WINDSURFING uk

Issue 4 July 17

THE BIG SALT
James Cox

RACEBOARD
revival

OLLIE SCOTT
da man in charge

SIMON PETTIFER
down the park

HEY LADIES!
Danielle Lucas inspiration

KRAFTY CUTS
Meggie (Kraft)

POPPIN'
Kirkham's Cork

JAMES JAGGER
in focus

KEFALOS
try it, you might like it

MASTERS COMPETITION
with Mark Dowson

+

SUMMER WINDY KIT REVIEWS
WINDWISE TECHNIQUE, SIMON WINKLEY'S FUNDAMENTALS

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THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

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As many will no doubt have seen the big man himself Dave 'Mighty' White recently suffered a stroke whilst out in Mauritius. At the time of writing we understand Whitey to be comfortable and on the road to recovery.

Photo: Dave White

For anyone that knows Dave you'll be aware of his obvious enthusiasm for getting out there on the water and doing it, whatever the discipline. At the merest sniff of breeze Whitey's on it, his passion instantly rubbing off on anyone who's within his vicinity. He's not a bad photographer either (understatement), Dave's work having adorned these very pages, as well as our sister publication SUPM, on many occasions.

It's no secret Dave has fought off health issues in the past and we're sure he'll overcome this latest hurdle. In no time at all we'll be seeing Whitey back out on the brine, living life to the full, and getting amongst it.

Without preaching too much none of us know what's around the next bend. All too often we prioritise the things that really don't matter too much. If you've been putting off getting wet then take a leaf out of Dave's book and just get involved, you'll be glad you did. We only have one life so we may as well live it to the full – cheesy, I know, but true.

For now our thoughts and prayers are with Dave and the White family. Hopefully we'll see you at the beach, full power, in the not too distant future. Get well soon Dave!

Onwards and upwards

With summer being here proper there's no end of opportunity for getting wet and having some fun in the sun. With high season (some would say silly season) conditions aren't quite as consistent as autumn and winter. That said, winds still blow – you may score a fun sea breeze session – and waves do still pump from time to time.

Summer's a chance to get out and simply enjoy a blast. OK, your regular gear may be wave orientated but don't dismiss the euphoric feeling of simply skimming across the brine. And if airs are light, then so what? We've waxed lyrical before about all the alternative windsurfing kit available to riders in this day an age – windSUP, foils and inflatables – so now's the time to use them

With this in mind we have a bunch of test write ups featuring equipment that may suit you well this summer. Big freeride gear from JP, Pryde, RRD and Severne with a review of Fanatic's Freewave Stubby 105l for when winds ramp up a tad. Then we have AHD's Sealion Wings, a real Swiss Army Knife of a board. WindSUP (in waves), surf SUP, wind foil and SUP foil, it's all possible. This time round we just look at the windSUP benefits though. Stay tuned for a spotlight on its foiling potential.

That's all from me. Enjoy the ride, this issue and I might see you out there...

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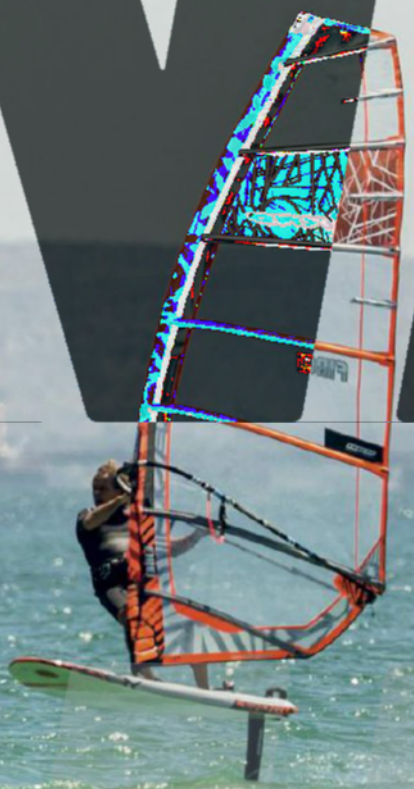

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THANKS AND PRAISE
JAMES COX, ROD DAVIS, OLLIE SCOTT, CLAIRE GLASBY, MILES TAYLOR (PROTOGRAPHY), SIMON PETTIFER, ANDY STALLMAN, DANIELLE LUCAS (GETWINDSURFING), MEGGIE KRAFT, DAVE WHITE, CORKY KIRKHAM, JAMES JAGGER, OLLI ANDERSON, FLO RAGOSSNIG, JON POPKISS, ANDY CHAMBERS, SIMON DAVIES (NEILSON ACTIVE HOLIDAYS), SIMON BORNHOFT (WINDWISE), SIMON WINKLEY, OCEAN ELEMENTS, SARAH JACKSON, BEN PAGE, STUDENT WINDSURFING ASSOCIATION, RYA, MARK DOWSON, BRITISH WAVESAILING ASS, WITCHCRAFT WINDSURFING, K4 FINS HARNESS MOUNT AND FLYMOUNT, and everyone else who submitted contributions.

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SUPM

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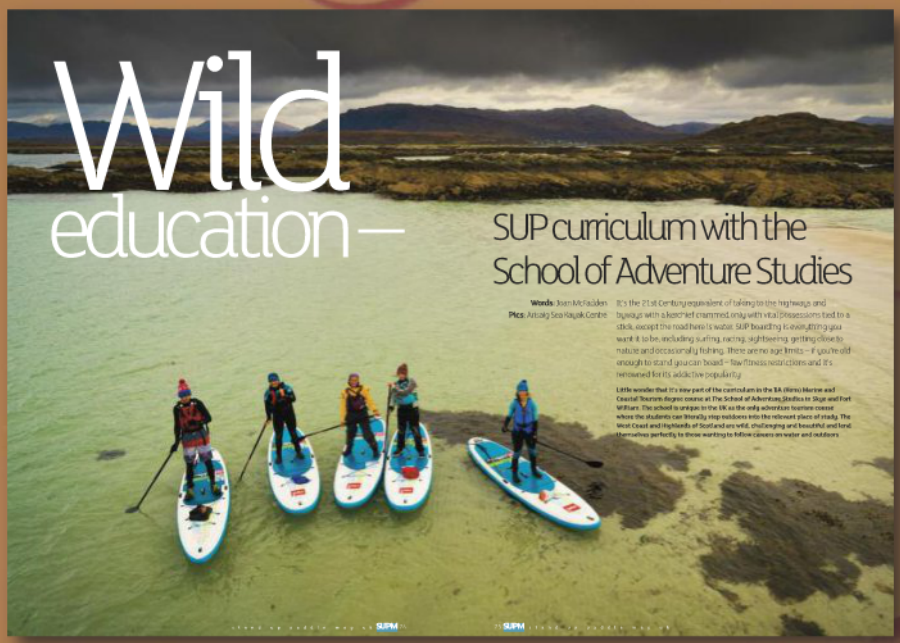

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TAKA

THE BIG SALT

Profile photo: Jamie Hancock
Main photo: Iwona Bielinski

JAMES 'COXY' COX IS A STAPLE PART OF THE UK'S WAVE SAILING SCENE. EVER ADAPTABLE TO THE CONDITIONS ON OFFER, AND WITH A GO BIG STYLE, YOU CAN SPOT COXY A MILE AWAY WHEN HE'S DOING HIS THING – USUALLY JUST AS CONDITIONS RAMP UP THE GNARLY. As well as his on water prowess, Coxy is also the brains behind BigSalty Weather – bigsalty.com – a weather site aimed squarely at those who dip in the brine regularly. We caught up with Coxy to find out more.

Tell us about your windsurfing beginnings – where you started, what led you try the sport and why it keeps your interest?

I learnt to windsurf at Hengistbury Head in Dorset, which was a summer holiday getaway for my family back in the day. We left the suburbs of Southampton to go and live in a beach hut and enjoy sea food, water sports and most importantly windsurfing. My brothers learnt to windsurf there. Seeing them disappear out to sea in conditions that seemed impossible to deal with spurred me on. They learnt from my parents. It was a hard sport to fathom and that got me interested. There was just enough balance of challenge vs payback. It's no different today.

At what point did you think wave sailing was a good idea?

Early on I remember being sat at the end of the Mudeford sand spit during a summer storm, hunkered in the lee of a dune and looking downwind to Avon Beach and seeing guys out doing big jumps and going for forward loops in the distance amongst all the spray. It looked sort of terrifying but alluring. I knew I wanted to get that good, but was aware that the progress was going to be slow with the kit I was using and the restriction of only windsurfing in the summer time. It's kind of cool to look back and think yep, I'm there now and I'm still learning. The guys out on the water back then: John Dickens and Richard from Bournemouth Windsurfing Centre are still out on the water with me today. That's rad.

Is it still waves or do you dabble in other areas of windsurfing?
Still waves but I do a touch of freestyle. I recognise the technical skill of the freestylers and want to learn better sail handling for jumping so it's a good challenge to keep an eye on things but it's wave sailing that holds promise for me. There is an infinite learning curve and I get to challenge myself. On the good days, you fight fear, use skill, luck and get immersed in a wild environment. Seeing my friends and other top guys ripping is a thrill. It also makes me think, "I want to do that! Hey, what's stopping me?"

Aerial. Photo: Gregg Dunnett

Photo by Jamie Hancock

What's the score with your local area? How is it special and what are general conditions like?
The surrounding waters of Hengistbury Head, Dorset, offer a really good variety of conditions from onshore to cross-offshore all in a very short distance – we can thank the Purbecks and Hengistbury Head for that. There is Southbourne, Hengistbury Head, Christchurch Harbour, Boscombe Pier, Avon Beach, Branksome & Highcliffe. It's mostly wind swell and the associated fun, but occasionally ground swell magic.

Where's your favourite home spot to sail and why?
I'm pretty lucky to live next to a beach that can get untameably wild but is also reasonably consistent. Southbourne faces SSW and is predominantly cross-onshore. It provides a good dose of wind swell when few other places have much but on the bigger days, the

After a good session, you sort of feel like you've been dragged backwards blindfold through a hedge

Photos: Fergus Cowhig

When I windsurf during the week it costs me money in lost earnings but this is a trade off I've long been used to

waves break very heavily over a sand bar that keeps the wave's power very concentrated. It's choppy as hell a lot of the time and the sea state is very confused. After a good session, you sort of feel like you've been dragged backwards blindfold through a hedge.

And abroad?

There are so many incredible wave spots in the UK and Ireland that we are spoilt for choice but I've had memorable sessions in Waitara, New Zealand; Margaret River, Australia; The Neck, Tasmania; Pechilemu, Chile; Arroyo Laguna, California; Kuau, Maui.

As we understand it you have two young children in the mix. Does this make nabbing windy sessions trickier? How do you go about scoring time on the water?

That's right. I've got less free time now that I have kids but in theory I can still windsurf as much I just have to work less to free up the time! Fortunately, all my work is done over the internet so I manage my time almost entirely. That means when I windsurf during the week it costs me money in lost earnings but this is a trade off I've long been used to. So right now I earn less money than I used to before having kids and I buy more time. At some point that may have to change but it's a real way of living.

What about trips? We noticed recently you managed to sneak across to Ireland for a boys only few days. How did that go down with the missus?
Lucy's great and understands that I have.... well, needs! We both look after the kids in between our work commitments so it makes it easier in a way to justify going away. It's not like she's always the one looking after the kids. That way she also gets to do her thing too and I get to see them plenty despite the windsurfing which I'm grateful for.

Tell us about your day job. You're a web developer so how does that fit into your windsurfing life?
I build websites and manage hosting packages for a number of different businesses and individuals. It's pretty flexible work except it's always with me. It's a service industry at the end of the day so I need to make sure if someone needs something done there is a plan of action or a support option. I guess you could either build a big business in this area and get staff or stay small and be flexible but be more hands on. I decided to stay small a long time ago for maximum flexibility to suit windsurfing. This means you have to be resourceful when arranging cover for the trips away.

Talk to us about Bigsalty. Many windsurfers use the site as their 'go to' source of weather info. What's the history and what led you start a weather website?
Bigsalty is now a global weather service for windsurfers and other water sports users. We provide wind, swell and tidal data and some very unique ratings tools. These tell you where's going to be good for down-the-line windsurfing conditions and even glassy stand up paddle sessions. In addition you can set up alerts, to help prevent you missing a forecast. Bigsalty came about out of the excitement of trying to locate the best windsurfing conditions possible. The thinking being that somewhere is going to be going off, you've just got to know where! I feel like the website is heading in a good direction at the moment and things are getting exciting. We try and procure information from locals about specific conditions at locations and it's pretty satisfying when you're on the road and Bigsalty is suggesting you hit the beach that the local has just recommended. That sort of information is invaluable and can save you a lot of time and wasted journeys.

Anything big planned with BS in the future?
Recently we started working on lifestyle tools that aim to really help water sports enthusiasts get the most out of life. It feels great doing this because it takes us back to the original reason for starting the service. I love windsurfing, surfing, spear fishing, stand up paddle and a whole host of other water sports. I want a weather service that makes enjoying these sports a priority in my life. It's too easy to miss a glassy day or a windy day or a clear visibility day when there is so much clutter and so many distractions in modern day life. You have to be vigilante and selective. We have a vision of helping people make the most of good forecasts by helping them fit in sessions around their busy lives. Helping them to reset the priorities, you know. I think this is how to make people feel good. If we can make a difference and encourage people to prioritise enjoying the outdoors then I'm stoked and that's something I feel is worth working hard to accomplish.

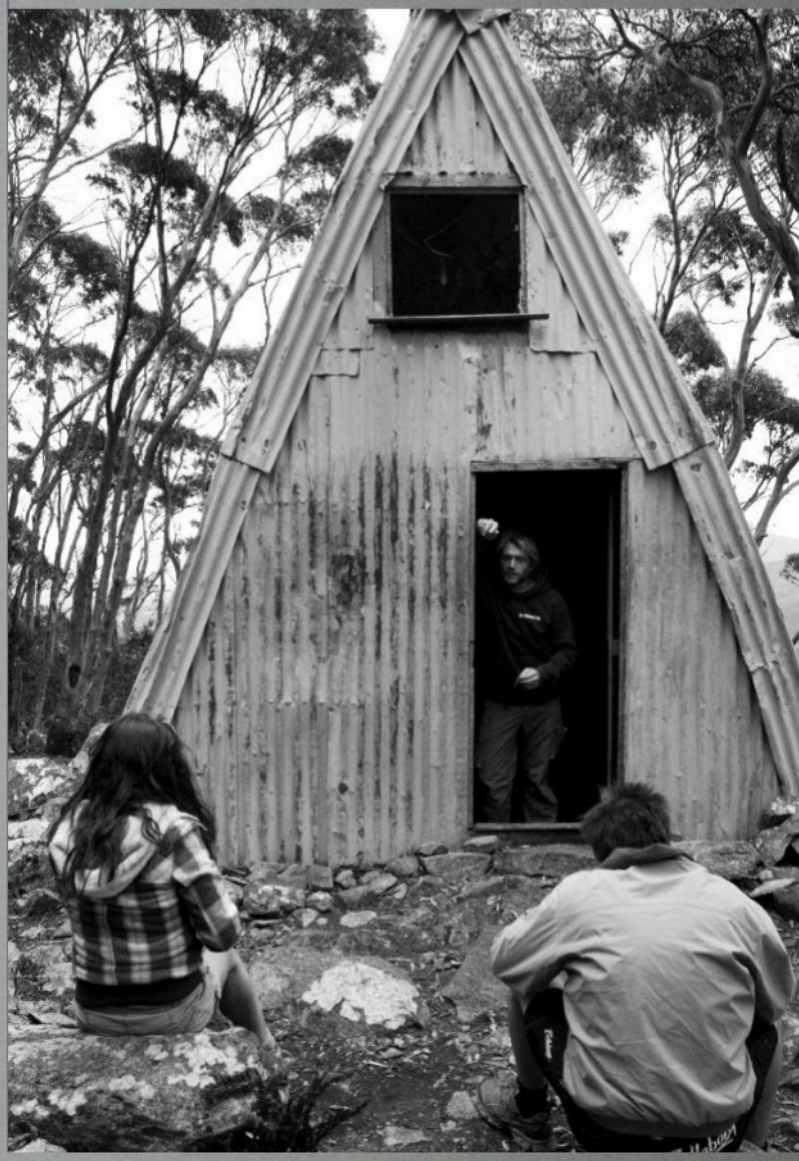
Southbourne. Photo: James Bowden

What's the ultimate goal re work? Is being a sponsored sailor not enough? Do you have to work outside of windsurfing?
My goal is to continue to prioritise windsurfing for as long as possible and find a way to make work fit in around that. One day my fitness and health will run out so I can't do it the other way round. I bought myself extra time when I was 16 years old after a knee operation fixed damage done by a bad skateboarding accident. If I work on this premise with the awareness, that this won't always be possible, I think that's my best shot at being happy. Hopefully I can make it all tie together. This way, I also stay true to the commitment I made to myself as a kid which rightly or wrongly I still hold as extremely important. I'm extremely grateful to have been using what I consider the best equipment for such a long time - Quatro Boards and Ezzy Sails. Them helping me with kit really makes a big difference.

How does it work with your supporters? Are you expected to compete or are you free to follow the soul sailing path?
They've never told me they expect me to compete but I feel it's important for me anyway. Competing against others provides me with a yard stick and makes sure that I don't get soft. Fortunately I often windsurf with some incredibly talented windsurfers so I get that from them too but getting beaten in a heat has a good way of rubbing off the need to improve. I think that my sponsors are aware that it is challenging to mix professional level windsurfing with modern life so they do offer me a good degree of flexibility. I'm hoping to pay them back by doing some big and interesting things over the next few years.

Who do you get your kit from and why do you love it?
Boards from Quatro, sails from Ezzy and fins from K4 fins. I sort of feel like these brands not only have the quality and thinking behind them that I respect but they are run by people with a passion that really filters in to the products. That's invaluable as far as I'm concerned and it's really noticeable to me when I use the gear. I'm not a hype man, I like good quality gear that lets me focus on what I need to do.

Any out of industry sponsors? What's the deal with them if so?
Some wheels are turning with Conker Spirit whose vision and enthusiasm I feel we share. Hopefully we'll put pen to paper and do something that is really productive for both parties. I feel that something great is possible. Meanwhile buy yourself some Conker Dorset Dry Gin and you'll understand where I am coming from (we have! – ed).



In the shack

Ireland aerial - Photo by John Carter

What's your most loved piece of windsurfing equipment – either from the past or currently owned? Why is it a winner?
It's my UJ. I've had it for about eight years now and it's still going strong. I really should get a new one because at some point it's got to break. Every time I swim back to my kit after a wipe out, I silently thank it for doing its job.

Do you help with equipment development? If so, what feedback do you provide?
No, I'm not very analytical when it comes to kit, I'm not very interested in getting involved either. I know how good the kit feels and honestly don't think I could offer a better perspective.

How's 2017's windy season looking for you? Any plans for trips and/or events? Will the family be in tow?
Lots of trips planned on forecasts, but they will always be, by nature, spur of the moment with the guys. But hopefully there will be some with the family too. I'm planning to do all the BWA events this year too. It's been a few years since I managed to compete in all events and I'd like to try and get a good overall result. We're tentatively looking at going to New Zealand winter 2018. We'll see how that goes...

What about outside of windsurfing – do any other kind of sports or are windows limited?
Limited yes, but I imagine this summer will involve a lot of stand up paddle fishing and hopefully plenty of spear fishing too. Any chance to get some fresh fish in the kids' mouths I'll take.

