

# Wannabe a Wavesailor

## Part 24



## LETTING GO = THE SEQUEL!

In this month's instalment of his comprehensive series examining every aspect of wavesailing, **Jem Hall** looks to upgrade your back loops with the one-handed variation...

**ABOVE:** Feel the freedom of flight

Many of you should now be feeling the fear and doing it anyway on the forward looping - either by working those tail-up jumps and wymaroots, or actually pulling the trigger. Those of you who are forwarding should be looking to set new standards of higher, cleaner and faster loops, and are now psyched up to let go and drop

that front hand. So let's move on to one of the best and most graceful jumps out there, the one-handed back loop (backie). We can't let all those nice steep stunt ramps go to waste, so the time has come to rack up the vertical airtime and take a look over that front shoulder as you drop the front hand.

The beauty of this move is that, as with the regular backie, if you're in the 'go for it

but under-rotate slightly' category, the feeling is fantastic even if you don't make it. But when you *do* make it the feeling is amazing! It's weightless and graceful and you just feel so free.

This move is not at a high level of consistency for me (yet!) so I can remember all the very best ones, and often find myself daydreaming about them. It's a

**“He who dares, wins...”** *Derek ‘Del Boy’ Trotter*

move that can be built towards, by developing style and competency in big, steep, one-handed jumps, as this will kick the whole journey off. As with many big moves, visualisation is key. Imagine one of your icons performing it, like the master Josh Angulo. Place yourself in this picture (or video) in your mind, and then you will begin to have the feeling of the move and your body will learn it. In sport psychology terms I believe, from my degree-days, this is called ‘participant modelling’.

The first one you pull off (and you *will*, for belief is a huge part of all windsurfing moves) will feel incredible, but equally incredible is the journey of discovery as you seek the sweetest and most succulent of all jumps, the one-handed backie.

**Tuning**

Many great coaches will say *“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”*, so this prep starts with visualisation and then works on the key skills of very good one-handed vert jumps and a degree of consistency in back loops. You will, as always, be needing those long lines that are positioned slightly further forward on the boom to give you more control through the back arm. This will keep you away from the kit, give you the time and space to manoeuvre and control the rotation – and most importantly, open up the opportunity of actually landing one-handed!

This journey started a long time ago when I implored you to learn to jump one-handed. Now you’re moving towards the culmination of all your hard work, so I wish you all the very best.

**SKYE HIGH AND ONE-HANDED**

John is super-committed to the one-handed back loop, and shares his enthusiasm before offering us one of his excellent top tips.

*“There are one-handed backies and then there are SICK one-handed backies. What’s the difference? Style! For the ultimate style you need to have your hand off the boom for more than a split second. Forgot ‘quick draw’ – we’re talking about taking off and landing all one-handed. Then for mega bonus points you need a head-throw in there as well. Then if that’s not enough for your mates, try flipping them the bird while hanging upside down. Nobody can say anything after that!”*

*“Sorry – got a bit excited there! Here’s the tip. For really high backies when it’s very windy, it can help to keep both hands on the boom for a little bit longer after take-off. Jump high and control the move by keeping the rig in close to you, then once you’re at the top drop the hand and hold it off the boom as you look over your shoulder and spot your landing. This technique really helped me to learn them on my weaker port tack side.”*

**John Skye is sponsored by RRD Boards, Naish Sails, Xcel Wetsuits and MFC Fins**

PHOTO: ADAM THULIN

PHOTO: PWA / JC

Skye high with style





# Wannabe a Wavesailor



SEQUENCE: ADAM THULIN

**1** Gun it towards your steep ramp while remaining hooked in. Your launch is as for a regular backie, aiming to jump as high as possible by leaning back slightly on take-off to thrust the nose up to kill forward speed and give you good vertical projection. For smaller ramps or more onshore conditions, like here, you actually need to forget a little bit about height and carve into the wind more before takeoff to kill forward speed, but still have the **height and time** to achieve the rotation on the way down. My ramp is not ideal and could have been bigger / steeper, and I could have my arse lower for a more vert ascent. I thoroughly recommend looking up to get you higher as well.

