

# SHOOTING WITH THE PROFESSIONALS

## FALLAWAY vs. BLADES

by Professional Archer JOHN DUDLEY

**N**o matter where I go and talk to a group of people I can always count on someone asking the question: "What is better, the fall away style rest or a launcher blade style rest?" To be honest I don't ever have a straight forward answer to this question because I believe both styles of rest are good choices for today's target archers. Both are proven and equally accurate. I have shot great scores with both styles and I have been beaten by other archers shooting both styles. However, just like with anything in this World there are pros and cons to the decisions we make or the products that we choose. What I am going to do is lay out not only the advantages but also the possible disadvantages of these two choices and going to give you a quick rundown to correctly setting up both the fall away and blade style rest.

There has been an explosion of blade style rests for the past few years with compound archers. The blade style rests are also commonly referred to as lizard tongue, blades or launcher rests. They are very popular and for good reason. A blade rest is simple, repetitive and dependable. The active part of the design is just a small piece of spring steel that acts as the support and guidance for your arrow. In high speed footage it is amazing how this simple design stabilises and provides consistent direction for the arrow. I don't see many down sides to this design because the only thing that can possibly go wrong with it is to bend or break the blade or lizard tongue.



I can say that I have seen blades break but nearly every time it was because of the blade being very old and having rust corrosion and breaking because of age. But, if you are wise and realise that you have been using the

same blade for several years and that it is starting to weather, just spend a few pounds and replace it before it fails. I have gone several years on one blade, but I do make a conscious effort to dry it off after shooting in the rain and not letting it corrode. When first setting up a new blade rest, the only thing you really need to think about is what thickness blade you are going to use and what angle to set it at. I think the most popular thickness for the launcher blade is the .10 blade for most people using aluminiums and X10's. Women will prefer the groups they get with the .8 blade because of their arrow weight being fairly light. The package of the launcher blades will normally have a selection chart for blade thickness (See photo).



When choosing the blade thickness that you need you can start by referring to the recommendations on the blade packages. Each thickness is actually rated for certain range of weight arrows. As I said, for most guys the .10 will be a good starting point. Tuning will be achieved best when a blade is not too stiff. A good indication of your blade being too stiff would be if you can hear a loud "ting" noise when you shoot your arrow. Chances are if you are noticeably hearing that sound the blade isn't flexing out of the way of the arrow and the arrow is actually banging off it. You will most likely get a high tear through paper that you won't be able to correct by moving the arrow rest.

This could also be due to incorrect nock point height or contact with your fletching. If your blade is too weak the arrow will be bouncing up and down as you pull the bow back. Most likely it will also have too much sag in the blade when the bow is at rest. This is also not right and you will need to get a thicker size to prevent this.



Having a blade that is too weak will result in having groupings where the arrows have spread out vertically (up and down) but the groups are good both left and right. When my blade rest is set properly I can actually nock my X10 upside down or right side up and it will still hit a 10 at 70 meters. The blade is that forgiving!

However, that is not always the case with the blade rest and there are many variables that can determine how forgiving it will be. When tuning a launcher blade you will find that adjusting the angle of the blade will also have an affect on how the blade tunes and the fletching clearance. I have found that if you shoot a blade that may be a little too stiff for the arrow that lowering the angle on it several degrees will help the tune. If the blade stiffness is good for the arrow you are shooting then an angle of about 36-40 degrees is good.



*Launcher Blade grouping*

A common mistake I see is when people set the blade angle too steep. This often results in poor arrow flight and also continually breaking the launcher blades. I think the reason they make the launcher angle so steep is to help hold the arrow on. However, if you use a quality designed blade you won't have to worry about that unless you are shooting larger diameter arrow than the blade is designed for. For that you may choose to shoot a wider blade design that is available on certain model launcher rest.