BIGSALTY WEATHER

Any final thanks, shouts and praise?
Quatro, Ezzy Sails, K4 Fins, Conker Gin and to everyone using and promoting Bigsalty Weather. Special thanks to everyone getting out there and having it and having fun. There are too many names to praise everyone I enjoy spending time on the water with but as I get older I enjoy seeing the power these people have and it's inspiring. Check out bigsalty.com to make the most of the next forecast.

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KEFALOS:
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WORDS: OLLI ANDERSON
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GREECE'S INFAMOUS MELTEMI WIND IS A CONSTANT ATTRACTION DURING SUMMER MONTHS WHEN IT REALLY RAMPS UP. WITH CLOCKWORK CONSISTENCY IT BLOWS ACROSS THE WARM WATERS OF THE AEGEAN SEA, BUFFETING THE ASSORTED ISLANDS AND MAKING THEM AN ENTICING PROSPECT FOR MANY A WINDSURFER LOOKING TO GET AWAY FOR A SPOT OF SALTY ESCAPISM. Kefalos, on the island of Kos, is a long established location but possibly missed by many in the UK. Yet it offers great conditions for all windsurfers, whatever your level. Instructor Olli Anderson runs us through what to expect should you decide to hit up the resort.

The low down

From pro freestylers to beginners, families, groups and single travellers looking for the perfect relaxing, or action packed holiday Kefalos Windsurfing is the place to be! Situated on the southern tip of Kos in the small traditional harbour side village of Kefalos boasts glistening turquoise water, bright blue sky and strong, reliable thermal winds. It's a short four and a half hour flight from all major UK airports via Jet2, EasyJet, British Airways and Thompson, to name a few.

Conditions and when to go

Kefalos relies on strong northerly thermal winds blowing down the Aegean, called the Meltemi. Due to the geographical structure of the southern tip of the island, the wind is funneled through towering hills behind the village giving strong, consistent and reliable winds from the end of May right through to the end of September. Since the wind is a thermal it builds in strength throughout the day, starting light in the morning before hitting full power around lunchtime. It'll then last into late evening. This makes it a great family destination, as the light morning winds are ideal for beginners, before the afternoon winds turn on suiting more experienced windsurfers. For those improving the excellent safety boat cover makes it a friendly spot that suits those looking to crack waterstarts, gybes and beyond.

Generally the best month for breeze is July, with last year's (2016) wind stats showing 100% (force 4 or above.) During the off season, such as early May and late October, strong south winds can provide onshore bump and jump sessions – perfect if you fancy some air time. The south west coast of the island boasts the best wave spot; Agios Theologas. Cross shore breeze and large rolling waves break onto a sand bar providing some excellent 'real world' wave sailing. It might not have the power and glassiness of say Ho'okipa, but it's no less fulfilling. If you get chance to check it out then I can't recommend it enough

Local area

Kefalos is a traditional Greek village with extremely friendly locals and a mellow/laid back vibe. Down in the harbour are several bars and restaurants to make use of. Sydney's Bar and Grill for top-notch food, Dolphin Rock Cafe for drinks and 70's music or Riverside Cafe for delicious sandwiches – these are just a couple of my faves!

Many Greek restaurants are located around the bay selling the freshest fish – caught on the same day – homemade Tzatziki and the finest Souvlaki Greece has to offer (in my opinion). These establishments are easily accessible for wheelchairs, and the recent opening of Kos Mobility Hire means there's no need to carry them around the airport either.

Excursions are always arriving and leaving the harbour under the experienced hands of Captain Yannis. These trips come in many forms. Jaunts to the neighbouring volcanic island of Nisyros, fishing trips with an astonishing/captivating views while Kefalos Windsurfing offers a BBQ boat trip every Tuesday around the headland to a secret beach – the star gazing is amazing due to the beach being untouched by any light pollution from Kefalos. Furthermore, regular buses and many car hire places allow easy access to other parts of the island such as Kos town. Now the capital of Kos, located on the north east of the island, it offers retail shops, a variety of restaurants and more diving trips, boats to Bodrum, Turkey and Gyros than you could imagine.

The centre

Kefalos Windsurfing and Sailing Centre provides the highest quality instruction from both RYA and VDWS certified instructors. With such a range of languages spoken by staff – from English to Italian, Greek to German – there are no barriers. Kit rental is one of the cheapest in Greece with a week's tariff of standard boards and sails in peak season costing only €245. Top gear from North and Sailloft rigged on 75% carbon masts, with 60 boards to choose from containing a mixture of F2, Fanatic and Patrick, means there's kit for all conditions.

The centre also offers a V.I.P range for the speed freaks out there; Sailloft Ultimate's rigged on carbon booms and 100% masts paired with Patrick's slalom and speed range, F2s and Fanatic Falcons, and a range of fin sizes to choose from. Then there's dual hulled catamarans and RS Picos which are great for getting kids onto the water.

SUP is also popular on light wind mornings. While Tuesday and Thursday sees Lynn from Lynn Yann Yoga bringing her highly trained skills for anybody keen to try Yoga with a difference. Always very popular with the ladies, but it's also seen dads getting involved, who are just as impressive. Even the staff are keen, as manager Florian Ragossnig has shown beautifully.

Other activities include fishing, snorkelling and rock jumping – only for the brave! The centre's shop is fully stocked with Kefalos Windsurfing tees, rash vests and Mystic board shorts as well as other essentials.

Where to stay

Many hotels are located along the bay. Royal Bay is a stunning 4-star hotel located directly next to the centre and offers beautiful views across the water, a restaurant, swimming pool and play area for the kids. There are also many self-catering apartments up in the village itself, and several supermarkets located in Kefalos including Oasis and Jim's – both of which supply everything from fresh fruit and veg to daily cooked pastries and even sunglasses and luggage bags in case you have any airport disasters.

To summarize, Kefalos is a unique location, with constant strong winds, turquoise blue water and is complemented by an astonishing landscape and lovely locals. Come see what it's all about for yourself!

For any enquiries please email the centre manager, Florian Ragossnig at: flo@kefaloswindsurfing.com or alternatively check out the website at www.kefaloswindsurfing.com for exclusive offers and booking prices.

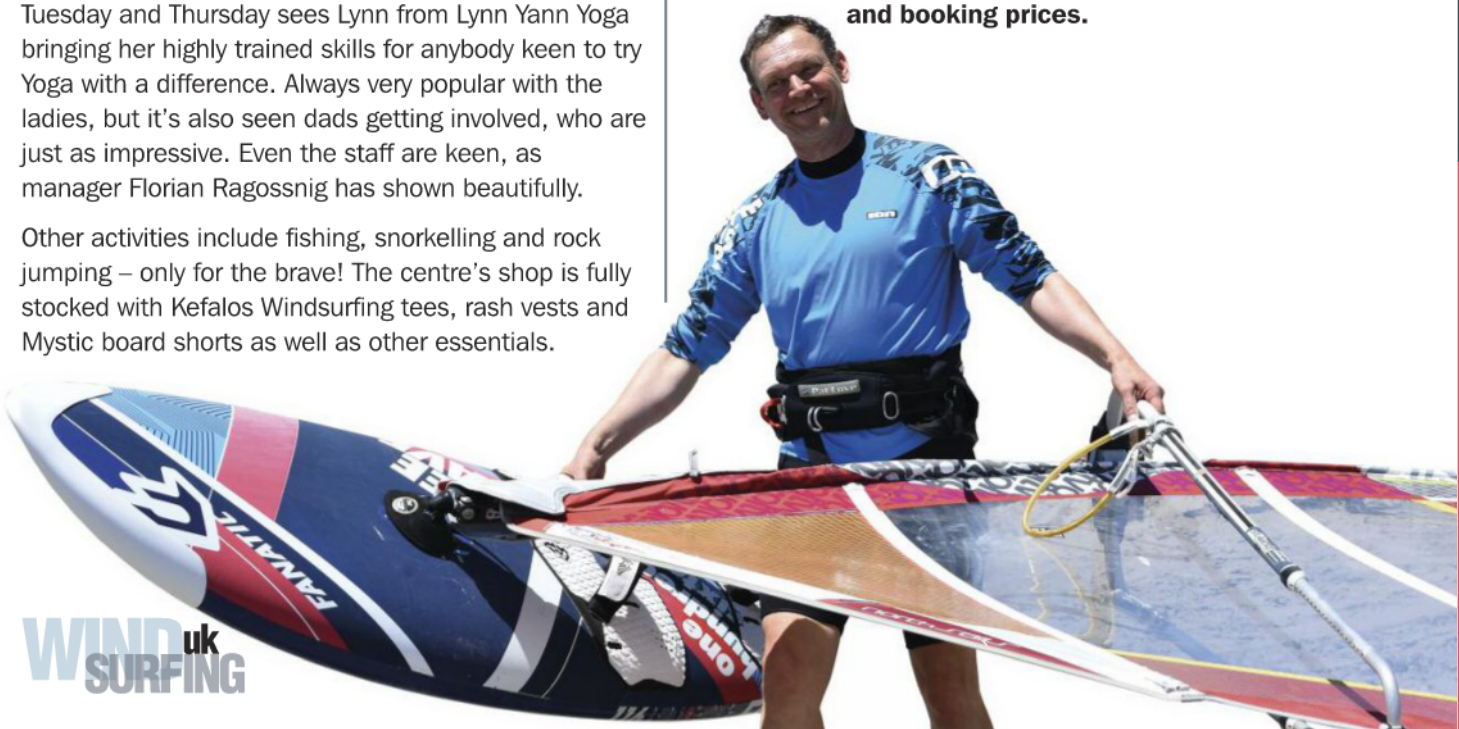

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Photo: John Carter

OLLIE SCOTT

WORDS: OLLIE SCOTT
PICS: MALEEN HOEKSTRA, JC/JOHN CARTER, CLAIRE GLASBY
MILES TAYLOR - PROTOGRAPHY

OLLIE SCOTT HAS DONE THE ROUNDS, IN WINDSURFING TERMS. STARTING AS A LOWLY SUNSAIL INSTRUCTOR OLLIE QUICKLY PROGRESSED HIS SKILLS DURING SUMMERS WORKING FOR CLUB VASS. SOON HE WAS COMPETING IN FREESTYLE WITH THE LIKES OF ANDY 'BUBBLE' CHAMBERS AND COLIN 'WHIPPY' DIXON. These days the foot's off the gas slightly as Ollie has hands full now running CV. We caught up with Mr Scott for a chin wag about how things have changed over the years.

I tried windsurfing on holiday in Spain as a teenager. I could sail a dingy as well but windsurfing appealed more. I got serious about windsurfing after studying sports science so did my instructor ticket and got a job more or less straight away as a windsurfing instructor for Sunsail working in Turkey.

After my first season I knew windsurfing was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life – I've never looked back. You just get hooked, literally! I just enjoy sailing now but in the beginning I wanted to get better so I had to be on the water as much as possible practising, pushing and learning new moves. I'm past that now and am just happy doing what I do.

DA MAN IN CHARGE OF CLUB VASS

Club Vass

I did a few stints working for Rich Page, Trevor Funnel and Andy Groom on the PWA and BWA tours which opened my eyes and surprised me in a few ways. But Club Vass has been the biggest influence, along with Benny Harrison, Si Hurrey and Bubble (Andy Chambers).

My first competitive event was way, way back – I can't remember that much about it. It was Poole Windfest a long time ago. I don't think I did that well the first time out. Competition is a lot different to free sailing and you need conditions that suit. Plus being on it in terms of form. So many things play their part.

After a while I started to get it. Sailing with Bubble and Whippy (Colin Dixon) really helped. Basically, you free sail with the boys but you're always in competition mode with each other on the water. You also coach each other as you can see what's going on when you're flying next to them. It all helps (helped).

We were a tight little crew. It was wild times: travelling, partying and windsurfing hard. Yeah, for sure I miss the boys and that time but things change and you move on. We're all still good mates and I will be Bubble's best man next year! Can't wait…

I've always enjoyed the windsurfing scene as a whole and just wanted to be part of it. I didn't stick at the competition thing for long though. I had some great moments/results over the years on the EFPT tour but it was always about being part of the freestyle movement at the time rather than winning and getting podiums. I had to stop because of my job. Things got serious with

"I'm often asked how much longer I'll continue but I still have tons of energy so can't see any reason to stop."

Club Vass and some of my friends like Andre Paskowski (RIP) and Antxon Otaegui had moved on from competition as well. As I say, things change.

I fancied running the Club Vass beach operation for a few years having been manager in Dahab and Margarita during winter. I was stoked to be offered the job running the club not just the centre. It took a while to get my head around it all and dial in to the change. It was a shock realising I had to sit in an office for a few hours a day! It still is…

Running Club Vass is an amazing job. I mean, I'm responsible for the organisation of an awesome windsurfing club, kid's club, hotel, two bars and a restaurant, 50 staff and up to 250 people in and out daily! I've come a long way from teaching foot straps and harness work in Turkey that's for sure.

The buzz is different. You just evolve. I always need a challenge so running Club Vass keeps me busy (that's an understatement!). So much happens in a single day my mind is constantly active. I've been here 13 years now and counting. I'm enjoying it so yeah, count me in for the long haul. I'm often asked how much longer I'll continue but I still have tons of energy so can't see any reason to stop. I get asked that question a lot! Doing lots of yoga helps.

Cape Town

The last few winters I've been In Cape Town, South Africa, with Max Rowe. Most of the CV boys and girls head down south as well. If you windsurf and like surfing then It's the place to go. All the PWA guys are there for training so it works well from a learning point of view. CT is also cheap, has reliable wind and a variety of wave and flat water spots to choose from.

There are no plans to move back UK side – not yet at least. I can't really see myself living in the UK full time to be honest. My family live in London and Winchester though, so I do pop back occasionally. A lot of friends live around Poole or Chichester as well.

I'm lucky and grateful to still be supported by the industry for my windsurfing by actually working in it. I've obviously got access to the world's biggest windsurfing toy cupboard with Club Vass! Tony and Roger (Club Vass owners) sponsored me in the beginning and I use the centre's gear – Severne and JP. Mystic and Nikiboy Green have been amazing in the last few years with wetsuits and clothes while Boardwise's Ian and Doug are just legends. They have always been good for getting me sorted with kit even if it's just a fin bolt.

Instagram

I don't use Facebook so much but my Instagram has quite a healthy following. I get a lot of likes and follows for my windsurfing posts – 6,150 likes is the best so far. To be fair I speak to a huge number of guests personally each year about gear and windsurfing, so

from a shop or sponsors point of view I'm useful as I can be used as a sort of sales tool for equipment.

Guests are a captive audience. But just because you're a hotshot PWA freestyler doesn't mean you can talk kit with the general windsurfing public. You must have good knowledge, understand each individual's wants/needs and then have the people skills that making conversing with guests from all walks of life comfortable and relaxed.

Windsurfing is ever changing. I was with Bubble in March windsurfing at Avon (Dorset) and there must have been 50 people on the water so I'd say it's doing OK. The vibe and buzz was right on! If Club Vass is anything to go by then there are still lots of people from the UK wanting to get their windsurfing fix. Everyone in the industry has a different point of view though. I suppose it depends if you're selling gear, the lifestyle, teaching or competing.

I see people progress very quickly at CV but most would say this is because it's an easy place to coach and sail. Sun and flat water = huge improvement.

Club Vass coaching

We coach windsurfing in a slightly different way at Club Vass to most other venues. We teach the RYA syllabus for Start Windsurfing but we also coach the skills required to progress as a windsurfer in the purest sense. We're not just about collecting tickets, although it's still important to do so. Maybe update the syllabus?

SUPs are keeping the windsurf game going now, to an extent – or at least inflatables. The foiling thing has got people's juices flowing again. We're running foiling tuition with Max Rowe this summer at Club Vass on our JP foil boards. Maybe foiling could go to the Olympics?

Female pro sailors

It's good to support female windsurfing as well – we do this a lot. It's grown more in the last few years. Some female pro sailors are nailing all the bigger moves but they are coaching to a higher level as well. I have four advanced female instructors working at Club Vass (check out Clare Elliott's profile from issue two – ed) – now that's impressive in my book! These girls can do spocks and loops so it's good to see progression in the sport from all ages and all levels. The last few Diva Weeks at Club Vass had close to 40 female windsurfers per week, which we're super proud about.

Windsurfing is a hard sport but an amazing one – a never-ending journey whatever your level. Club Vass is a special place that anyone interested in getting into windsurfing should visit. After that you'll be back year after year.

There are too many shout outs to thank everyone. I'm just grateful to be part of windsurfing in the UK and abroad!

"We teach the RYA syllabus for Start Windsurfing but we also coach the skills required to progress as a windsurfer in the purest sense."

Steve Backside

MASTERING THE MASTERS

BWA RHOSNEIGR 2017 EXPERIENCES

WORDS: MARK DOWSON
PICS: MARK DOWSON, BWA, OLLIE LADDIMAN

VIVID IMPRESSIONS OF WAVE SAILING COMPETITION WERE FORMED WITHIN ME FROM WATCHING A TAPE OF A BBC PROGRAMME ABOUT THE TIREE WAVE CLASSIC BACK IN THE DAY. STARING A CERTAIN YOUNG DUNCAN COOMBS, I WATCHED IT TIRELESSLY OVER AND OVER ON A VHS VIDEO RECORDER. My kind old Dad had managed to record it for me and the tape was worn out and chewed up long before I'd finished with it. I made the pilgrimage up to Tiree with some fellow Yorkshire men in the 90s, however, being part of the teaching profession I'm blessed with many holidays, but sadly they don't fall in the particular week when this hallowed competition takes place. One day, maybe... The Rhosneigr event is a completely different story.

From my fuzzy recollections (probably highly inaccurate) the first opportunity for competing in a wave sailing competition that I took was in Rhosneigr. It was so far in the mists of time I can't even remember if Bucky was installed as the proud owner of the shop, which he renamed Funsport or if it was before this great era? Regardless of this haziness, some form of modest competition was organised at Rhosneigr, although it was not an official BWA event and many local sailors didn't enter.

On my side of the ladder I was pitted against my French friend Alex Tritten. Across the other side was Graham 'Gump' Turner (he can't remember either!), the current owner of Juice Boardsports who, deservedly, in everyone's minds was the favourite to win the contest. The result was a relaxing sunny afternoon sail with friends I windsurfed with all of the time. I managed to pip Alex with a forward and a few wiggles on a small wave to take our side of the ladder. Then I was rescued by the wind promptly switching off which somehow left me in joint first with 'Gump'. The final was never sailed but we had a great evening in the Sandy Mount Club, and for me at least, it was a memorable experience.

Thereby followed years and years of mostly enjoyable free-sailing until a conversation at Fraisthorpe Beach on a Juice demo weekend, with none other than Dave White, rekindled the spark and set me on a journey into the Masters fleet.

Dave's enthusiasm and advice proved simple, but highly effective: "Don't go to win, just go and have fun!" Three years later I am still loving every moment. It's given me a focus that I previously lacked, enabled me to meet and re-acquaint myself with some very cool people and taken me to locations and great conditions that I would otherwise never have laid eyes upon. Both the competition and the surrounding days have delivered magic, all time sessions. We've had setbacks, failures and conditions that lack oomph to inspire, but ultimately we've had a great deal of fun and it's enabled me to progress in ways I'd previously not thought possible.

