

WATERSLIDE DECALS

Use a sharp, quality scissor to carefully trim the decals. Don't use razor blades or Exacto knives. Scissors won't tear or roll up the edges of the decal. A magnifying headband helps a lot here as in many aspects of rod building. Round the edges and they won't lift on you and the decal will move easier without bunching up as it's moved.

The surface the decal is to be applied to should be very smooth and, of course, clean. It's best to put the decal on a gloss blank or on a coat of rod finish (epoxy or Permagloss style). There is a MINUTE amount of adhesive on the back of the decal and I have applied a few that turned out very good on matte finished blanks. I think, because I didn't move the decal after applying it, the glue filled in any low spots and it appeared very glossy when done. I also think that I was very, very lucky. I won't take this chance again and I always apply a coating of epoxy or Permagloss first.

After the coating has fully cured, put Microset on the area the decal will be placed on with a brush to apply. This allows the decal to move easier and gets the surface 'prepared' for the decal to adhere to. Nothing makes up for oily fingerprints or dirty areas, though. The surface should be clean and dry before applying the Microset.

Make sure this brush is only used with Microset (not Microsol). The brush can be cleaned with water. Dedicate one brush for Microset and one for Microsol. Decals can be done without these two products, but these two products greatly increase the odds of perfection (no mistakes, the decal moves if needed, and they look good) when they're used.

Dip the decal in water for 5 seconds or a bit more. Experimenting here helps, but 5 to 10 seconds is generally more than enough. If the decal paper is the old style (which is all that I use now; I have both kinds and just prefer the thinner material to work with), this is all the soaking that's needed and the decal will slide off almost immediately. If it's the new, thicker style decal paper, which is much tougher and resistant to tearing, then the decal needs to sit after this soaking for a minute or so before it will slide off.

Make sure your fingers are wet and the area of the blank is wet with water. Put one end of the decal low to the rod right where it needs to go. I like to slide it off maybe 1/16" first, but not too much. It can easily roll around the

backing paper and stick to it instead of the blank if too much is slid off. Tip the decal at a slight angle; the end where it slides off should be very close to the blank and the other end can be $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the rod. Slide the decal paper out from under the decal slowly, allowing the decal to contact the rod area as the paper is removed. When the decal touches the rod, put light, light pressure on it with your finger to aid in pulling the backing paper away. Watch that the decal is as close to EXACTLY where you need it to go as you do this.

Excess moving of the decal only removes the tiny bit of adhesive that it has on it. Minimize the movement to ensure non-cloudy appearances later on. In other words, if the decal doesn't have that adequate amount of adhesive under it, it won't be stuck tight to the rod and once finish is applied, the decal will appear cloudy in those areas where it's not adhered.

Now, the decal is on the blank. **Crooked, ain't it???** Be sure to use wetted fingers and gently, with a finger from both hands, pull the decal into the correct, straight position. Don't push-this will only cause the decal to bunch up. If the right side needs to go up, hold the left side gently with one finger and, with the other hand's finger on the top edge of the right side of the decal, pull the decal higher until it's level. Splashing a dash of water on the decal before moving helps this sometimes. Pushing down on the decal with too much pressure removes the water between the two and adheres it to the rod. It may never move again if too much pressure is applied.

Once I'm happy with the decal's position, I like to use a Kleenex to gently 'blot' water off the decal. Then, I gently push the decal straight down with the Kleenex, starting in the middle of the decal and working out to the edges. This can be done with my finger, too.

Don't use toilet paper; it's way too dusty and I'll get fuzzies on the area. Even the Kleenex, if it's used to wipe the area away from the decal, will leave fuzzies. But a paper towel isn't soft enough-it doesn't "give" like a soft Kleenex does-and I've always had problems of the decal moving just when I don't want it to when I've used paper towels. Just don't wipe the area away from the decal with the Kleenex; use the stiffer paper towels for that.

Once this is all done, apply a coat of Microsol to the whole decal area. I like to start at the middle of the decal with the brush and go towards the outside of the decal. This will smooth out the decal and shrink it a bit to fit any irregularities in the surface that the decal was applied to. It just makes it look much nicer, unless a perfect job all around was done initially.

At this point, if I want to put finish on the area, I've put the rod in my rotator, and with the rod spinning slowly, I bring a swing arm lamp with a 60 watt bulb in it down close to the decal surface. I've applied finish to hundreds of them as soon as I can get it mixed up and put it on.

Again, the area was blotted dry of ALL water, a coating of Microsol was applied, then the rod is turned with the light bulb warming and drying everything for the 15 minutes it takes me to get all of my finish stuff out and mix it up. I apply it right away and have not had a problem with this yet in hundreds of applications.



Other notables:

Water quality- If your tap water isn't very good, the decal can still cloud. Use distilled water to solve this problem. The water is very good where I live. I don't have running water upstairs here where I build rods and I have to confess a little secret. I do have a bathroom stool, though, and I've always just flushed the toilet, filled a shot glass as the water comes into the bowl, and used that. Never had any trouble there, either. LOL!!! True story. I've done it many, many times.

Steady hand- It's really easy to move the decal accidentally while blotting it dry or when 'pushing' it down into the adhered position. The Kleenex helps this, but if my hand isn't steady, I like to hold the wrist of that hand with my other hand before getting too close to the decal just to steady it.

Vision- Having good lighting and using the magnifying headband really, really helps out a lot with this.

If you found this useful I suggest you please check out my DVD's. The good people at C&M Custom Tackle carry them exclusively. You can see them at: <http://www.acidrod.com/books.html> Colleen Griffin would be happy to assist you and you can email her at Colleen@acidrod.com or call 909-394-7486

Sincerely,

Putter