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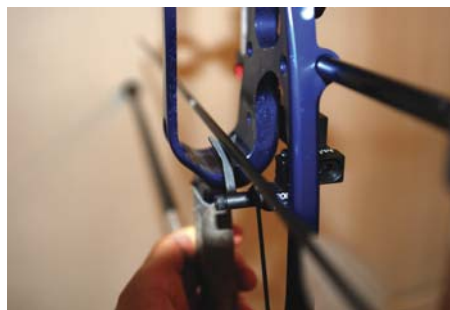
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The blade style rest that I personally use is a Trophy Taker Spring Steel 1 & 2. The reason I use both of these rests is because it gives me the option to use two different width blades, "narrow" and "wide" and it has easy micro-adjustment. I like having the option of different width blades because I use the wide for aluminium arrows and the narrow for ACE and X10 arrows. Blade style rests are great and proven in performance and World Records but there are equal amounts of top archers that prefer the fall away style arrow rest as well.

The best benefit to a fall away, in my opinion, is the clearance. Any fletch style, at any length and at any angle will not have any problems contacting the rest. Dejan Sitar, Morgan Lundin and Niels Baldur's are other



proven performers that have used fall away style rest in setting their multiple World Records and World Titles. Fall away arrow rests have won the Vegas Tournament in the Men's Pro class in previous years. In my opinion the downside to a fall away is that setting up the fall away is not as simple as a blade, but again the results are still just as good.

Fall away cords can be attached to either the cable, cable slide or even to the limb of the bow for some models. For my fall away arrow rest I like to use a piece of poly loop cord from BCY to attach the rest to the power cable of the bow. Several years ago I tuned a bow for Dejan Sitar because I wasn't too happy with how he was doing his and felt it was costing



him points. Prior to me setting up Dejan's bow he was just using a piece of 62 braid serving material to attach the fall away to his cable. Not a piece of loop material but a piece of braided serving thread. I see this all the time in Europe and haven't yet had anyone explain to me why there is any benefit to trusting your whole bow set up to a piece of thread. Your whole bow is hanging on by a thread, I guess you could say. That is CRAZY! The poly cord isn't going to break or cut if you snag it on something and will be more reliable in the long run. I like to attach the cord to the cable by putting it through the cable about even with the pivot point of the bows grip for height. I tie a serving about 2 centimeters in length above where I have the cord through the cables to prevent it from sliding up while pulling back.

It is helpful to make sure that when you put it through the cable it comes out and goes directly to the rest. Don't have it twisted around the cable so that it has to straighten out once you draw. You should be able to separate the cable strands so the poly cord is in a straight line to the arrow rest. Make sure to have enough extra cord length to where it can adjust it properly in length.

Do this by sliding the loop cord either shorter or longer until the arrow rest comes all the way up about 4-5 inches before you are at

full draw. Then mark the cord and tie a knot in the cord right at that mark. Pull the bow back several more times to make sure it is coming up the same as you had it before. I have found that in my tuning of fall away arrow rests that the length of the cord is important and, when the rest falls away, leaving contact with the arrow shaft, this has the most affect to how a bow groups. If you leave the excess cord so that you can adjust the knot and adjust when the rest comes up, you will be able to try what is best for you.

This will take some time out on the range shooting several groups with the cord one length, then adjust the knot so that you have several millimeters longer or shorter and again shoot groups. When the bow is grouping the best then that is the length you need it to be. Then cut the excess cord and burn a ball to assure your knot doesn't come undone.

A properly adjusted cord will make it come up 4-5 inches before full draw, but as I said before, this is only a starting point and for the best results you will need to shoot groups at the longer distances to determine groupings. As you can see in the photo attached I have

shot equally good groups with a fall away rest as I have with a blade style rest. For the people shooting larger diameter arrows for 3D or for those of you that like to shoot the spin wing vanes then shooting the fall away can be a great choice for you to get proper clearance.

Whether you are using the fall away or a blade style rest you should have it set up right. To me it seems the value of your bow regardless of the price tag is only worth what little accessories that you choose for it. When I see people that buy brand new Hoyt Elite series bows but aren't happy with the groups I just look at the pieces they have on the bow. If you are taking the best bow and relying on the lowest quality arrow rest then why should you be surprised at how it

groups? Invest in a rest that is machined of aluminium and have steel parts and micro-adjustability. This will assure that you are able to make the most of the bow that you are putting it on.

I wish you the best and wish you well in your shooting success! John Dudley



John Dudley's group at 70m

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