So the 2017 BWA Masters Rhosneigr event had 15 entrants and marked the third season of my personal involvement, though in previous years work commitments and injury only allowed me to do a couple of Rhosneigr events and three Cornwall comps. 2017 was on! Big Salty, the official BWA weather sponsor, was giving a promising forecast and excitement was high. I had a smile to myself as I noted just how many K4 Fins adorned the Masters fleet boards in the morning sunlight. (Steve Thorp's obviously doing something right!).

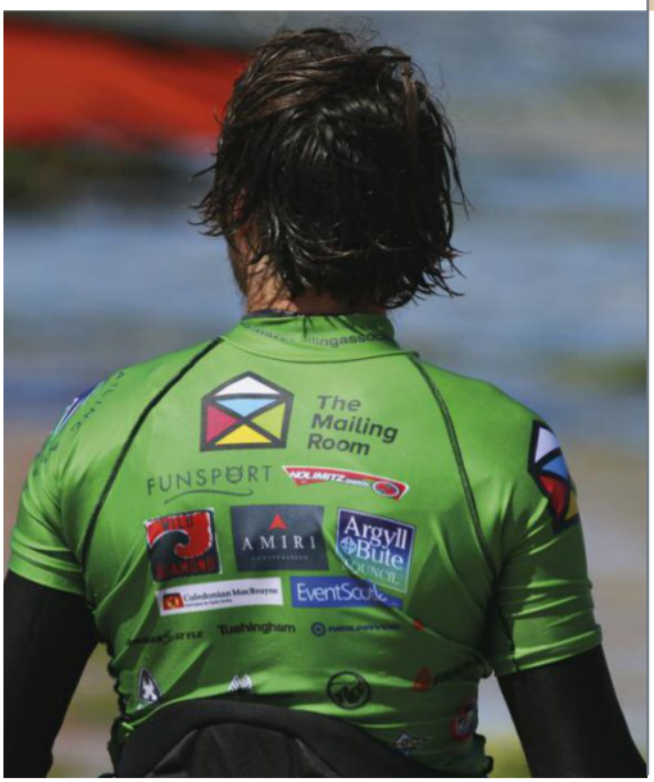
I love a good collaboration so I decided to get quotes from some of my fellow 'Masters' to get a wider impression of what they took away from the event.

Steve Laddiman (1st)
"Despite challenging conditions, the sun was shining and the turnout was superb. Was super fun on and off the water with folk from up and down the country. Big props to the organisers, all the BWA team, Funsport and all the sponsors. See you all again in Cornwall later in the year!"

Kyle McGinn (2nd)
"Loved the event, competition pushes your windsurfing in fun ways plus it was a lot of fun catching up with an amazing crowd of people. The organisation and commitment that goes into these BWA events is impressive!"

Alan Cockerill (4th)
"Great event, well organised and very friendly atmosphere, well worth the effort to get involved!"

Ivan Causer (=7th)
"Fantastic weekend at Rhossi. Warm, sunny, windy and wavey with great craic on and off the water. Bombed straight out when we eventually got to compete but great fun with Mark taking the heat win from eventual champ Laddiman! Nice work dude! You learn loads watching how the best sailors do things and it really forces you to up your game and try new stuff. Can't wait till next year, hopefully in the conditions they got today and with Laddiman having buggered off to the pro fleet!"

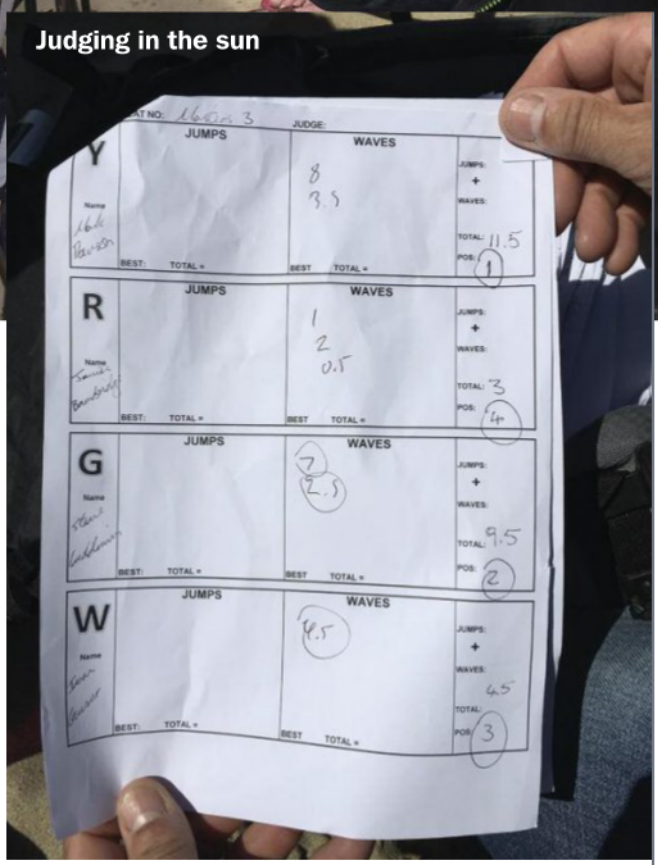


Steve 'Trees' Laddiman

John McLawrence (= 7th)
"Well organised event at Rhosneigr this year, good turn out. Conditions on the day didn't really suit me, would have been great if the wind was stronger as I am more of a high wind sailor. Hoping for better conditions in Tiree."

Carl Tomlnson (=9th – missed heat!)
"After years of putting it off I decided to enter spontaneously the day before the event whilst travelling back from America with work and seeing the Rhosneigr event discussed in Facebook posts. I never realised just how much fun it would be competing in the BWA. It doesn't matter what level you are and even if the conditions aren't that good, it's a celebration of UK windsurfing and the perfect opportunity for good craic! As they say 'hindsight is a wonderful thing' but I wish I'd have entered years ago!"

Judging in the sun



it's a celebration of UK windsurfing and the perfect opportunity for good craic! As they say 'hindsight is a wonderful thing' but I wish I'd have entered years ago!"

Geoff Hautman (=13th)

"The strength of the Masters fleet is amazing, and it's growing. It has been the largest fleet at some events, and some of the Masters might win the Ams! Soon we might need a Pro Masters fleet, as Phil and Ben are getting close, and I certainly don't want to sail against them!"

Jamie Bambridge (=13th)

"I had a great weekend and really enjoyed my first Masters BWA event. The atmosphere was fantastic and everyone is so nice and helpful I kept forgetting it was a competition. It made me really think about my sailing and what I was going to put into my 10 minute heat, especially in the light wind. Will definitely be competing again. Managed to get out on Monday morning for a couple of hours, it was classic Rhosneigr. I was stacked on a 3.7m. Unfortunately had to cut it short when I damaged the tendons in my wrist. Looking forward to next time!"

Nigel Treacy, BWA Founder and Chairman

"The BWA Masters fleet remains the friendliest of fleets and those passing the 40 year mark are welcomed into the gang with open arms. Off the water this warm and friendly bunch of competitors share wave sailing knowledge, experiences, stories, jokes, lies and beers. However, once the heat starts, they fight fiercely for hard earned points. Rhosneigr 2017 was no exception. The first round of the tour brought out all the big guns such as Craig Hamilton, Graham Pettit, Geoff Hautman, Steve 'Trees' Laddiman, Kyle McGinn, Mark Dowson and last years Vice Champion, John McLawrence. Missing was last year's Masters Champion, Justin Dennington who is recovering from an injury.

"A nail-biting single elimination was completed on day one with local boy Steve 'Trees' Laddiman taking the honours. Kyle McGinn put in his usual solid performance taking second and Graham Pettit a well earned third. New/old boy Alan Cockrill took an impressive fourth at his first event.

"So the scene is well set for the rest of the tour and with three events yet to go there is still time for McLawrence, Dowson, Hamilton and Hautman to regain points. All eyes will be on Tiree where we may also see the return of 2017 Champion, Justin Dennington.

"Personally I had a great time, I tried my best, worked towards improving upon previous performances and was delighted with my first heat result, where (probably because of downright tricky conditions) I managed to come out on top against some quality sailors. I couldn't quite believe it! Unfortunately I was unable to repeat it in the second heat, which despite being very close I was out sailed by Kyle. It was really useful seeing the heat sheets and it was glorious to sit and watch the judging process in the bright sunlight."

So there you have it the Rhosneigr BWA 2017 Masters fleet proved to be very enjoyable for me and my peers, and I would like to thank the whole BWA team: Bucky at Funsport, all the Judges and all round good egg Head Judge Mark Hosegood whose professional and cool attitude made it even more amazing. Oh I'd better not forget Gump at Juice Boardsports for all the windsurfing gear!

Mark Dowson's Rhossy 2017 Masters memories vid: https://youtu.be/B9bsqviuAnw

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POPPIN' THE CORK

WORDS: CORKY KIRKHAM
PICS: GILBERT BARA

CORKY KIRKHAM HAS BEEN A LONGSTANDING AND RECOGNISABLE FACE ON THE UK WINDSURFING SCENE SINCE THE 90S. RESIDING IN THE CANARY ISLANDS, FUERTEVENTURA, CORKY HAS HAD HIS FAIR SHARE OF WINDSURFING SUCCESS AS WELL AS HOSTING MANY TOP LEVEL RIDERS, AND EVERYDAY SAILORS, AT HIS INFAMOUS CORKY'S BAR. With a new set of sponsors in the mix and a renewed focus on his sailing we caught up with Corky for a natter.

It all started for me on a holiday in Spain. My dad bought a second hand board to the beach. He gave up soon after and I got left with it. So after I sat watching everyone else sailing I decided to give it a go. I was up and running straight away. That was in the sea so when I got back to Newcastle I started taking my kit to the local lake. My mum used to drop me off for whole day, glad get rid me for a while, and I'd sail until she came back to pick me up.

I soon got better and I wanted to get back into sea sailing. Stronger winds also became my thing. Gales were what I looked out for as there's no better feeling than jumping.

In Fuerte I also do a lot of stand up paddle boarding – it's ideal when there's no wind. Great for cardio and another sport where I get to enjoy the ocean. I also go jogging to stay fit for those big winds ahead.

I've been windsurfing for more than 25 years. I love it and still get a buzz from seeing the trees blowing. When it's like that I just have to go. It's why I moved to Fuerteventura years ago. I wanted to concentrate on windsurfing – my motivation, as anyone knows, has always been super high. With sun and wind in the mix, like you get here, it's through the roof.

Sponsorship

Being sponsored these days is a lot more technical and precise in what companies expect of you. In the old days you could receive pretty much loan boards/sails to compete if you were good enough. There was no social media – FB, Instagram and such like. It was just you being at the beach, sailing and pushing your supporters by having it on the water.

Nowadays it's all about contracts: what/where you go, which events you attend and basically it being a job. My new role is as international team rider for NoveNove, plus being their brand agent in the UK and here on Fuerteventura. My other deals are with Challenger Sails from Italy. We're hoping to get these into the UK soon. Pawn Future Kings Clothing, Gecko Headgear, Hey Dude Shoes, K4 Fins, Secreto del Sur Ice cream and Coffee Shop and East Coast Airbrush all help me out as well.

I showcase the kit, compete at certain events and be on call, along with Luke Wilkes. He sorts out sales visits for me. But also my job is to really spread the name, highlight the logo and band the word about on social media. This is how the world works now. To get sales and have potential punters see what the gear can do it's all about action shots!

Fuerte

I discovered 'the Rock' when I was still sailing in Newcastle. I'd follow Gary Gibson and see his pics of insane conditions. I knew Fuerte was rough and crazy and wanted to go! All my mates went to Matagorda in Lanza, but I only ever dreamed of Fuerte. The crystal waters and pure white Sahara sandy beaches definitely drove me to come here and live.

Moving back to the UK isn't an option. I own my own home here and am very happy being 10 yards from Rocky Point. I do head back to visit though. For all my sponsors I need to be there sometimes for promo purposes.

Corky's Bar

Corky's Bar was infamous – a real colourful period of my life (and no doubt any others who visited). It was insane! I had it for 15 years but as town got busier, and more bars opened up, each one had less people in. Where I used to get 80 each night, the number started dropping. When numbers dipped pretty low it was slowly dawning on me that time had come to sell up and sail even more!

I've had plenty of 'names' in Corky's Bar. And I've made some great friends through it that still come and visit. Timo Mullen stays with me when he flies over. Andy King, John Skye, Andy Funnell (RIP) and numerous others have spent memorable summers sailing Punta Blanca and other spots.

One particular story I do recall was Bjorn Dunkerbeck one night stood on the pool table, shirt off, drinking Vodka Red Bulls until 4am. Bjorn being tall got caught by my ceiling fan and slashed his forehead! There are countless other stories, most of which I can't describe here…

Now I'm free sailing more, we've been producing drone videos of Fuerteventura breaks. Sponsors have been very keen on this alongside other social media stuff. My first drone safari video got over 6,000 views so it's working quite nicely.

Has windsurfing changed? I'd say it definitely dropped off when kiting came on the scene. Only diehard windsurfers wouldn't look at a kite. But then so many of my friends tried it and came back to windsurfing, eventually. It's having a resurgence definitely – all over from the UK to the Canaries. There are increasing

"Moving back to the UK isn't an option. I own my own home here and am very happy being 10 yards from Rocky Point."

numbers of sailors on the water again. You can see it every time you head to the beach.

Sometimes you have to take a step back look at where you live and how good it is. I've always wanted to live here. It's pretty amazing as I did it all on my own. There are other spots I fancy hitting up. Mauritius and Cape Verde to name two. I've promised Josh Angulo I will go over see his bar/restaurant set up. But ultimately I'm super happy on Fuerte.

The wipeout side of my sailing has always been a thing. Crashes and bail outs are the only way you learn. You have to go through countless moves before you nail them. My trademark Eaglewings are still sick to do. I'm also into Crazy Petes at the mo – hence the bails! It's so cool. There's always a new jump to try.

I always stretch in the morning and must have coffee. I don't eat in the morning – not when going on a boom session at least. Post-sesh I stretch again and maybe have a late night jog. Bruises though are all part of the game,

My plans this year are to push NoveNove. We're looking for only four shops to stock sups and windsurf boards. I'm then competing in Tiree again and will have more drone edits dropping soon.

Windsurfing has given me the best life ever so I intend to do it as long as I can full power. Injuries are never far away but you can always come back stronger.

Shout outs...

Final shout to all mates in the UK. To Luke Wilkes for getting me to comps, Timo Mullen for always making me laugh, my son's Josh in Argentina and Jason here on Fuerteventura and my mum, dad and sister in Scotland. Also to my sponsors who without I'd still only have a skateboard!

Team rider agent, Corky Kirkham, corkysbar@hotmail.com, UK agent, Luke Wilkes, lukesamuel9@aol.com

My plans this year are to push NoveNove. We're looking for only four shops to stock sups and windsurf boards.

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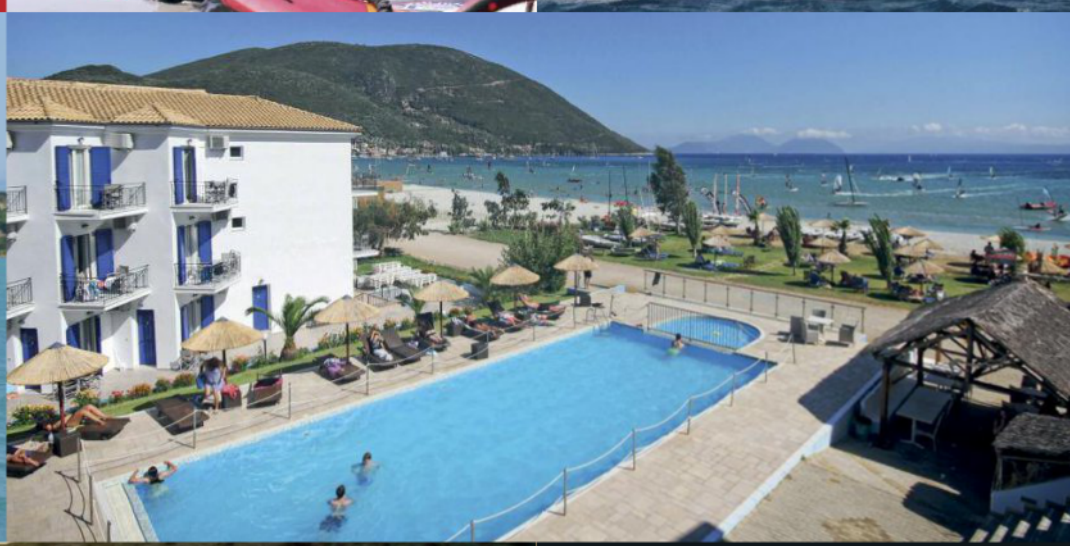

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COLWYN BAY '05 CORE

SWA HITS NORTH WALES

WORDS: SWA (STUDENT WINDSURFING ASSOCIATION)
PICS: SWA, CLAIRE GLASBY

SITUATED HALFWAY ALONG THE PROMINENT NORTH COAST OF WALES, COLWYN BAY NESTLES PEACEFULLY INTO ITS GENTLE SEASIDE PROFILE. ITS BEAUTY IS DIFFICULT TO DISPUTE AS THE RUGGED WELSH HILLS ROLL DROWSILY DOWN TO MEET THE SHIMMERING IRISH SEA. THIS YEAR, FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME, THIS QUIET SEASIDE TOWN PLAYED HOST TO THE MOST IMPORTANT WINDSURFING EVENT IN THE UNIVERSITY CALENDAR: THE BRITISH UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES SPORT (BUCS) NATIONAL WINDSURFING CHAMPIONSHIPS.

Taking place over the last weekend of April (29th-30th) the event saw almost 100 student competitors take to the water across five divisions to compete it out for the coveted BUCS points and medals. Ever changing conditions and unpredictable wind patterns set the backdrop for a spectacular weekend of competition, a fantastic event debut into the Student Windsurfing Association's (SWA) annual event series.

BUCS competitions are held for 48 different sports between 170 universities, and are recognised nationwide as the student showcase of sporting excellence. Windsurfing is no different, with the coveted BUCS points divided between the top two race divisions. Firstly the recognition for individual excellence is measured in the solo advanced racing a total of 30 points are allocated for the top four finishers in both male and female rider category. Competitors must sail around a course for multiple heats - the highest positioned racer over all races takes the top spot. With only one discarded result allowed per racer and almost 50 entrants it's a very tight competition with very little margin for error.

A further 62 BUCS points are reserved for the top eight teams in the advanced team racing. This takes on the thrilling format of a three-person relay race, where each rider must complete one lap of the race course and pass the kit to the next rider through a beached transition. Individual speed and close coordination are key to transitions smoothly between riders and break into away into the top spot. Qualifying heats and a final race separate out the competitors until one team reigns victorious. In addition, new and developing windsurfers battle out in beginner and intermediate divisions respectively, whilst a freestyle showdown allowed those with other talents on the water to shine.

WINDuk SURFING © Clai

SWA NATIONAL WINDSURFING CHAMPS

BUCS Advanced Division

With no hesitations preventing a snappy Saturday start, the advanced racing kicked off the weekend's proceedings. Competitors were permitted to use any sail 7.5m or below, and any board - leading to a range of strategies from old school raceboards to modern freeride boards. Moderate winds with sparse gusts set for an exhausted pumping battle between the windsurfing elites. Through five gruelling heats racers were tasked to traverse a half kilometre beam reach course stretching out into the Bay. Amongst the main competitors were the faces of the GB race squad, as well as a couple of regulars on the student windsurf race series.