**2** The looking up part, to get higher, has come into more effect here and you should get enough height to give you the time to drop your front arm. Your speed of rotation is set as you take off, as you aim to be just through the wind as you reach the highest point. For windy conditions and bigger / steeper ramps it's the opposite; you need to slow the rotation and jump high, but not turn too much. Then, when you're at the apex, point the nose through the wind and rotate on the way down.

**3** Halfway through the rotation and at the apex here, you'll begin to look over the front shoulder and twist your body round further. Extra style points come from really straightening the front arm to point at the water, and this also helps you rotate better as it drops your leading shoulder. At the top here you can sheet out to slow the rotation, or bring the rig back and sheet in a bit to increase the rotation - but definitely turn your head and really **SPOT THE LANDING**.

**4** The kit has come round now so keep looking round and down at where you will be spearing the nose into the water. Remember; where you look is where you go. While you're coming in to land and focusing on the rotation you'll be placing your front hand back on the boom. Your back loop experience here will be pulling the strings as you get your rotation just right.

**5** With your hand back on, unhook and get away from the boom. Get your nose down by thrusting the rig forwards and keeping the back leg bent. I need to get my hips back pronto here to resist the rig's power on landing and enable me to do the good old rig forwards, body back hokey cokey.

The conditions in Jeri, Brazil, were medium to slightly underpowered with waist-high ramps (could have been bigger), on a 5.2 Ezzy Wave Panther and RRD Wave Twin 90. After a few runs I'd mapped out where the suitable ramps were and I would come in, tack, get planing and absorb / pre-jump all the small stuff until I had full speed at the point where I was ready to launch into a one-hander. Find your spot or peak, keep making quick runs through it, and keep a good lookout ahead so you're ready to soar, look and drop! If you need a recap on the backie then check out *Wannabe 11* and *12* from the Jan/Feb and March 2008 issues.



6 Nice one baldie! I got my hips back and the rig forward, but needed to land more sheeted out and with a more bent back leg to take me in and slightly under the water. By sheeting out slightly you stop the over-sheet and fall in backwards, and landing slightly under the water gives you a bit of momentum and stops the rig powering up too much. So please bend your back leg here and get your arse over the tail to help you control all that power in the rig.

7 Quite a heavy landing, so I drop my arse in the sea to control power in the rig and begin to open the sail to stop any possible over-sheeting. This will also begin to turn me from the dead downwind position (which you should be all landing in) to moving more across the wind. A good, soft, well tuned sail will aid you by twisting off here.

8 Don't blow it here! You need to get back across the wind sharpish, so open the sail more, look over the front shoulder, forwards and upwind, and weight the heels from your low position. It's all got a kind of top turn vibe to it, so you will begin to open the sail and bring it forwards in readiness to pull you out of the water.

9 Open your sail and keep your back leg bent, and thrust your arms up to get you moving forwards and your arse out of the water. Choking on the rig and pulling in here will possibly see you falling in backwards, spoiling your dream ending of sailing away from this awesome move. Start screaming and begin to get goose-bumps all over, because this is *the biggie* and the feeling of completing a one-handed backie is just spine-tingling.

Jem's brand new wave technique movie *Winner to Wavesailor* is out soon.

**RRD Boards, Ezzy Sails, Oceansource.net, Flying Objects, USPmedia.TV, Prosport Sunblock and Grasshopper Porridge sponsor Jem Hall. Check out [www.jemhall.com](http://www.jemhall.com)**

If you seriously want to improve and have a fantastic holiday book one of Jem's '09 clinics at Baja, Rhodes, Ireland, Mauritius or Brazil now as they are about to sell out! Or join him on a UK performance boost this May at West Wittering.

## HALL'S HOMEWORK



Boosting that vertical height to give me time to drop one in Prasonisi, Rhodes

PHOTO: JOHN BAINBRIDGE

Let's see some one-handers of both varieties if you please, and of course some much improved regular forwards. Get your regular jumps and backies high and vertical, as you now really WANT the one-handed backie. More daylight and our windy season are coming, so take action by setting specific and realistic targets to make '09 your time to shine.



Look mum, no hands!

PHOTO: ADAM THULIN

## NEXT MONTH

Jem looks at some skill-specific jumps like the nose first landing and the no-hander. [boards](#)