

## Tying Tips beyond the Blue Zulu

With grateful thanks to Davie McPhail



You can often find the greatest value in the simplest of things. So it is with Davie McPhail's latest video demonstration on how to tie the Blue Zulu. For those who don't know the Blue Zulu, it is a famous Scottish sea trout fly that has been around so long ago that no one can say who developed it. It is the progenitor of the woolly buggler and like the woolly buggler is easy to tie but difficult to get perfectly right. Davie McPhail is one of the foremost fly tying instructors on the planet. His easy to follow engaging videos on you tube are a first port of call for anyone serious about tying a fly right. His Blue Zulu demonstration is no exception. To see that demonstration, click [here](#).

Davie's video emphasises the importance of avoiding bulk and the need to get proportions right. So when tying a Zulu or a woolly buggler:

- Start wrapping your thread roughly where the most important proportional marker will be. In a nymph that will be where the thorax starts. In a blue Zulu it's where you will tie in the front hackle.
- Minimise the amount of thread you use by tying the tail directly onto the hook. Don't worry about laying down a bed of thread first. That merely adds bulk.
- Wrap the tail along the entire body so as to keep the profile constant. Don't tag it in at the bend leaving an unsightly bump.
- Tie tight. Tension your wraps to what your thread will bear.
- Lay a wrap or two behind the tail to lift it from the hook but keep it to a wrap or two only.
- Tie in the ribbing with a couple of wraps and then start dubbing the body. The dubbing wraps will keep the ribbing in place.

- If you are tying in the hackle from the tail, tie it tip first. However it is often tidier to tie the hackle in at the eye of the hook and use the ribbing to hold it down. Then tie the hackle in from the base.
- Whichever way you do it rap the ribbing in the opposite direction to the direction you palmered the hackle. It is not necessary to cut metal ribbing. It can be broken off easily enough.
- Prepare your hackle by stroking the barbs away from the stem towards each other. It makes it easier not to trap hackles thus making for a neater tie.
- A light coating of glue on your thread before you whip finish works better than applying glue later.

---