Over the first couple of heats, the top three contenders established themselves as the ones to beat. No surprise, these were Matt Barton, Rob York and James Hatcher of the GB race squad. With perfect racing starts, smooth gybes and refined pumping, these three broke away from the pack. Forming the next cluster were the SWA favourites - Twins Ben and Laura Bulson, Thomas Sambrook and Leo Calnan. With the multiple race format it wasn't all plain sailing though, with Rob York suffering an unfortunate kit malfunction in race three seeing him and his Severne sail drop to the middle of the pack. Heat four saw increasing winds, and many of the sailors suddenly becoming overpowered with their sail selection. This new dynamic was no challenge for the top sailors who used the gusts to their advantage and powered through to consolidate their podium positions. After five thrilling heats, with each competitor dropping their worst finish the results finished as follows:

1. Matt Barton (Exeter)	**1. Laura Bulson (Sheffield)**
2. James Hatcher (Exeter)	**2. Julia Stankiewicz (Manchester)**
3. Ben Bulson (Bristol)	**3. Jane Paddison (Liverpool)**

We caught up with the winner Matt Barton to get his thoughts on his performance, *"It was nice to (race) in quite different ways to what we normally do, everybody here has been so supportive and happy, in all it's been had a really great atmosphere. We don't get to race with this number of people normally, which was very cool, it's been really well run event and we were on and off the water in good time. I and Exeter University will be very happy with the BUCS points I've earnt today."*

James Hatcher and Rob York were also travelling to the European competitions straight after the event, to compete with quite a different fleet of racers. James Hatcher: *"This type of event really keeps you on your toes, I got caught out on my first race and had a*

horrendous start with malfunctioning kit, but pulled it back in the later races." Rob York: *"It's really cool to see everyone from the SWA taking part out on the water, you don't often get to see this many people racing, it's a credit to the SWA to sustain people's interest in windsurfing, I've seen some people here that I raced with six years ago and it's fantastic to see them back out on the water racing."*

BUCS Intermediate Division

Inspired by their advanced counterparts, many students took to the water to test out their skills in the beginner and advanced divisions. In the intermediates, fan favourite Luke Storry showed why he has been doing so well on the series this year, finishing in first position in all races to claim his position as top intermediate sailor. In the girls, it was Emma Seaton who came out on top, securing a second first place lady for Sheffield University, a windsurfing club which only began this year!

1. Luke Storry (Bristol)	**1. Emma Seaton (Sheffield)**
2. Benjamin Essigman (Sheffield)	**2. Maddy Green (Cambridge)**
3. Seb Olingschlaeger (UWE)	**3. Eliza Tilbury (Birmingham)**

BUCS Beginner Division

The beginner racing was conducted a few 100 metres back from the seafront on a small inland lake, which provided flat waters and sheltered shores. The competition was still fierce and very little room was spared for the competitors to edge beyond their rivals. Top riders from Bristol and Sheffield dominated the podium positions again but all round it was brilliant to see such interest and dedication to racing at such an early stage.

1. Brendan Chung (Sheffield)	**1. Joanna Philips (Bristol)**
2. Jimmy Nguyen (UWE)	**2. Alice Hunt (Nottingham)**
3. Christopher Outlaw (Bristol)	**3. Helen Anderson (Sheffield)**

Team Racing

Widely regarded as the main event of the weekend, eight universities fought over the title of fastest University in the BUCS team race competition. With two heats, and the top two from each going through, it was all to race for. The wind had stepped up to a steady 20 knots, meaning some teams opted for smaller sails than the permitted 7.5m, whilst all teams used the one-design RRD Firerace, kindly supplied by

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division sponsors Boardwise. The first heat saw Southampton and Bristol consolidate their position as favourites, whilst Liverpool and Cambridge struggled to cope with the chop. In the second heat, Birmingham came out on top, with Swansea closely behind. Sheffield and Nottingham unfortunately fell foul to the tricky conditions.

Heading into the final and it was a clean slate, with all to sail for. Southampton's team, comprising Oliver Bull, Leo Calnan and Charlie Wilson showed why they have a reputation for dominance as each sailor put in a solid leg, with slick changeovers, meaning they were never really challenged for the title. Coming home in second were Bristol, who also all sailed valiantly but didn't have the skill or experience of the Southampton team. The closest showdown was for the final podium place, with Birmingham and Swansea battling for the valuable BUCS points. Swansea were in the lead going into the final leg, but expert pumping from Birmingham first year Tom Sambrook propelled them into third place.

1. Southampton

2. Bristol

3. Birmingham

Freestyle

For those with a penchant for bending themselves inside out, the weekend of competition was rounded off with a freestyle competition. Spectators lined the beach to gaze in awe at the moves being attempted – borderline planning winds meaning many spectacular crashes were seen. Forward loops, vulcans and 360s galore were attempted, landed and crashed as the competitors attempted to woo both the judges and crowd. Southampton really showed their dominance in this division, with all three podium places being taken by their sailors.

1. Oliver Bull (Southampton)

2. Charlie Wilson (Southampton)

3. Leo Calnan (Southampton)

The key partner and facilitator of the weekend was Colwyn Bay Watersports a Community Interest Company and Welsh RYA Training Centre. Providing all safety cover and race officials, they were instrumental in the events running. We caught up with founder and director Taffy Osborne for his take on this year's BUCS event. *"The Student Windsurfing Nationals have been an incredibly inclusive and colourful event to host here at Colwyn bay. We were apprehensive that as it's the first year here there was always room for something to go wrong. But in reality we couldn't be happier with how it has all turned out – we've had some good wind, which can always make or break an event and the SWA committee have been superb to work with. Windsurfing is one of our core activities that we provide at Colwyn Bay and we are delighted to have been able to support young persons to get out on the water and take part in this incredible sport. We hope this is just the first of many events to come here at Colwyn Bay."*

The BUCS nationals draw an end to the student windsurfing event series 2016/17, it has certainly remained a core highlight of the year and one that leaves great memories and high expectations for the new year to come.

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DOWN 'THE PARK' WITH SIMON PETTIFER

WORDS: SIMON PETTIFER
PICS: ANDY STALLMAN, KEVIN GREENSLADE

SIMON PETTIFER IS A LONG TIME UK SLALOM COMPETITOR WHO'S AS PASSIONATE AS EVER ABOUT WINDSURFING. WITH LONG LOCKS FLOWING IN THE BREEZE, SIMON EPITOMISES THE 'REAL WORLD RACER' THAT MANY CAN ASSOCIATE WITH. HOLDING DOWN A DAY JOB, YET STILL MANAGING TO SQUEEZE IN VALUED TRAINING TIME, AND PUSH FOR PODIUM FINISHES, WE CAUGHT UP WITH SI P TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT GOES ON 'DOWN THE PARK'.

I was super lucky with my windsurf beginnings. Dad was in the army so when we moved to Cyprus windsurfing began around aged ten. Pretty much every day after school was how things went (which finished at 1pm – awesome!). So, down to the Dhekelia Watersports Club, sail all day every day – rinse and repeat for three years. By the time we left Cyprus I was fairly competent. We then moved to Gibraltar and even though I had to go to boarding school in the holidays I got plenty of high wind action across the Straits in Tarifa.

Total contentment

Windsurfing is welcome relief from work, haha! I've just been sailing today for the first time in four weeks due to a foot injury – a dislocated big toe. Two and a half hours on the water was amazing. I was in the middle of Poole Harbour grinning like a kid. The sun was out, it was warm and some good friends were with me – what's not to love? The feeling after a good session on the water never changes: total contentment, super chilled and happy. According to the wife I'm much easier going after a sail. (I think we can all relate – ed).

Slalom is what I do. I guess I dabble in speed as well. I love doing Weymouth Speed Week – it's great when the wind blows. A whole seven days of charging down the speed course is cracking. It's been a long time – years in fact – since I have ventured out in waves. I can bust a forward and find my way around but with it currently being so tough trying to keep up with the youngsters of slalom this is where my priorities lie. I don't have time for anything but slalom training at the mo. The fact I don't have any wave gear is also an issue. Though any day now I'm sure Jim Brookes-Dowsett or Nik Baker are going to send me some… They are both such nice guys and super supportive. I can't thank them enough.

My favourite place to windsurf in the UK is Portland. It never let's you down, works in most directions, is mostly flat water, but with the option of popping outside the harbour wall into Weymouth Bay. The place I sail most, however, is Hamworthy Park, Poole.

I like to think I'm pretty good at gybing but in a race it can go so wrong so quickly with 8-10 people all wanting the same piece of water

Spectacular views, works in every direction (except NE – I hate NE winds!) and I love it. It's ten minutes from home so I can go there after work. There are about 150 buoys already laid ready for gybe practise. Also there's the Hamworthy Hero's: a highly tuned group of windsurfing athletes ready to race at a moment's notice. We have some quick sailors usually in attendance so it's great for tuning up.

At the moment I'm mostly focusing on trying not to damage myself after what seems like an onslaught of annoying injuries. But as a rule I find I just can't get enough gybe practise. It's really hard to copy what happens in a race. I like to think I'm pretty good at gybing but in a race it can go so wrong so quickly with 8-10 people all wanting the same piece of water. It's good to be as on form as you can be. The other thing I focus on is trying to go faster than anyone else – same as all the other slalom sailors reading this. Sometimes a couple of us bang out an hour of figure of eight slalom and how could I forget the winter training camps at the OTC? These are great for honing you're skills and staying sharp during the off season.

Hamworthy Hero's

I have some of the best slalom sailors in the country to tune up with. Kev Greenslade, Simon Cofield and Scotty Stallman to name a few. Then there's the Hamworthy Hero's: Nigel Spriggs, Garry Connell and Yan Vasseur. These guys are down 'the park' most nights, so I nearly always have someone to sail with – it's great!

When he's in the country Ross Williams also trains with us in Weymouth. He's no slouch round a buoy that's for sure! Kevin and I have assisted him in testing F-Hot fins for Steve Cook the last couple of years. Portland Harbour is a great place for that.

I would like to do some international comps but that's all on hold for the time being as Herbie my dog and best friend is not well

The aim for 2017 is to podium and win a couple of finals along the way. This is going to be achieved by drinking a horrible green power thing every morning (consisting of broccoli, spinach, ginger, apple and seeds) then sailing my arse off whenever there's a puff of wind. Fingers crossed…

Bol, Croatia

I would like to do some international comps but that's all on hold for the time being as Herbie my dog and best friend is not well. I'm not leaving the country for any reason for the time being. But I'd like to do some of the IFCA slalom events again in the future – maybe a trip back to Bol, Croatia, which would be cool. It's an amazing place and I can't recommend it enough. Also I quite fancy a pop at the Dunkerbeck Speed Challenge in Fuerte, which seems quite a chilled out event.

Competitive windsurfing isn't hard as such. You do end up having to make yourself go for a sail more I guess to stay sharp. If there's an event coming up and there's been no wind for a while you suddenly find yourself stood on a big board with a 9.0m up, pumping your arse off whilst telling yourself you will get planning soon, haha! Apart from that it's a blast. It's not like I'm a professional so although results are important I'm not relying upon them for an income.

Training in winter can be cold and limited by daylight, but it's oh so good in autumn, summer and spring. If there's one thing that'd help it's not having a job that knackers you're back!

Support for me comes from a few people. Firstly we have Jim Brooks-Dowsett from Puravida Board Riders in Wales. He sorted me out when I got back into racing. He also helps with my deal through Fanatic, North and ION. The man himself Nik Baker provides boards, sails and wetsuits. Also he's really helpful and always happy to give advice and good ideas. Then there's Steve Cook at F-Hot – he's the man that provides the world's best fins IMO. Sam Latham at South East Signage also helps out. Any type of sticker making or designing, he's the man. Sam produces my awesome flaming sail numbers.

In return for their support I basically have to go to all the UKWA slalom events and a couple of demo events throughout the year, like NWF. (Sorry Allan couldn't make it to this one!). Also there's social media. I'm sure all my non-windsurfing friends are pretty peed off with seeing my windsurfing photos all the time, but that's what sponsors want – as much coverage as possible.

If you're looking at getting into comps then practice, practice and practice some more. That's it! Watch movies, note how the pros do things and then time on the water.

Full time carpenter

I'm a carpenter full time. I build houses around the Poole area. It's a job and it pays the bills. It occasionally allows for quick sojourns to the beach, but I'm not one for letting people down at work. If the forecast is really good, and the Hamworthy Hero's are all out playing, then I can sometimes leave early. It only takes 10 minutes to get to the beach so it's not like I need all day.

I'm going to get stick for this from the boys but my North Power XT extensions are my fave pieces of kit. I've not hurt my back downhauling since I got them. And no wet bum from sitting on moist grass. And to top it adjusting my downhaul in the water is unbelievably easy.

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Meggie Kraft profile

WORDS: MEGGIE KRAFT
PICS: ANDY STALLMAN, DAVE WHITE, IAN KRAFT

KRAFT...YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE NAME WITHIN UK WINDSURFING CIRCLES. BUT IT'S NOT JUST DAD (IAN 'KRAFTY' KRAFT IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING) WHO'S HANDY WITH A BOARD AND RIG. Daughter Meggie is also pretty swift round a race course and loves nothing better than a full power blast. Meg now works at Buzz as a Windsurfing Instructor and loves teaching people how to windsurf. WSUK caught up with Meg for a gas.

Tell us about your windsurf beginnings. How did you get into the sport and what did you like about it?
Before I participated in the sport I had been to many events, national and international with my Dad. So, I guess I had been around the scene for a long time before I became a part of it. From watching I thought it was cool and it was something different to all the standard hobbies (for girls) out there. With that in mind (and some encouragement from my Dad) I had my first ever taster session aged nine.

And now? What keeps you hooked?
Eight years on and I'm still windsurfing. The thing that keeps me hooked is the fact that every session is different. This could be anything from the kit I am using, the conditions, the location or the people I am on the water with. All these factors are different every time meaning I never get bored. I also enjoy the fact that every time I go on the water I can see an improvement in the way I windsurf.

Where did you learn? Is it somewhere you still sail?
I learnt at Spray Watersports Centre, Eastbourne. This is now called Buzz Active and has grown across two sites. I haven't had much of a chance to windsurf there lately, however, when I am in the area it is still somewhere I like to ride.

What are your favourite conditions?
My favourite conditions are 18-25 knots on flat water. This is because I can work on conditioning my speed and work on my gybes. In the winter storms, I also enjoy taking wave kit out and try some bump and jump stuff.

And location to sail?
For flat water I enjoy sailing at Weymouth because there is a lot of room inside the harbour walls to work on speed. For bump and jump West Wittering is a great location because at low tide it has The Trench. I can dip in and out of the waves as I see fit. Eastbourne also works well for bump and jump if the conditions suit.

Talk us through your kit – what are you using?
For slalom sailing I have Tabou and Vandal kit. The boards I have are as follows: 2016 Tabou Speedster 85 (128 litres), the 2017 Tabou Speedster 75 (118 litres), the 2016 Tabou Rocket wide (108 litres) and the 2017 Tabou Rocket wide (100l). The sails I use are Vandal Missions (twin cam) in sizes 6.8m, 7.8m and 8.8m. I found that after some careful kit tuning I have some very quick combinations of kit that are durable and look great out on the water.

For bump and Jump I have a range of kit. The boards I have are: 2017 Tabou 3S (96 litres), the 2017 Tabou Pocket Wave (86 litres) and the 2009 Tabou DaCurve (79 litres). The sails I use for bump and jump are the Vandal Riots. I have these in sizes 3.6m, 4.2m, 4.7m, 5.3m and 5.8m. I also have a Vandal Enemy 3.3m for when it is really windy. This huge variety allows me to get out regardless of the conditions, it means I can practice my Bump and Jump skills and get used to being in the waves.

Generally I have all bases covered for kit meaning I can get out whenever I have the time.

Do you compete? If so, what draws you to comps?
I have competed since I was nine years old. I started out in the RYA racing programme called 'Team 15'. This allowed me to race with other people of a similar age and ability over a series of four regional events. If we as a team, The Spray Sprites, won three or more of these events we were given the honour of attending the National Windsurfing Championships, previously known as the Champions Cup.

As a team we were incredibly successful and I attended the National Championships in 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. I joined the RYA East/South East Techno Zone Squad in 2013 and trained with them for three years. Whilst with this squad I attended two Eric Twiname Championships (ET's). In 2016 at the ET's I placed 5th and won the title of first girl in the 7.8m Techno Class, helping my team win the event overall. In summer 2016 I also competed in the Techno 293 European Championships in Sopot, Poland. This was a great experience that offered me the chance to race on an international level. As of 2017 I am competing in the British Slalom Association events. This is a new discipline for me. I am excited to try racing on new kit and with new people. I am a competitive person generally, so I enjoy racing and I enjoy the social side of the events, for example meeting and getting to know new people.

Any plans to take this further – PWA or Olympics for instance?
I would like to place well this year within the British Slalom Association amateur fleet. My future plans are to inspire and encourage new people into the sport by being a windsurfing instructor. My first season of instructing will be at Buzz Active, which is the place where it all began for me.

Got any wind heroes? Who do you look up to?
At the National Watersports Festival 2012 I was partnered with Nik Baker for the Turbo 15 floodlit night race. We worked together well and we managed to win the race and a big trophy. Because windsurfing is a sport with so many different disciplines it is hard to pin point one role model. All the pros at the top of their discipline are looked up to by so many people and it's great to see such a wide range of people always willing to help others up their game.

How is it being a female sailor? Do you feel you have to prove yourself to the boys?
Being a female sailor is good because it allows you to work hard to beat the boys. It's always nice to beat them in a race. Also, if you train with boys it means you can beat the rest of the women in the fleet because most of the time they will not race as hard as the boys do. Conditioning yourself to be able to match or almost match the speed of the boys means you are not going to struggle when it comes to racing against anyone. Everyone knows that racing is for fun, however. it is always good to beat the boys every now and again.

Do you think it's harder windsurfing as a girl?
In some respects yes, however, generally it is an advantage. Most of the time the female competitors weigh less than the male competitors meaning we can get planing in lighter wind and on smaller kit. This means that in racing we are able to get away from the start line or hit the gybe mark quicker.

What do you think could be done to make the sport easier for ladies?
The development of kit has helped because it has made things easier. This is everything from smaller volume boards, smaller and lighter sails and well-fitting wetsuits to keep us warm. The continued development of this kit will help women into the sport.

How would you go about convincing your girly mates to get involved?
I would ensure that the conditions are just right and then take them for a taster session. As I am a qualified Start Windsurfing Instructor I would offer to teach them so they had a familiar face showing them the basics. I would ensure the session has an emphasis on fun so that they would want to give it another go in the future.

Do you do anything else outdoorsy?
Currently I study Outdoor Adventure Education at Plumpton College. This means I am frequently kayaking, canoeing, climbing, navigating, mountain biking and dinghy sailing. I am very busy and it all involves being outdoors. I also had two expeditions to North Wales at the start of 2017. These included climbing Mount Snowdon (the biggest mountain in Wales) in the dark. We reached the top just in time for sunrise. We have also climbed Yr Aran, the mountain opposite Snowdon. During these expeditions we got the chance to experience some white water canoeing on the River Dee and some extreme MTB at the centre, Coed Y Brenin. This summer I will also be embarking on an unplugged sailing expedition to Lake Runn, Sweden. This is a seven day trip where we will be sailing dinghies and wild camping. We will have no luxuries and no technology – phones and watches will be completely unplugged. As you can see I am quite an outdoorsy person!

How does the above compliment your windsurfing?
I sail a dinghy every Wednesday, with a group from college. Having previous windsurfing experience has helped with my sailing because I understand the theory. Overall this has made me realise the differences between sailing and windsurfing and this has motivated me to work harder in both sports.

What about windsurfing at large. Do you think it's got the appeal of other disciplines like kitesurfing and SUP for instance?
I think in general the sport has a good appeal. This is thanks to social media, the press, the events put on and the people who are keeping the sport alive. I think youngsters in windsurfing also help because they are good at promoting how much fun it can be and the different pathways it can open up.

How difficult is it to windsurf as a teenager? Do you rely heavily on parents?
Unfortunately being a windsurfer as a teenager does have its limitations. This is because we do not have the ability to take ourselves to events or training, meaning we have to rely on our parents to put the time aside to take us places. Once I can drive I will have a lot more freedom and I will not have to rely on my parents. This is good because it means I can go training or just windsurfing whenever it is windy.

If you could be anywhere in the world windsurfing right now where it be and why?
There are so many places that are good for windsurfing, and I'm sure in the years to come I will get the opportunity to explore them. I would, however, like to visit Club Vass in Greece. This is because it is sunny and generally windy. There are also lots of people there who share the same passion for the sport, meaning I would get the chance to meet them.

Any final thoughts on windsurfing in general?
Windsurfing is fun. There are too many sports that are serious. Every session is different meaning it is always interesting and the people involved are friendly. All round it's sociable and offers you the opportunity to meet new people and travel the world. I would definitely recommend windsurfing to anyone who wants to have some fun out on the water in the summer months.

Shouts and thanks?
My windsurfing journey has been a long one so far, with hopefully plenty more to come. So firstly, I would like to thank my family, and in particular my parents, who have supported me since day one. Thank you for driving me to events and training at stupid hours in the morning, for supporting me financially with kit, for showing up at events and cheering me on, but most of all for the all-round support. I wouldn't be where I am today without my parents so I am incredibly grateful for everything they have done for me.

Secondly I would like to thank my sponsor. 4boards, https://4boards.co.uk have been supporting me with kit for the last three years. Without them I would not have all the equipment to get out on the water. I am very appreciative of all the support I have received from Bob and Stu. With additional thanks to Ross Williams for his support and encouragement as the Tabou and Vandal UK importer.

I am pleased to announce that I have a new sponsor for the 2017 season. The man who's father invented windsurfing, Guy Chilvers, is now enjoying a new lease of life in the renewable energy industry. His new company, Richmond Green Energy Limited, will be supporting me this season.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who has coached me throughout my time on the water. This includes everyone from Charlie Holman who delivered my first ever taster session at Spray Watersports, to Paul Sibley who has known me (and coached me for a few years) since I was two years old as he was competing in the UKWA series with my Dad. Also thanks to Sam Ross, Ben Lee, Ali Masters, Graham Colam and Lewis May who coached me whilst I was in the RYA Zone Squad. Huge thanks to everyone who has helped me out on and off the water, I just wanted to let you all know that it is hugely appreciated.

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LADIES WHO...

WINDSURFING AND THE FAIRER SEX

WORDS: DANIELLE LUCAS (GET WINDSURFING)
PICS: GET WINDSURFING

AS A WINDSURF COACH I TOO AM ALWAYS LEARNING AND ONE OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS IS HOW IMPORTANT WINDSURFING WITH OTHER GIRLS CAN BE. IT IS ALWAYS GREAT TO SEE NEW RIDERS AT THE BEACH AND WE ALL NEED TO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE AS MANY FEMALES AS POSSIBLE TO GET INVOLVED, TO STAY INVOLVED AND TO BRING OTHERS INTO THE SPORT. There is so much lightweight, stable windsurfing equipment now available for all levels of windsurfers. Match that with really well developed modern coaching methods and you see how now is definitely the time to get even more girls on the water.

And for the men out there reading this, we love your assistance, reassurance and support too – we need it! However if you are struggling to help out your wives, girlfriends, friends and family, encouragement to seek out a session or a lesson with some other ladies could be just what they need.

As much as I would like to say it isn't, windsurfing is still male dominated. When I was learning my first years in the sport were always surrounded by the boys. Often I was the only girl out and I really didn't know any different. In the last couple of years I have had more and more ladies coming to me for coaching and have had many more on the beach with me on a regular basis. I have become much more aware of the benefits of sailing with other girls, of all ages, levels and experiences.

At the end of May this year I had the pleasure of leading the Stithians Lake Diva Weekend. This was the third year I have coached it and we had the biggest group yet – 18 ladies. Ten were beginners, with little or no experience, and they enjoyed fantastic lessons with Lark, Stithians Chief Instructor, as well as mother and daughter assistant instructors, Molly and Sarah. The other eight were intermediate to advanced and joined me for some really exciting sessions. We were also very lucky to have team GBR sailor Izzy Hamilton on hand for a day who helped out and inspired everyone – including myself

Everyone had a great weekend. I have never seen so much enthusiasm and love for windsurfing from so many ladies all in one place. It was amazing to see girls not only pushing themselves on the water, taking on our advice and really improving their skills, but it was also fantastic to see how they helped and encouraged each other – giving feedback, tips and sharing what worked for them, stories of achievement, tales of funny crashes, achy muscles and finally making plans together for future sessions was great to hear.

Don't get me wrong I really enjoy sailing with everyone – male or female – and as I already said, often I am the only girl on the water which doesn't bother me at all. But coaching other ladies and sailing with girl friends on my time off has made me realise how for some people (myself included) having other ladies around has a big impact.

There are obviously differences between girls on the water and the guys. First there is the physical aspect. Often we don't have as much muscle or weight behind us and so we have to really nail technique to succeed. This means it can take ladies longer to reach milestones. But once we do it often our technique is better as we use less brute force.

The physical side of windsurfing can be off-putting but it really shouldn't be. Windsurfing is not an easy sport but with the right equipment and conditions, as well as guidance and encouragement, it is something we can all succeed in.

It's not only the physical things though which set genders apart. A huge issue for women can be confidence. Whether it's wearing a wetsuit, rigging a sail alone, getting out at new locations or in more challenging conditions, trying bigger sails or smaller boards women tend to have less confidence, especially as we get older. Self-preservation comes into play and perhaps over-thinking gets in the way – a natural thing. Sailing and sharing the experience and emotions can really help us to work through and get past these psychological barriers, whatever your level.

When I first really experienced the benefits of sailing with ladies was in Fuerteventura during a PWA freestyle event. I found myself sailing with the best in the world and it was incredible. They were amazing to watch. They also inspired me so much as they were landing tricks I could only dream of and had only ever seen the boys perform. But what was special was how much they encouraged me and also offered advice to help

Windsurfing is not an easy sport but with the right equipment and conditions, as well as guidance and encouragement, it is something we can all succeed in.

me get the best from my heats and my sailing in general. Sailing in Fuerteventura is incredibly challenging, and when I had a bad day and was losing my confidence, they were there offering hugs, pointing out the good bits and cheering me on to get back out there. They reminded me it was increasing experience and persevering which led them to the top.

Now I seek out girls to sail with wherever possible. It's great to windsurf with those who are better. Watching their technique helps me to visualise doing the moves.This winter I spent a lot of time sailing with Oda Johannes – world number two in freestyle. Watching her was inspirational, but also she was so happy to sail with me give advice to help improve my skills. That said, I love sailing with girls of all levels. A lot are less experienced than me and helping them to enjoy the sport is so rewarding. I love seeing them come off the water having had an amazing session, or to encourage them back out if it hasn't gone so well, suggesting ways to enjoy it more. Windsurfing wasn't natural to me and it has taken hours of hard work to learn all I have. Sometimes others don't realise this and often I share memories of how difficult I found it.

So ladies, when you are next thinking about getting on the water see if you can head out with other girls. Look to them to inspire you, or to make you feel good about your own ability and how much you have already achieved. Use your experiences to help them get more from it too.

Guys, continue your awesome work helping them when needed, encouraging and inspiring them, but also help them to meet other girls because sometimes as wonderful as you boys are that might be the missing ingredient to really give them a boost.

Let's bring more women onto the water and enjoy those good feelings we all get from not just doing the sport, but for girls, sharing the experience with someone we can relate to. And for guys getting more beautiful ladies out there for you to sail with is always going to be a bonus…

For more from women windsurfers, private lessons and future Diva weekends with Danielle check out www.getwindsurfing.com

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Taking that step...

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PHOTOGRAPHER PROFILE

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AS MUCH AS WINDSURFING IS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS ON THE WATER THERE'S ALSO A WANT/NEED FOR DOCUMENTATION – AFTER ALL, WITHOUT THESE TYPES THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY VIDS, IMAGES OR INDEED MAGAZINES SUCH AS THE ONE YOU'RE READING NOW. A plethora of camera addicts exists who get all snap happy when the wind blows. We've already featured Joe Cockle (see issue two for profile) and now we're highlighting south coast based James Jagger. James recently went full time with his photography which prompted us to sit down with JJ for a natter.

I was always encouraged to use a camera on family holidays from an early age. The first time that stands out was on a ski trip to Austria when I captured an image of a paraglider silhouetted against the sun. I loved the way the shot showed the interaction between an adventure sport and the natural environment and from that point onwards I was hooked.

I've wanted to be a full-time freelance photographer for over 10 years but it's been a question of plugging away alongside a full-time teaching job until I was in a position to make it a reality. In the last 12 months, the photography has gone to another level which has meant I've been able to leave my job as a teacher and go full-time with the photography.

UK weather

I work for a company called 'Alamy Live News' who are the biggest image provider in the UK. I photograph anything to do with the UK weather, which fits in really well with windsurfing, and have to date had photos published in the Times, the Telegraph, the Express, the Mirror and the Sun. I also get commissioned to do various other shoots, including portrait shoots of the Archbishop of Canterbury, cup finals for the local football team, family portraiture and weddings. Being outdoors and capturing the elements however is definitely my favourite.

I was raised in a family who were 100% into watersports and if I didn't join in I would have been sat bored on the beach. I very quickly fell in love with windsurfing, waterskiing, surfing and more recently SUP.

West Wittering is a firm favourite as it's got the beautiful beach, and South Downs backdrop. It also gets a huge amount of visitors who regularly form part of the composition for my images. I also love South and West Wales as locations for photography, including Newgale and the Gower, as the scenery is just stunning and the windsurfing action can be amazing.

Originally, Ansel Adams was a photo hero of mine for his black and white photography

Outside the UK, Fuerteventura is right up there as one of my favourite photography locations with perfect beaches, crystal clear waters, wind and waves.

Originally, Ansel Adams was a photo hero of mine for his black and white photography, and more recently David Noten for his landscape images. In watersports, I love the work of Thorsten Indra who has a real talent for watersports photography.

In terms of people on the water James Dinsmore is always great to work with. I went to school with him and he's a Hayling Island local so is more often than not out training off the seafront. Tez P has provided some great looping sequences recently. He really works the camera and isn't afraid to go for the big moves (thanks! - ed). I'd like to organise a shoot with Chris Audsley as I used to sail a lot with him and he's really talented.

Windsurfing is such a colourful and dynamic sport that it lends itself to being photographed. It's not just about the radical jumping/looping shots but also about capturing people having fun whatever their level. I've had images published of beginners/intermediates at

Esso Beach on Hayling, to jumping shots off Wittering. The key thing is flexibility and being available to photograph when conditions are firing.

I've done a bit of photography from boats but its super challenging when the wind is up as the boat gets thrown around a lot. I'd like to invest in a decent waterproof housing for my camera so that I can swim out and get right into the action. To date though, my shots have always been from land.

The beauty of photography is that you can always improve and shoot images from different angles and perspectives. I love capturing the moment. In watersports, that might be an off-the-lip, a looping sequence or showing the size of the conditions in relation to the natural surroundings. The key to action shots is to get up close with a long telephoto and having a camera that has a high frame rate.

When I used film, I shot using Minolta cameras and lenses. When I went digital in 2006 I couldn't afford to change the camera and lenses so went with Sony as they had bought out Minolta and I could carry on using my lenses. I've stuck with Sony ever since.

I shoot mainly with the Sony Alpha 99 mark 2 and Sony Alpha 77 mark 2 with a variety of Carl Zeiss lenses, from 24-70mm f2.8 to 70-300mm f5.6-6.3 and with my whopping Tamron 150-600mm lens a recent addition. I've also got a whole load of Minolta prime f1.7 to f2.8 lenses which are great for portraiture. The great thing about the Sony cameras is their frame rate which peaks at 12 frames per second which is perfect for photographing action sports and wildlife.

The key to action shots is to get up close with a long telephoto and having a camera that has a high frame rate

Stunning images

I've also had considerable success shooting with the Apple Iphone 7+ which has two fixed focal length lenses which produce stunning images.

The best camera is the one you have on you, be it a phone, a compact or a bridge camera. I travel with all of those and use my professional Sony cameras for the day-to-day work when image quality is paramount. The important thing is to get out there and find your own shooting style. I run photography tutorials and aim to help clients to improve the quality of their images no matter what their level.

Unfortunately I wouldn't be able to make a decent living at this point if I just took images of sailors but that may change as doors open. I've just covered the Virgin Kitesurfing Armada at Hayling Island and got some awesome shots of the kitesurfers. One of the images made it into the Sun newspaper so it made all the hard work worthwhile. Variety is the spice of life as they say and being able to cover a range of different watersports plus the weather photography is key at the moment.

Persistence is how to 'make it' at anything. Keep challenging yourself technically. Have the best kit you can afford. Have a decent agent. My agent at Alamy Live News, Jessica Mann, is amazing and will call me to discuss a shoot and the markets we're aiming for.

Greater variety

I think it would be great if windsurfing images weren't published from the same two or three photographers all the time but that brands were willing to give some of the freelances a shot. That would bring greater variety to the sport as each photographer has his or her own unique style. I'd love to be commissioned to do a photoshoot for one of the major brands, either at an event or ultimately in Maui!

I first windsurfed in 1985 on a lake in SW France but it wasn't until 1987 when I got really inspired seeing the images of Mark Angulo doing killer loops. I got my first shortboard soon after that and have never looked back. I currently use RRD boards and Ezzy sails, although I do have a magic Simmer Quantum quad which I love when conditions are firing.

I'd love to be commissioned to do a photoshoot for one of the major brands, either at an event or ultimately in Maui!

Being a windsurfer absolutely helps when taking pics of sailors. Being able to anticipate what a rider is about to do really helps, so a good knowledge of the sport is key to getting saleable shots. Being a windsurfer gives you a big advantage over the competition.

It definitely gets frustrating when you're constantly shooting. I missed some incredible conditions whilst shooting the Virgin Kitesurfing Armada and by the time I got on the water it was crowded and inconsistent. However, the great thing is that the newspapers need the images by lunchtime on the day which means the afternoon/evening is playtime! There's nothing quite like submitting images to my agent in the morning and then seeing them online within a couple of hours on the website of a national newspaper.

I set up my surf brand 'Six Foot & Pumpkin' 18 months ago with the aim of producing decent quality surf wear at an affordable price and manufactured solely in the UK. I come up with the ideas, my designer, Richard Johnston, does the design work and then I get the clothing produced in South Wales by a SUP friend, Neil Jackson, who has his own printing firm. Its early days but we currently sell a really cool range of hoodies, t-shirts and beanies which are proving really popular. The biggest challenge is manufacturing in the UK at a cost-effective price, as most of the big brands produce their clothing in the Far East where manufacturing costs are way cheaper.

Windsurfing is an amazing and dynamic sport which is so much fun to photograph and take part in. I love getting action shots which bring a smile to the faces of those I've been photographing. My thanks go to my partner, Millie, and my family for encouraging me to take the leap into full-time photography; to my agency Alamy Live News for the opportunities they have given me; and to all the windsurfers, SUPers, surfers and kitesurfers who by accident or design are the models for my photoshoots.

THE WARRIOR TACK

'COACH OF THE YEAR', SIMON BORNHOFT EXPLAINS WHY TACKING BECOMES FRUSTRATINGLY HARDER IN STRONGER WINDS OR A COMPLETE LOTTERY ON LOWER VOLUME BOARDS. BUT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, DEMONSTRATES HOW A WINDWISE 'WARRIOR' TACKING STYLE WILL NOT ONLY DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE YOUR TACKING SUCCESS RATE BUT ALSO MAXIMIZE YOUR SHORT BOARD CONTROL, UPHAULING, GYBING, WAVES AND ANY ADVANCED MOVES YOU'RE TRYING TO DEVELOP. TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE? WELL, WHETHER YOU'RE A TERRIBLE OR TERRIFIC TACKER, READ ON; SO MANY HAVE BEEN SURPRISED AT WHAT A DIFFERENCE THE 'SYSTEM' CAN MAKE

Who's this feature for what's it related to?

Beginner-improvers-intermediates: Uphauling,tacking, fast tacking, short board tacking, hovering, gybing and control.

Advanced-freewave-wave-freestyle-pro: All of the above, plus wave sailing, up and downwind 360s, helis and the majority of feasible and incomprehensible freestyle too.

Check out the SBW feature from our last issue to get more Warrior info…

The windsurfing pathway kicks off with beginners being taught the 'Classic Tack' where the sail is raked back and 'pulled' over the tail, causing the board to turn through the eye of the wind. The sailor 'nips round the mast' and twists the rig forward to sail away. Good Vision, neat footwork and constant Opposition is vital to maintain counter balance. We still sometimes teach the Classic Tack and, with lots of practice, it can become fast and achievable on small boards, provided you can master that horrible wobble and tendency to nose sink. Yet many sailors always struggle on smaller boards and decide to leave tacking to the nimble persistent types. Also, I'm now convinced a variation in tacking style will do wonders for your windsurfing. Tacking on even small vessels is possible for everyone, especially if you use our Warrior system

'Warrier' tack – why does it all go wrong?

Words: Simon Bornhoft
Pics: Windwise & PhotOcean

The issue that drives most people crazy is over sinking the nose and basically flying off the front. Even if you scramble it together and save a dismount, the skills you're using are really only applicable to 'saving a tack'. At Windwise, we seek to dramatically enhance your success rate and also impact your gybes, yes gybes, and many other transitions by the way you uphaul and tack!

Q. Who is the Warrior tack for?

A1. If you're struggling or have given up on tacking, our Warrior tack will get you there!

A2. If you can Classic tack on most boards, but aspire to more advanced skills, a Warrior tack eases you into wave riding, turns up and downwind 350s into 360s and without question, improves freestyle ambitions.

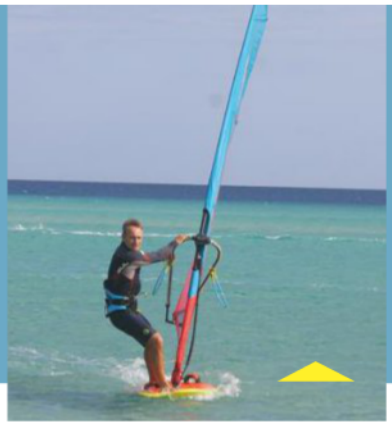
A TACK OFF

Classic Tack v Warrior Tack

Essentially, a 'board' and 'sail' tack only ONE way, and that is by 'pulling' or 'pushing' the clew over the tail. The action of the sail passing low over the tail is THE action that turns the board 'through the eye of the wind'. So, the question is not how does a board tack, it's how do WE tack and WHEN do we force the clew over the tail? Both tacks use the same Key Principles of Vision and Opposition and the same Touch Points for feet and hands and it is really important to state they are THE most important factors when tacking, which we've always taught.

But we basically have two choices as to the timing of when we make our move. Either, as in the Classic tack, we turn right through the eye of the wind, make our move and twist the rig forward to exit of the tack. Or in the Warrior tack, we make our move earlier just before we go through the eye of the wind, end up every so slightly 'front to sail' but keep the rig LOW AND BACK throughout the whole tack, then PUSH OUT on the clew hand to turn the board downwind. After trialling and testing it over and over with clients, I believe this Warrior tack is more applicable to most people who want to tack well and improve their overall sailing. It's a win-win in our book, hence going down this route very passionately in recent years.

Classic tack



Windwise Warrior tack

Short Board Warrior tack

Classic tack After sailing and looking upwind, the head turns and the clew is pulled over the tail. The board is turned right through the wind before moving the feet. Once on the new side and through the wind, the rig is twisted forward and sheeted in (rig forward – body back) to turn the board downwind and sail away. Great in light winds, on big boards, but becomes very difficult on lower volume sticks as we've just illustrated.

Windwise Warrior tack So, sail upwind but don't worry about trying to go 'right through the wind'. Before the board slows down completely or starts to get that horrible wobble in no man's land – make your move across to the other-side of the board. To create space on the new side and avoid being back-winded, force the mast/rig low, back and towards the tail. Then, and don't be tempted to bring the mast forward, keep it BACK, clew almost in the water, and adopt an exaggerated forward facing Warrior stance. Wait a second, before PUSHING the clew hand back, down and away from you to pass the clew over the tail. Think body forward – rig back the opposite to a Classic tack ending). You'll be far more balanced and find you can turn downwind by pushing away on the clew/rear hand rather than pulling the rig forward which is what normally results in walking the plank off the front.

Short Board Warrior tack Ramped up and planing, note how the clew is not pulled over the tail on entry. This keeps momentum, stability and actually makes it easier to move the sail. It is vital to resist pulling the mast forward mid tack and exit. Rake it back and low towards the tail as the body accentuates Warrior to push OUT on the rear hand, which actually raises the mast to sail away.

THE WARRIOR TACK

Principles, core skills and touch points

Land Warrior entry and set up

Vision: Very briefly look upwind, then as early as possible plant that chin on the REAR shoulder. Keep it there no matter what happens.

Opposition: Rig drops towards the tail, body steps well forward and as upright as possible.

Set Up: Head up, tight torso, front foot wrapped around mast base. Rear foot next to or just in front of rear straps, all toes pointing down the board.

Entry touch points check and say, "Hand, head, foot and 'feel' them."

1. **Front hand** touching boom clamp.
2. **Front foot** wraps right round and feels the mast base.
3. **Head-Chin** on rear shoulder.

WISEWORDS

Only use the Warrior stance for the exit, be as upright as possible going into the tack, it makes it easier to move the feet. Over weighting and anchoring on the rear foot going in makes it really hard to move your feet and leads to pushing hard off the back foot too much, which sends you running off the front with your rig.

Land Warrior mid tack shift & switch of feet

Vision: Turn your head FAST with chin planted on rear shoulder. It quickly becomes the front shoulder.

Opposition: Rig is forced across the board and, crucially, low and BACK towards the tail as the body moves across the board.

Shift and switch footwork: Head high, chin on the shoulder. As the head turns, the feet and hands move together. Switch your feet exactly, and create a new front hand on the boom close to the mast clamp. Push the mast the opposite way to the body with an extended front arm. If you look at, hug or pull the rig towards you at this point (very common), you'll be in!

Entry touch points check and say, "Hand, head, foot and 'feel' them."

1. **Front hand** transfers to new side touching the boom clamp.
2. **New front foot** replaces the old front foot wrapped around the mast base. Feel the new front foot pointing forward, ideally touching the mast base. The new back foot takes a massive step back down the board.
3. **Head-chin** has become the new front shoulder – look forward!

Land Warrior exit

Vision: The rear shoulder has become the front shoulder – keep looking up and forward!

Opposition: Keep the rig raked back over the tail as the body leans forward. Say, do, accentuate 'rig back-body forward'.

Warrior stance: Super wide foot spread, head high, hips low, looking and leaning over a heavily flexed knee.

Entry touch points check and say, "Hand, head, foot and 'feel' them."

1. **Front hand** touching or close to boom clamp.
2. **Front foot** feels the mast base on windward side.
3. **Head-chin** planted on front shoulder looking forward.

Counterintuitive moment and human nature

Throughout the tack it's human nature to look at and pull the rig forward or into the body. Resist, instead look forward and force, push the rig 'across your body' and 'back' towards the tail…Settle into Warrior quickly, wait… and then with the clew near the tail, **push OUT with rear hand.** It's this action that turns the board downwind and raises the rig.

WARRIOR TACK summary

If you've read this and thought, just keep chin on rear shoulder, keep the rig back a lot and lean forward in Warrior to exit, the answer is yes! Simple things done well = results!

At this point you have a choice?

At this critical moment mid tack, when tacking often goes wrong, you have a choice A or B?

Classic tack dismount

A. You may learn and we've taught many people to bring the rig forward and sink back low to turn down, but it so often ends up like this.

Warrior tack success

B. Think only of keeping the rig BACK and never bring it forward! Settle quickly into Warrior, look forward, wait… and then push out on your rear hand to elevate the mast and sheet in!

WINDWISE WARRIOR SKILLS TRAINING EXERCISES

To increase your success rate in tacking develop your Warrior look, lean, lever, with these exercises.

Warrior uphaul

I've always suggested we need to change the way beginners are taught to uphaul. Standing feet next to mast base, across the wind, rig elevated at 90 degrees to the board, might work on a lake – but it is NOT a 'secure position' in breeze, lower volume kit or a moving pitch! Promise me you'll use your Warrior stance and, just as importantly, turn the board more into wind, never, ever across the wind. You can also learn to hover in Warrior to catch waves or hold a position.

Nose sink training

Vision: Look forward and sail right into wind. Keep the rig away from you and angled towards the tail, edge the feet forward and sink! Quickly shift the feet back to save it.

Upwind downwinder tack ending

If you have done our upwind downwinder training you'll know that you can simulate the Warrior ending without actually tacking. Remember this simulates then ending NOT the beginning, where you need to be more upright.

1. Adopt a wide foot spread, look forward chin on shoulder.
2. Rake the sail back, drop into accentuated Warrior to turn into wind.
3. With hands right forward, imagine trying to get your harness hook in front of the mast, rake the rig back until the sail 'touches' your rear leg.
4. When contact is made, push out hard on the clew hand. You should feel the board turn downwind and the mast rise up into your hands to sail away.

Warrior laydown

Warrior NPCG & carve gybe

Warrior 360

More reasons to Warrior tack

We'd love to teach you Warrior tacks in person and then enhance your sailing, be it gybing, waves or freestyle, here's what you can do.

Gybing Warriors

Warrior is used in different levels and stages of gybing. Chin on shoulder, looking, leaning over a flexed knee, levering the rig back!

In laydowns the rig is raked fully back, the body leans forward in Warrior.

In both non-planing and planing gybes, crucially, before and during the foot change, the body is in Warrior, Looking (chin on shoulder), and Leaning into the turn over a flexed carving knee with the rig/mast angled-Levered the opposite way - clew hand pulled in tight!

Warrior wave

Freestyle and waves

So often in waves and all freestyle Warrior is pivotal in every sense.

Downwind 360 endings require an extreme Warrior 'tack ending'.

In waves, like this backside wave ride, Warrior is the way and it feels great!

Full on Warrior to carve that board into the wind!

The Warrior tack ending finishes a duck tack.

Warrior upwind 360

Warrior duck tack

WINDWISE WARRIOR SKILLS TRAINING EXERCISES

Here's why things go wrong...

Q. Why do I get back winded when I go 'round the mast'?

A. You're either not far enough upwind before you move, or most likely, you're just jumped to the downwind side and not forced the mast across the opposite way enough and back down towards the tail.

Q. Why can't I move my feet?

A. Body mechanics. If the front foot isn't wrapped right round the mast base and the rear foot isn't facing down the board, it's really hard to move the feet and the body has a tendency shoot off the front.

Q. Why do I fall onto the sail?

A. This is a good problem to have! But it's usually because you're looking at the sail. So yes, make sure you slide the sail low towards the tail, but disengage the body and Look & Lean forward in Warrior to take the weight off the rig.

Q. Why do I just get stuck in no man's land?

A. Usually means you went right through the wind before making your move or you're not getting the rig back enough and the body forward enough to have something to work with.

Q. I keep finding the board tips over to leeward.

A. Check your touch points. It means the new front foot is not touching the mast base on the new windward side. Always talk through the touch points 1-2-3.

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SIMON BORNHOFT WINDWISE

SIMON SAYS...

I don't expect you to go out and get this straight away. When we coach it takes a little while to get your head around it. But stick with it, progress has been fabulous and so many people have transformed their tacking and so much more. Don't get bogged down in detail, accentuate vision and opposition and use the touch points to self coach and help accentuate that Warrior stance to look, lean and lever!

We'd love the opportunity to teach you so you can experience what this has done for literally hundreds of windsurfers. Join us for a UK session or one of our incredible overseas experiences to find your inner Warrior!

SEND SIMON...

a question or suggestion to info@windwise.net! If Windwise answer it in Windsurfing UK, you'll get a fab Windwise Rash Vest!

Simon Bornhoft Windwise
'Coach of the Year'
2017 UK freeride and freewave courses still available
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Contact: info@windwise.net or www.windwise.net for courses, advice, experiences and holidays.

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SIMON BORNHOFT WINDWISE

www.windwise.net

When sailing across the wind - leaning the rig forwards and towards the wind will turn the board downwind

101: NON-PLANING STEERING

WORDS: SIMON WINKLEY
PHOTOS: MILES TAYLOR WWW.PROTOGRAPHYOFFICIAL.COM
ILLUSTRATIONS: PETE GALVIN

GETTING TO GRIPS WITH EFFECTIVE STEERING IS IMPORTANT AND IT IS LEARNED FROM THE EARLIEST STAGES. FROM BEGINNERS LEARNING TO AVOID AN OBSTRUCTION IN THE WATER TO THE MORE ADVANCED TECHNIQUE OF CARVING THE BOARD BY FOOT-STEERING IT'S AN INTEGRAL PART OF ANY SESSION AFLOAT. There are far too many variations of non-planing steering for the basic information here to apply perfectly to all situations. The aim then is to set the scene for steering by simply looking at what's going on when we are sailing slowly across the wind (on a beam reach) to make a board change direction.

Understanding this elementary level of board and rig control on a beam reach should form a framework of understanding to help with progression towards other more specific forms of steering including tacking and gybing. Throughout, whilst transitions will not be referred to, remember that steering is indeed an integral part of turning the board all the way around. Whilst this is done frequently at the end of short reaches I was once lucky enough to experience blasting for over 30 minutes on one tack from the Sinai deep into the Gulf of Suez. Yet even with that much water to spare I had to use steering eventually to turn around and head back before I ultimately became stranded on the remote shores of continental Africa.

A windsurfing rudder?

Let's start by 'putting the rudder on'. Imagine – if you will – an alternative world where windsurfing has developed along traditional sailing lines since the origin of the sport. Here windsurfers control power with their front hand holding the boom of a rotating sail whilst their back hand steers by gripping a long rod linked to a rudder bolted onto the tail. It's hard to imagine achieving very much on such a stand-up-sailing contraption! One of the main challenges with dinghy sailing is avoiding over-steering the rudder which makes the water flowing over it turbulent, causing it to act like a brake. Luckily, in the real world, we can steer a windsurfer without relying on a swinging chunk of wood/fibreglass/carbon at the back and this is what can make our sport so smooth at the lower end of the wind/skills spectrum and so radical at the top end.

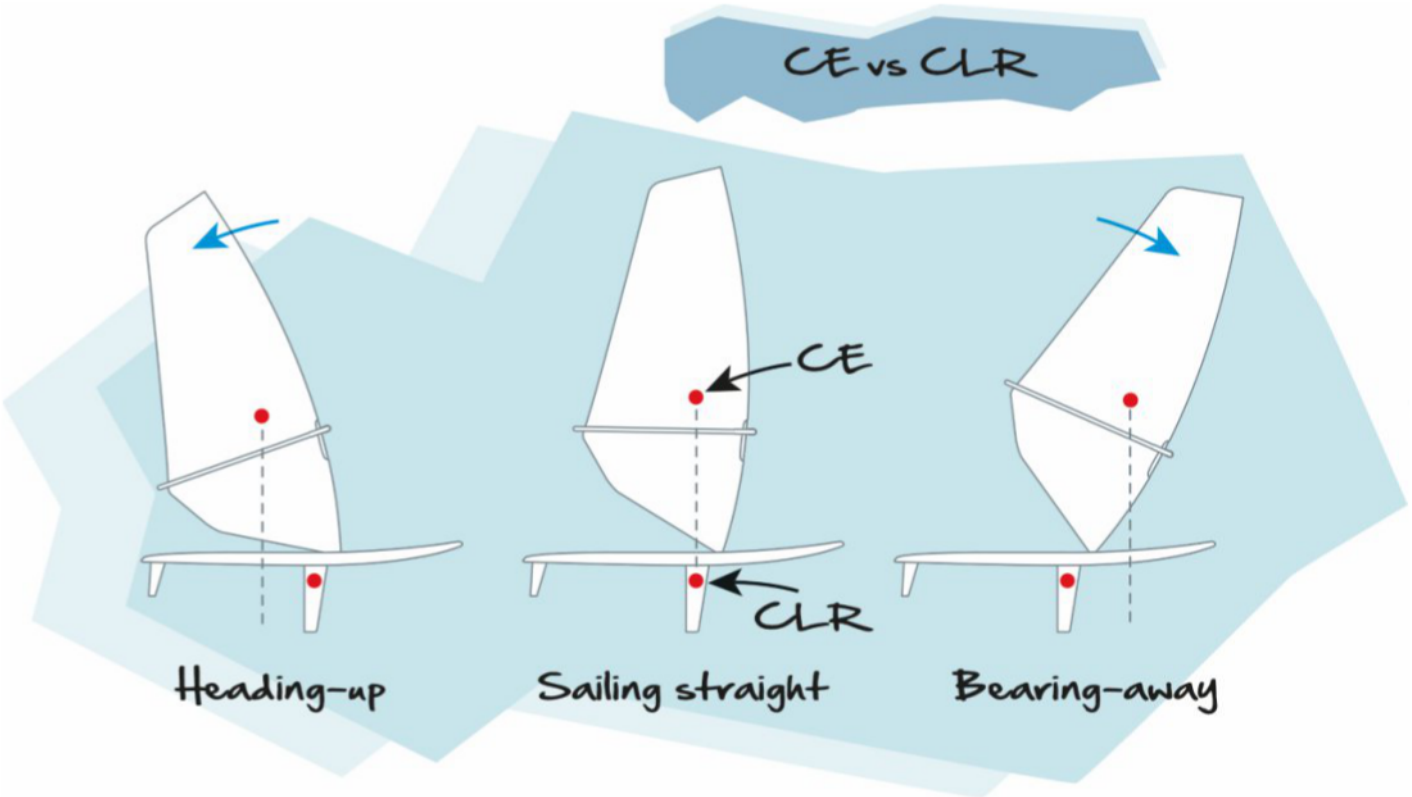
CE AND CLR

In order to change direction we lean the rig back to steer upwind and forwards to steer downwind. The lift created by the flow of air over the sail is best represented by a point in the middle of the sail above the boom and is called the centre of effort (CE).

With some of the lift from the sail pushing the board sideways the board opposes this sideways force along its length. This unwillingness of the board to slide laterally is known as its lateral resistance and the mid point of this is essentially in the middle of the board or on the daggerboard and is known as the centre of lateral resistance (CLR).

- When the CE is directly above the CLR then the board will travel forwards in a straight line as the equipment is in balance
- Leaning the rig backwards puts the CE behind the CLR and the board will turn upwind (heading up). The back of the board is pushed downwind as the board pivots in the middle
- Leaning the rig forwards puts the CE forwards of the CLR and the board turns downwind (bearing away). The front of the board is pushed downwind as the board pivots in the middle.

Further, in order to steer downwind effectively, we must lean the rig towards the wind as well as forwards. When I am running the early phases of instructor training I always ask the candidates why they think the rig needs to be leaned towards the wind as well as forwards yet I seldom procure the correct answer. So lets look more closely at this.

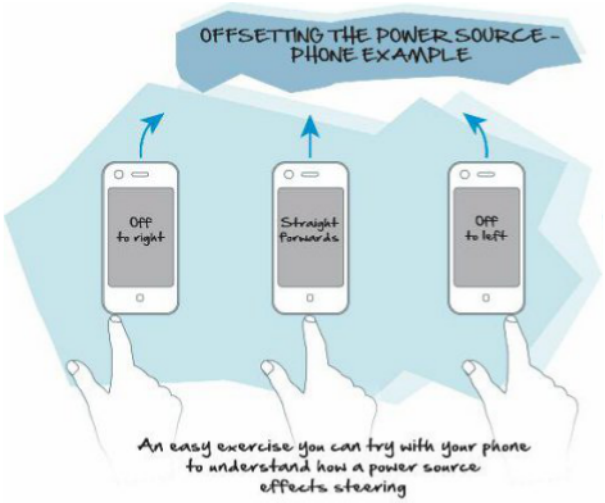


Positioning the Centre of Effort in front or behind the Centre of Lateral Resistance is the key to steering

OFFSETTING THE POWER SOURCE

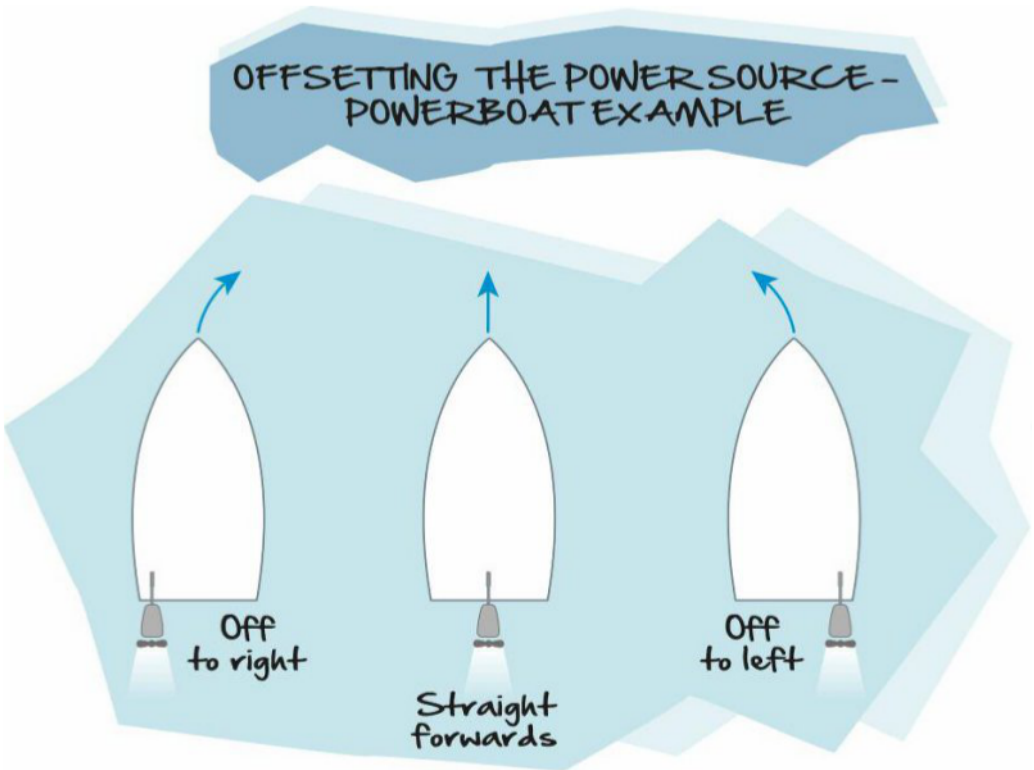
Imagine owning a small powerboat and storing the outboard engine off the boat when not in use. Imagine attaching the engine to the middle of the back of the boat and centralising the steering. When the boat is put in forward gear which way will it go? The answer, of course is forwards, in a straight line.

Now imagine that one day you ask a friend to attach the engine for you – a friend who does not quite know what to do – and let's say that they attach it securely to the back of the boat but, instead of putting it in the middle, they erroneously position it far over to the left hand side. Now which way will the boat go in forward gear? Even with the steering centralized the boat will turn right and we need to appreciate why. The force pushing the boat forwards is no longer acting on it centrally. With one side being pushed effectively and the other side experiencing drag then the boat will turn as it pivots around the side that is feeling neglected.



Try it. Take your phone and place it on a table directly in front of you with a short edge facing you. Place your index finger in the middle of the short edge and push the phone forwards. It should travel in a straight line away from you. This represents a balanced power source. Now try it again but this time place your finger on one end of the short side and push it forwards. The phone should turn smoothly to the opposite side as it moves forwards. This represents an offset power source.

So when we lean the rig forwards and towards the wind we throw the CE not only in front of the CLR but, crucially, over the windward side of the board. This provides more power to the windward side than the leeward side so the windward side is propelled forwards more effectively than the leeward side – and it is this that turns the board downwind.



Thinking about how the positioning of a powerboat engine could effect it's control helps to understand how a windsurfer steers

When we steer upwind the rig needs to be leaned back and away from the wind. As the sail is already positioned away from the wind however (over the downwind side in its natural sailing position) we only need to focus on leaning it back.

THE STEERING PLANE

So with steering in non-planing conditions across the wind there is a diagonal plane in which the rig moves as can be seen in the illustrated photo below.

Understanding this will help to steer smoothly and proficiently, especially when counterbalancing the pull of the sail with the body. Another critical reason that non-planing steering must be performed along the diagonal plane is that airflow over the sail is kept smooth (laminar) which transfers power into the turn. Over-sheeting the sail in order to lean the rig directly towards the nose or tail would mean trying to steer using turbulent airflow which would fail to turn the board effectively. So to get your beam reach non-planing steering just right, remember to only position the rig forwards and backwards along the diagonal plane and from here other more specific steering techniques will follow.

Changing direction at planing speed – the more dynamic version of steering – will be covered in the next article.

The diagonal plane for non-planing steering when sailing across the wind

Simon Winkley is a RYA Advanced Windsurfing Instructor and a RYA Windsurfing Trainer running instructor courses across the UK and overseas. He is supported by Starboard, Severne and Bray Lake Watersports and provides enjoyable, non-elite windsurfing coaching holidays through Ocean Elements in Vassiliki.
Facebook: @swwinds
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OCEAN ELEMENTS

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SEVERNE STARBOARD ABTA

SOME LIKE IT HOT

Making the most out of your windsurfing holiday abroad

WORDS AND PICS: RYA

GOOGLE 'WINDSURFING HOLIDAYS' AND THE CHOICES ARE ALMOST ENDLESS. However, with so many options available, how do you decide where and how to take your well-earned downtime?

Whether a seasoned sailor or newcomer to the sport, every year thousands of Brits opt for warmer climates. In fact, more than 65% of us take to overseas waters every year.

An overseas trip can be the perfect break to try windsurfing for the first time or put our already well-honed skills to the test in some of the world's most revered windsurfing locations, while sneaking in the odd cool beer or 'pina colada' while the sun is setting!

If you are a seasoned traveller, popular destinations such as Egypt, Brazil, Mauritius, South Africa, Maui and Australia, may already be on your hit list; or perhaps you already have the stamp in your passport.

But if going overseas is a new adventure, the opportunities fantastic, long haul isn't necessary and there is something for everyone. Yes – you can have that well deserved windsurfing indulgent holiday while your partner sips sangria on the beach or heads out for a mountain bike.

One of the great things about many windsurfing holidays is the centres offer a variety of activities as part of your package. So, you could do a windsurfing lesson in the morning and practice in the afternoon or try one of the other activities at the resort, whether that might be sailing, biking, SUPing, gym/fitness classes or swimming for example.

So how can you make sure you get the most fun out of your windsurfing holiday?
Amanda Van Santen, Chief Instructor, Dinghy and Windsurfing at the RYA, explains, *"People often prefer to learn and progress their skills in warmer waters overseas and look to continue when they are back home in the UK. Some go on a multi-sport activity holiday that offers windsurfing and discover they really enjoy the sport, while others will go overseas specifically to try windsurfing maybe even for the first time.*

"There are many holiday companies out there in a wide variety of locations who really understand what people are looking for from their windsurfing holiday and have developed packages to suit, from beginners

in calmer venues to adrenaline seekers in the windy conditions offered by Vassiliki, Kos and Rhodes.

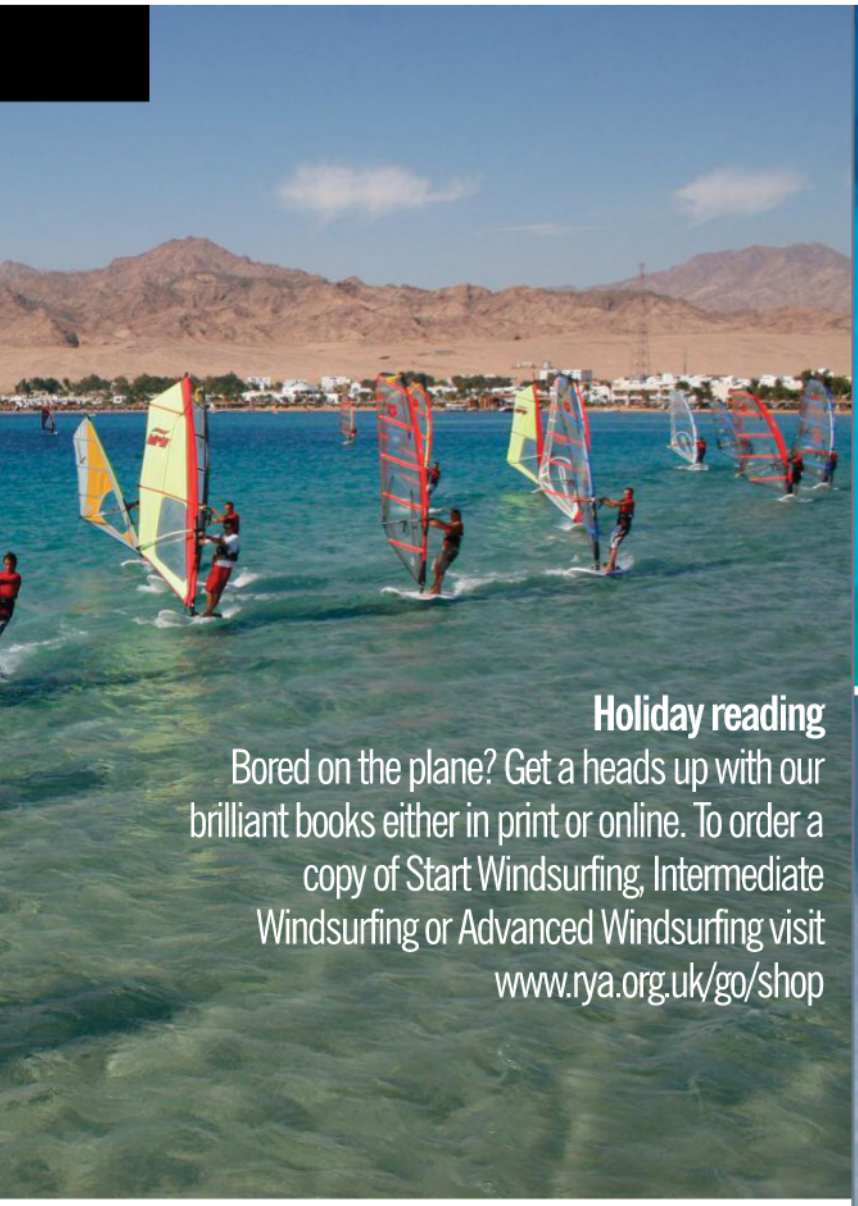
"The most important thing is really consider what you want from your holiday and speak to the booking team about their venues, making sure it is relevant to your skill level and experience before you book anything. A location may look awesome online but if you're a dedicated advanced sailor, who loves their bump and jump or freestyle, yet the venue is mainly flat water you won't have much fun!"

Windsurfing holidays are as brilliant for families and groups of friends as they are for individuals who want to hang out

Equally, if windsurfing is new territory, you might want some calmer water to start out in.

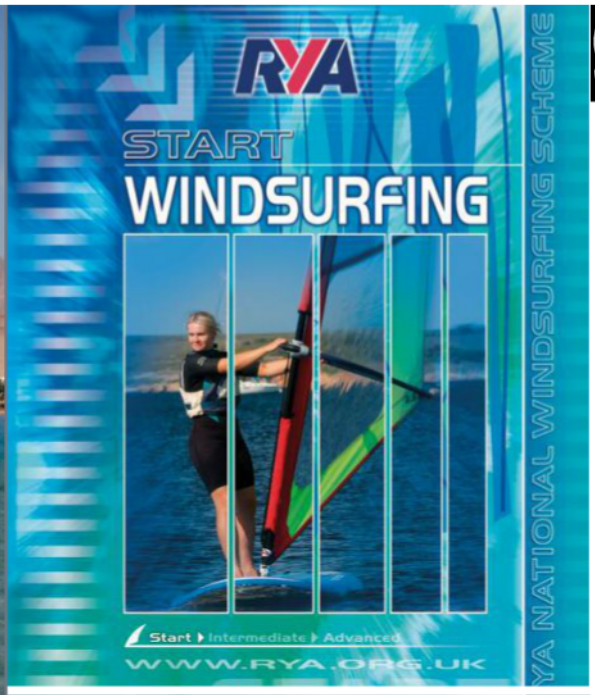
Equipment provided
As with all the companies we work with, equipment is provided – generally the latest boards and rigs, freshly unwrapped, providing you with the perfect chance to try lots of different kit, and enabling you to get out in all conditions, making the most of the time you have.

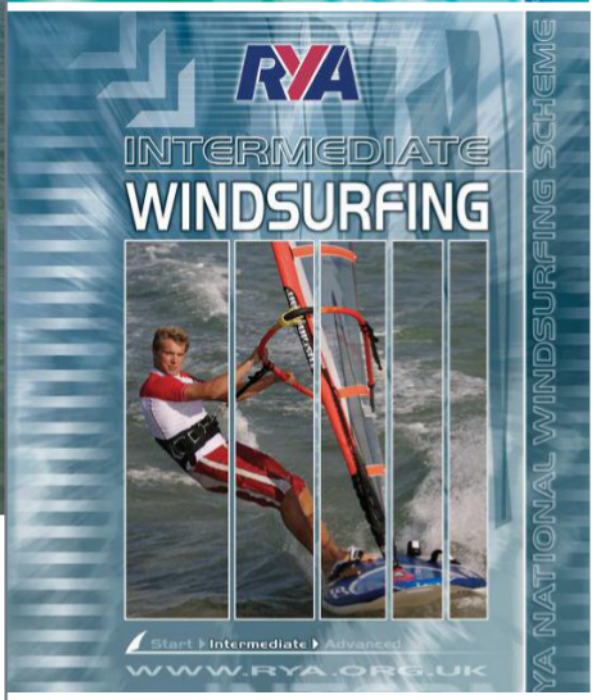
Most packages also include tuition, operators such as Neilson, Ocean Elements, Minorca Sailing and Mark Warner are all recognised by us at the RYA and recognised RYA Training Centres. This means you know you will get the same care, with the same high standards of safety and quality of tuition from RYA qualified instructors, as you would at an RYA Training Centre in the UK. The RYA Tick Mark logo will help you find them.

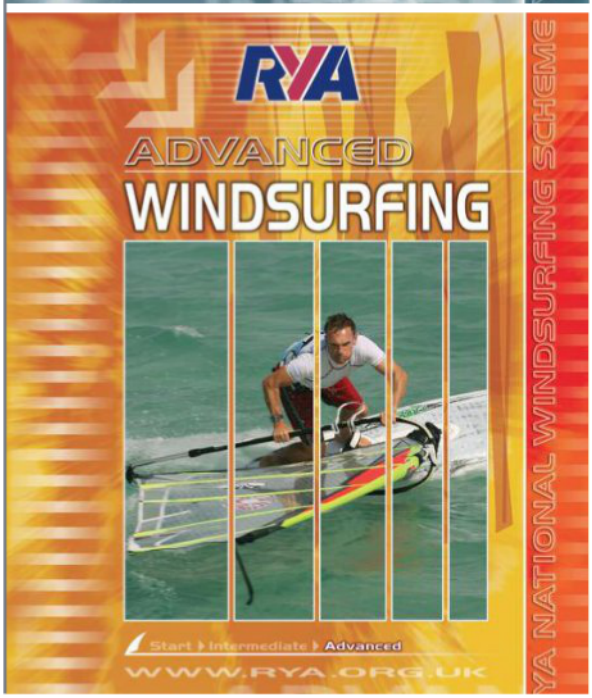


Holiday reading

Bored on the plane? Get a heads up with our brilliant books either in print or online. To order a copy of Start Windsurfing, Intermediate Windsurfing or Advanced Windsurfing visit www.rya.org.uk/go/shop







As with any holiday, whatever your budget you will find a centre and location to suit. And because windsurfing is as much as about lifestyle as it is the water, windsurfing holidays are as brilliant for families and groups of friends as they are for individuals who want to hang out and windsurf with like-minded people in a new country.

Tuition can reflect this and generally caters for both group, private or private lessons. Advanced clinics, with some of the biggest names in the sport, such as Simon Bornhoft, Sam Ross and Peter Hart to name just three, are also massively popular with intermediate and advanced sailors, with sessions focusing on developing higher end skills in the different disciplines, wind ranges and/or using new or different kit.

If you want to find a windsurfing RYA Training Centre overseas visit www.rya.org.uk/wheresmynearest

RYA members enjoy up to 10% off selected Neilson holidays. Find out more at www.rya.org.uk/go/Neilsonholidays

Original moves

RRD FireMove 120L E-Tech V3 2017

Info: www.robertoriccidesigns.com/year-22/windsurf/boards/firemove-ltd-wood-e-tech-v3/ Price: £1264

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK
PICS: WINDSURFING UK

RRD WERE ONE OF THE FIRST BRANDS TO INTRODUCE THE THINNED OUT FREERIDE BOARD CONCEPT. SHORT AND WIDE BOARDS (WIDESTYLE ANYONE?) AREN'T EXACTLY NEW BUT UTILISING THE CONCEPT AND TWEAKING TO ENHANCE THE BLASTING/EVERYMAN PLANING WINDSURFING EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN A WINNER.

The version we got our grubbies on is RRD's E-Tech FM. E-Tech is RRD's harder wearing technology that shakes off knocks and bumps. During testing we put the FireMove through its paces on location at Neilson's new Sardinia centre. All kit will see heavy use so it's nice to know the RRD is up to the task. The only thing we'd say is watch out for the 42cm fibreglass fin which does pick up nicks.

Thinking behind this style of board is riders can drop a size (in terms of dimensions) and still retain the properties of sailing a bigger board – but with enhanced manoeuvrability and a more comfortable riding sensation. RRD's 120L is more like a bigger board, in terms of its early planing.

At the merest sniff of a gust it does everything possible to get going. With proactive rider input light airs are no hurdle and you'll be shooting off at full power in no time. It's probably the earliest planing board of this style in its respective category we've tried.

We were simply blown away with the FireMove 120L's speed at full chat. Locking down the board increases efficiency, the FireMove racing and accelerating as each puff of wind hits. As riders force more into the 120L the more it responds. It's also a user friendly board for carving. The more you put in the more you get out.

Cranking into full rail gybes, downwind 360s or ducks reveals the manoeuvre orientated sled the FireMove is. We'd go so far as to say that anyone into old school freestyle would love the 120L even though it may be perceived as too big, which simply isn't the case.

And then there's the jumping element. Boosting off chop and wavelets is perfectly doable. OK, we'll admit there are more efficient machines for airtime shenanigans but you can't sniff at the FireMove 120L's way of doing things. Time it right and riders will be rewarded with a fulfilling floaty jump. Not high, but long, the board's fuller nose helping keep it airborne a fair distance down your run.

Conclusion

Every brand has a magic range of boards and this is one of RRD's. We remember testing an original RRD FireMove nearly ten years ago and being impressed. For 2017 the FireMove 120L has undergone a few subtle tweaks but ultimately remains an accessible and fun board to boot about on. Fast, smooth and delivering a carving experience that's hard to rival RRD's FireMove 120L E-Tech sled is bound to put a big beaming grin on your face.

Boosting parallels

Fanatic Freewave Stubby 105L 2017

Info: www.fanatic.com/product/freewave-stb/#series-1 Price: £1899

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK
NON-POV PICS: JAMES JAGGER PHOTOGRAPHY

FREESTYLE WAVE BOARDS: THE DO IT ALL, GO TO TOOLS FOR MOST WINDSURFERS LOOKING TO DABBLE WITH ALL KINDS OF SAILING. EXCEPT WE KNOW NO ONE SINGLE PIECE OF WINDSURFING EQUIPMENT CAN COVER ALL BASES, CAN IT?

Fanatic have made rapid progress with their stubby parallel rail concept FSW. With its duck's bill nose and double diamond tail the 105L is every bit the new school shape it professes to be.

Heaping volume into the middle of the board allows for a reduced/stepped rail element around the tail. The brand's TE lightweight construction, yet hard wearing layup was welcome. Fanatic's top drawer fixtures, fittings and livery are all suitably high end.

Capped off are thruster style fins from MFC. The middle skeg is a traditional Powerbox while side bites are Slot Box. It's also possible to blank off the two additional boxes when tuning as a single fin.

With full power blow in effect the FW 105L is up to speed rapido. It accelerates progressively and glides through lulls effortlessly. Back foot dominant riders may prefer the 105L in single fin mode whereas manoeuvre orientated sailors will be content with it as a 2+1 set up.

Most obvious was the cushioned ride across chop. For many large chunks of water will see a board of this size buffeted and bounced about. The parallel rails of the FW keep it slicing through flotsam.

Fanatic's 105L is fast and loose. Eyeing your ramp riders will be skyward in a flash – how high is then down to nerves. Once in the air there's a lot of control for a 105L board. Lighter riders would certainly be able to take those first airborne steps without being unceremoniously dunked.

If you've a penchant for loops the FSW will serve you well. Swing weight is low which improves control. We were able to mix our loops up between old and new school versions – endos and whips being all good.

If you're into sliding backwards you'll discover an accommodating platform with the FSW. Its nose helps composure through vulcans/spocks and such like. All but the highest level of freestyler will enjoy the 105L. And waves? Drop in, bottom turn and the sensation isn't unlike a full on wave board with a forgiving nature that allows riders to progress and improve.

Something we would point out is when gybing in heavy chop the FW Stubby needs a committed approach. The board's whole rail needs to be utilised. Turns off the tail aren't quite as efficient, although doable.

Conclusion

Fanatic's Freewave Stubby 105L comes damn close to being a one board does all for mid to heavy weight riders looking to make use of 6m weather down to around 4.7m. A good board for jumping, small to medium wave sailing, float and ride, sliding freestyle and generally booting about on flat or moderately choppy water.

Feathery versatility

Severne NCX 8m 2017

Info: www.severnesails.com/freeride-sails/severne-ncx-11 Price: £639

WORDS AND PICS: : WINDSURFING UK

BILLED AS NO CAM FREERACE SAILS SEVERNE'S NCX RANGE CONTINUES TO DRAW ADMIRERS FROM ALL CORNERS. LOOKING UNIQUE AND INSTANTLY IDENTIFIABLE THE NCX 8M IS A BOLD LOOKING TOOL FOR MAKING USE OF LIGHTER WINDS. ALTHOUGH WE USED BOTH COLOURWAYS OF THE 2017 SEVERNE NCX, THIS DIDN'T AFFECT THINGS AS AESTHETICS ARE JUST THAT – PERFORMANCE IS THE SAME REGARDLESS.

Severne describe the NCX as having a huge wind range and putting this to the test we concur. When low wind speeds hit, tune accordingly for early planing performance. As gusts increase change the sail's settings and voila, you have an accommodating wing that'll keep you on the water without having to change down.

8m sails are right on the cusp of what most recreational sailors deem to be big. The easy going nature of the NCX does, however, belie the fact there's a low end grunty beast just wanting to propel riders on to the plane. There's certainly no lack of bottom end oomph with windsurfers up and running in no time. Lighter sailors will revel in the fact that the experience is smooth, with no bad behaviourisms trying to pull bodies into awkward shapes.

As much as burning up straight line miles is the NCX 8m's forte it's a sail that really shines when banging out moves. OK, you're not in the realms of aerial contortionism, due to its size, but duck gybes, full power carves and downwind/upwind rotations are fulfilling and rewarding – surprising some may find for an 8m.

Through each manoeuvre the NCX keeps its composure and displays characteristics of a much smaller sail. With confidence there's absolutely no reason why riders couldn't learn various types of trickery on a sail this size. But likewise there's nothing wrong with simply burning and turning if this is more your thing.

Paired with a mid-sized board the NCX 8m is efficient and fine for a bit of slalom/drag racing should that take anyone's fancy. It holds its own against much more dedicated foils/set ups and therefore could be a good choice for any rider looking at dabbling with racing. Stick it on a bigger board and it's early planing a go-go. Both elements lend the NCX 8m versatility, ensuring it'll find favour with many.

Conclusion

Severne's NCX 8m is a highly desirable sail that straddles many different windsurfing areas. If early planing is your requirement then you'll be served well, whereas manoeuvre orientated riders will also find favour with it. In terms of handling it's a stand out for a big size, displaying many characteristics you'd find with smaller sails. Rigging is easy and the overall aesthetic/finish is high end as you'd expect. It's no wonder the NCX range has found favour with many and will no doubt continue to do so.

Abra cadabra

JP Australia Magic Ride 130L 2017

Info: http://jp-australia.com/2017/products/boards/magic-ride/ Price: FWS: £1549 PRO: £1699

WORDS AND PICS: : WINDSURFING UK

LOOKING STUNNING IN PRO CONSTRUCTION JP AUSTRALIA'S MAGIC RIDE RANGE IS NOW INTO ITS SECOND GENERATION. AS YOU'D EXPECT WITH A HIGH END BRAND LIKE JP ATTENTION TO DETAIL AND LEVEL OF FINISH IS EXEMPLARY.

A Ride 44cm fin protrudes from the tail which is made from G10 material and more than capable of taking knocks and scrapes. You'll have to be careful with the board's pro construction as it does pick up chips – precise handling is needed. We also need to mention the top notch footstraps of the Magic Ride. Stiff, yet cushioned, and with a superb fit blasting on the brine has never been so comfy.

Paired with Neil Pryde's Ryde 7.5m (see review elsewhere) the Magic Ride 130L is a proper low wind efficiency machine. A few pumps has the board fully planing and then it's away you go…

We set up the Magic Ride with inboard and outboard footstraps and found best results with the latter. The MR 130L likes to be locked down and driven hard – almost like a slalom board so outboard is best. This isn't to say performance is tricky to unlock yet a 'drive it like ya stole it' approach yields best results.

Top speed is admirable, when you stop and think this is a freeride board. On a few occasions we ended up drag racing mates on perceived faster craft. JP's Magic Ride 130L more than held its own.

As is widely promoted with this style of board gybes are fulfilling and super smooth. Biting hard the Magic Ride carves a progressive arc and keeps impeccable manners through the turn. So much so that those looking to plane out of exits for the first time may accomplish this whilst riding the MR.

If you're a progressing rider then the Magic Ride is a good tutor, forgiving clumsy footwork, and delivering windsurfers onto each new tack moisture free (on most occasions). And the board's width is good for learning those tacking ropes.

But it's not just carve gybes the JP accommodates. It's also a fun sled for some old school downwind 360s and small hops. We're certainly not suggesting anyone head out searching for the biggest ramps but the MR does cope with a certain amount of low level altitude fly boying (or girling).

Conclusion

JP's Magic Ride 130L is a highly desirable freeride machine that looks the business. Efficient to plane, in the lightest of winds (when paired with an appropriate sail) it delivers straight line speed that can rival supposed faster boards. With footstraps set outboard riders can lock the MR down, eking out every last bit of performance possible. Round corners it's a joy and even allows for some old school carving trickery and moderate air time. The Magic Ride 130L would have a home in most sailor quivers, ready and waiting for those summer/light wind blasting days.

Feel the power!

Neil Pryde Ryde 7.5m C3 2017

Info: http://www.neilpryde.com/sails/freeride/2017-ryde.html **Price:** £639

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK
PICS: WINDSURFING UK

NEIL PRYDE NEED NO INTRODUCTION. A STALWART BRAND ON THE WINDSURFING SCENE FOR YEARS, WITH MANY A WORLD CHAMPION (BJORN DUNKERBECK, ANTOINE ALBEAU ANYONE?) HAVING USED THE BRAND'S GEAR TO DEVASTATING EFFECT, NEIL PRYDE CONTINUE TO DELIVER PREMIUM QUALITY SAILS AND RIG COMPONENTS.

WSUK got its grubbies on the C3 version of NP's Ryde 7.5m, billed as the perfect partner for modern wide and thin freeride boards. Rigged on the superb Neil Pryde TPX 100 SDM mast setting the Ryde is easy enough to do.

The last few cm's of downhaul need a bit of gritted teeth to yank on but you can't deny what a beautifully looking rigged sail the Ryde actually is. Rounding off the Ryde 7.5m was paired with a carbon boom for maximum performance.

There's no denying NP's race pedigree has filtered down into the Ryde range. Get up and go early planing is efficient. At the merest hint of puff the sail billows and transfers every ounce of available energy into forward thrust. A few occasions we found wind speeds right at the bottom of what we considered enough but the Ryde would have us flying. We appreciate that foils are all the rage currently, for lower wind speeds, yet sailors looking for conventional windsurfing tools shouldn't discount an efficient engine such as this.

Pulling solidly NP's Ryde 7.5m allows sailors to really lock down the sail, at which point it becomes effortless to cruise and burn up the miles. Round corners the Ryde 7.5m displays positive drive. If technique isn't quite dialled in there's a chance of being unbalanced. With a commanding technique, however, the Ryde will slingshot sailors through each turn with plenty of speed on tap for planing exits.

Although many riders won't be looking to complete any radical kind of transition with this size of sail we couldn't resist chucking in a few duck gybes, downwind 360s and even the odd jump. As with standard gybes as long as riders commit fully there's no reason why completed manoeuvres won't be the order of the day.

Conclusion

Neil Pryde's Ryde 7.5m C3 freeride sail offers everyday blasters the chance to tap into race like performance whilst still retaining the characteristics needed for general freeride sailing. A grunty bottom end will have windsurfers up and running swiftly, with plenty of reason to use a sail like the Ryde for light air blasting. Round corners and through moves it's a rewarding foil with pedal to the mettle. Tune for a more forgiving feel, or if wind strengths increase, and then go give your mates on their slalom gear a run for their money! Neil Pryde's TPX 100 SDM mast is absolutely fantastic and helps make the Ryde 7.5m the polished high end product it is. Eye catching, distinct graphics finish off what's a very desirable burn and turn engine that'll suit drag racers down to the ground.

Pick 'n' mix

AHD Sealion Wings 7.6ft x 29" x 109L windSUP

Info: http://www.ahd-boards.com/models/sealion-wings-2/ Tel: 02380 840777 **Price:** £1,579 with twin fins and foil blanking plate, or £3,149 with AFS-1 full carbon wind foil/SUP foil. (Non-foiling Sealion's are £979 in wood/epoxy construction)

WORDS: WINDSURFING UK

WE WERE INTRIGUED BY AHD'S SEALION WINGS 7.6FT. TEAM RIDER/DESIGNER BRUNO ANDRE IS OFTEN SEEN PUTTING THIS STRAPLESS DESIGN THROUGH ITS PACES. THE WINGS IS A MULTI-DISCIPLINE TOOL THAT SPANS WAVE SAILING WINDSUP, SUP, SUP FOILING AND WIND FOILING. FOUR SPORTS IN ONE NIFTY TOY! FOR THIS TEST WE'RE FOCUSING ON THE SEALION'S STRAPLESS WAVE SAILING WINDSUP PROPERTIES.

Manufactured in full double skin carbon it's had a lot love poured into it. A pronounced swallow tail, compact length, colourful livery, twin 16cm fins and impressive foil box (complete with blanking section) is impressive. We're not sure why AHD's Sealion range isn't more popular in the UK – when conditions aren't firing it certainly provides a means to milk what juice is on offer.

We found the best method of carrying, in windSUP mode, is grab rig as normal then insert knuckles (the wrong way round) into the firm deck located handle. (The recommended method is the overhead 'Hawaiian carry' but isn't the easiest).

Although most windSUPs are water pushers the 7.6ft was surprisingly efficient to get up onto the plane. Riders will need to give it a nudge but planing speeds were easily achieved. Booting along sans footstraps may be an odd experience at first, especially if getting airborne. Following a short acclimatisation period it's very pleasant to be free of deck restrictions.

AHD's Wings 7.6ft has been manufactured with sail power in mind first and foremost (paddling second). As such it's nippy, adept and manoeuvrable. We wouldn't recommend tackling Jaws but most low wind UK set ups are game for some Sealion windSUP action.

Small puff is all you need to drop into a liquid wall. Hurtling down the face AHD's SL 7.6ft switches personality to an efficiently manoeuvrable platform.

There's a different technique for bottom turns, but riders will dial in quickly. Heading back up to curling lips is surprisingly fulfilling – sailors will end up fairly vertical.

How hard your back foot pushes will determine the amount of slide. AHD's twin fins do grip, but with over exertion, they lose traction and will slip sideways possibly catching riders off guard. A few more goes will yield the sweet spot. Re-directing superbly the AHD is a bona fide wave carver.

Conclusion

AHD have come up with a real winner in their Sealion Wings range. With both paddling and windSUP wave performance available, plus the option of adding a foil – again, in both paddling and sailing guises – its versatility is hard to beat. Surprisingly rapid around the break with full power wind the SL puts a smile on many faces making it a great quiver board to compliment usual planing windsurf kit. Stay tuned for more about the Wings' foiling potential…

RACEBOARD REVIVAL NOW'S THE TIME

For many years the raceboard fleet in the UK had the appearance of an 'old man's' fleet. Younger sailors were taking to RS:X and Formula which seemed to offer more glamour and excitement - the RS:X with its Olympic connection and Formula with its 12 metre sails.

WORDS: ROD DAVIS
PICS: ANDY WATKINSON, JON DAVIS

A MORE SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE FROM WHICH THE RACEBOARD CLASS SUFFERED WAS THAT MAJOR MANUFACTURERS – F2, FANATIC AND MISTRAL – VIRTUALLY CEASED PRODUCTION OF RACEBOARDS AND CONSEQUENTLY SAILORS WHO FAVOURED THE CLASS WERE FORCED TO DEVOTE EVEN MORE ATTENTION THAN USUAL TO MAINTAINING THEIR BOARDS AS THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF REPLACING THEM WITH NEW MODELS. However the picture has changed dramatically over the last five years as more and more youngsters realise the potential of raceboards, maybe as a result of having seen them in action on the water during UKWA events whilst sailing their Technos. Since 2016 start lines have been composed of close to 50% of sailors under the age of 35 - the pendulum swing is now well and truly a reality.

Top UK raceboard sailors such as Mark Kay, Rob and Annette Kent have assisted and encouraged youngsters coming out of the Techno class. The result being the Raceboard Europeans 2016, taking place in Brest, France, which had young Brit sailors taking the first five places in the youth ladies with Molly Howell leading home Alysia Gibson, Rebecca, Emily Kent and Alice Butts.

In the youth mens, Julian Tait took second with Tom Sambrook in fourth, Galahad Wisbey fifth, Tom Cave seventh and Toby Cave in tenth. In the men's fleet, Louis Morris was fourth (light) and Lewis Barnes was fourth (heavy). This just goes to show young riders are able to mix it with the very best. All of the above, plus Harriet Ellis, who won the World Championship in 2011 at the age of 18 (but who could not make the Brest event), are now making serious inroads within the class.

So why did raceboards spend so long in the doldrums? Manufacturers lost interest because the design had reached a point not far short of peak efficiency. There was no incentive to bring out newer models every year to tempt the buyer. With boards lasting five to ten years (or more), it'd be tricky to justify initial outlay costs. Emphasis had shifted to shorter boards around the 320 mark, despite their lack of low wind capability.

Top UK raceboard sailors such as Mark Kay and Rob and Annette Kent have assisted and encouraged youngsters coming out of the Techno class, with the result being the Raceboard Europeans, Brest, 2016, featured young Brit sailors taking the first five places in the Youth Ladies' fleet, Molly Howell leading home Alysia Gibson, Rebecca and Emily Kent and Alice Butts. And in the Youth Men's Fleet Julian Tait took 2nd

Far left: Lewis Barnes
Left: Molly Howell
Main pic: Emily Kent

place, Tom Sambrook, 4th, Galahad Wisbey 5th, Tom Cave 7th and Toby Cave 10th and in the Men's fleet Louis Morris was 4th Light and Lewis Barnes was 4th Heavy. This goes to show these youngsters are able to cut it with the very best. All of the above, plus Harriet Ellis, who won the World Championship in 2011 at the age of 18 but who could not make the Brest event, are now right up there.

So why did the raceboard class spend so long in the doldrums? The finger can be pointed directly at the manufacturers whose lack of interest in the class could be explained if not condoned, because the design had reached a point not far short of peak efficiency. There was no incentive to bring out newer models every year to tempt the buyer with the latest go-faster gimmicks - because there weren't any! The boards were lasting five or ten years or more and yet still remained competitive - not exactly a market for planned obsolescence. Emphasis was all on the shorter - allegedly sexier - type of board, around the 320 mark, despite their lack of low-wind capability.

Into the bargain raceboards were more difficult to manufacture because having produced the basic board you then had to make a hole in the middle to accommodate a daggerboard and because of their overall length - 3.80 metres or so – they were more awkward to transport and no doubt they took up far too much space in dealers' shops.

In 2001 a conversation took place at the World Youth & Masters' Championships at Ostia in Italy, when the assembled raceboard fleet who were concerned about the lack of availability of new boards questioned BIC's Guy Chilvers about the possibility of a new raceboard. (Some years before, BIC had produced the Bamba, one of the forerunners of the modern raceboard). BIC's lack

Alice Butts

of enthusiasm was plain to see and the conclusion was that raceboarders themselves would have to do something about the situation. The sailors present decided they were prepared to club together to generate an order of sufficient size in the hope that a manufacturer could be persuaded to re-open production. However the answer eventually came back that raceboard class moulds had all been destroyed. There was no possibility of producing any more boards whatsoever. Some sailors declared that they would produce prototypes of their own, although this strategy would bring its own problems because a minimum number of 50 identical boards would have to be made in order to obtain ISAF certification before they could be used in international competition. It was a chicken and egg situation with no chickens and no eggs.

Despite the gloomy outlook raceboard sailors continued to enjoy their sailing because boards in this class deliver exciting competition in a much wider wind range than any other type of board on the market - everything from about 5 knots upward to 20 plus, in both displacement and planing conditions. This was an important factor for those sailors who spend most of their time on inland waters where less than constant wind would cause RS:X and Formula boards to drop off the plane, whilst the raceboard with its long waterline and high volume would continue to allow sailors to race competitively.

Probably all those who sail a raceboard have at least one shortboard whose qualities they appreciate. Particularly the great blasting and high manoeuvrability which such boards offer. But 10 knots of wind or more are an essential requirement before you can even get on the water - for enjoyable racing on anything but a raceboard the wind has to be consistent.

There were several false dawns in the mid 2000s, notably the Kona, which although it caught on in some countries abroad, notably Sweden, never found acceptance in the UK. Maybe this was because the earliest boards had daggerboards which were almost impossible to shift. This highlights a problem which has faced most longboard designers: namely the temptation - or maybe the absolute necessity - to reinvent the wheel instead of learning lessons from the most successful features of previous designs.

The raceboard world eventually received its metaphorical kiss of life when Starboard unexpectedly brought out its prototype Phantom in 2007. Suddenly the wish-lists of thousands of longboard sailors worldwide took on a newlease of life. Although not an especially radical design when first introduced, the Phantom is now in its fourth incarnation. Version three certainly was radical, with its innovative batwings, which provide extra stability off the wind without increasing the back-end volume, continue to be a feature of the series. This board also boasted a mast track which is higher at the front end, permitting the sailor to increase mast-foot pressure when heading upwind. The latest version - the 377L also with batwings - is intended for the 80kg plus sailor, with 3cm extra thickness and an extra 35 litres of volume over the standard 377.

Despite the undoubted success of the Phantom (which are priced around the £2,000 mark new, plus maybe another £1000 for a new rig), older generation raceboards can still be very competitive indeed. Mistral Equipes and PanAms, Fanatic Mega Cats, AHD 380s and especially F2 380s, one of the last old generation boards made in 1998, can still be found in the upper reaches of international regatta results and as such provide an inexpensive entry to the fleet for youngsters graduating from the Techno class. These boards can be found for around the £200 mark or even less - some are actually being given away by retiring sailors, and when fitted with the Techno 7.8 rig can be raced right away, although the size limit for youths is now 8.5.

The continuing progress of the raceboard fleet has been boosted in no small measure by the 8.5 and 9.5 VG5 and VG7 sails produced by Demon and the Tushingham with their XR: Race range. One or the other brand is used by virtually all raceboard sailors in the UK. There is an active second-hand market for sails as well as for boards and it is perfectly possible to get on the start-line having spent well under £500 for board and rig! However Tushingham's sail designer, Ken Black, has now decided to retire and has handed the baton over to Severne, who have begun to produce sails which are appearing at the top of the leader boards in 2017.

With the latest offerings from Starboard, Demon and Severne the long-awaited raceboard revival is happening now!

Rebecca Kent