

Wannabe a Wavesailor

BY A NOSE

PHOTO: SIMON CROWTHER



Part 26

Nose first jumps will help you get out

In this month's instalment of his comprehensive series examining every aspect of wavesailing, Jem Hall looks to give you the skills required for the all-important nose-first landing.

Yes, the jumping onslaught continues! Summer's smaller waves may not deliver classic riding conditions, but they're perfect for logging some airtime.

But before we get to this month's main event, now that you've all been sailing with heaps of passion let's hit the pause button so you can reflect on how that really feels. We all have so much untapped potential that we need to, well, tap into. This is reflected in my e-mail signature, "*focus, believe and enjoy*", which plenty of people take the piss about. There's method behind the mantra though! For people to sail well they must *focus* on what they need to do, set targets, *believe* in themselves and their ability to reach those targets - and they should *enjoy* it. One of my most recent

clients, who is a tennis coach, commented that if you are trying to do something well, then failure is an option, so focus on committing to your actions and engage in a positive self-dialogue. Phrases like "*I can... I will*" are very powerful. As you well know, *you* set your limits. So what you will be focusing on, believing in, and enjoying after this article and this summer is nose-first jumps.

There are many reasons why you need, and, yes - most importantly - *want* to nail down nose-first landings. Here are a few:

- They help you plane out of jumps, especially over white water.
- You can control your landing if you lose shape in the air and the nose gets blown

down inadvertently.

- It is important to have the skill to steer and control the board in flight and landing and in all manners.
- You will be able to control over-rotated forward loop landings.
- It will give you the confidence to finish off those back loops *when* you're working on those.

The nose-first landing used to be a lot more commonplace when the old-school boards were around. They were thin, long, had narrow tails and heaps of nose rocker, so were just perfect for a big jump into a nose-first landing (and then about five minutes of not planing afterwards). Truth be told, it's an impressive move and should be in your skills armoury if you 'wannabe a wavesailor'.

Wannabe a Wavesailor

Who? If you can jump, get some height and have some in-flight control and temporal / spatial awareness, then this move is for you. After all, you are the pilot and not the passenger.

Why? The reasons are as stated, in that it helps you learn or control other jumps, assists you in getting out the back, shows you have in-flight skills, and it means you can control your landings when it all goes a bit Pete Tong.

What? It's a jump where you get a bit of height, bring your tail up while dropping the nose at your apex, and then control your descent to get a clean nose-first getaway and not get chucked out the front door.

Where? Off ample sized chop and small to medium but not too steep waves and in cross to cross-slightly-on winds. You should aim to go for a long rather than a steep jump.

When? Off the white water on the way out or the inside waves. In bump-&-jump mode you launch off good chop to keep up your practice. And please do it both ways as you do tend to sail the same way in both directions, so one-sidedness will never be your excuse.

How? Take a look at the dynamics of this funky move overleaf...

Tuning

The sea change in your equipment tuning has happened: longer lines, higher boom, bigger straps, considering fin size and position, moving your mastfoot. You are reaping the rewards so much that you are now spreading the word and paying it forward to your mates and others. In fact you love the big straps so much that you have lost the boots in all but the coldest conditions. Board designers work hard to help YOU feel the board and make a solid connection with the straps and pads, so please don't put any extra rubber into the equation if you can avoid it.

The nose-first jump may be called into action when your windward rail gets blown around in mid-air; one of the main reasons for this is too much weight on the windward rail and not getting your toes down to get the rail high. This is exacerbated by those things you call footstraps, which might be better labelled tourniquets. Open up your straps and feel your jumping evolve.



SEQUENCE: ADAM THULIN



The conditions in Jeri, Brazil, were medium to slightly underpowered with waist-high ramps, on a 5.2 Ezzy Wave Panther and RRD Wave Twin 90 with 16.5cm twin fins and 30-inch Flying Objects lines (I'm 6'1" / 186cms), and a shoulder high boom with the mastfoot about 133cms from the tail. I was sailing out doing nose-first jumps over the white water and small inside waves to maintain speed for scoring some bigger airtime on the outside stunt ramps.

- 1 As you approach the white water get the nose up by extending the back leg from your previous compact stance, and pull back on the boom as you ready yourself for lift-off. The bigger the white water the earlier and more forceful you have to be get the nose up before you hit it. Unbroken waves are less critical. Ensure that you push down and not out on the back leg, and that you are over the board before you do this.
- 2 After the nose clears you begin to pull up your landing gear and bring the rig back, which will help you fly better. As you have jumped off your toeside the windward rail will begin to rise, and your generous straps assist you in doing this.
- 3 Pull your landing gear right up by bringing your heel to your bum, which will help you to straighten the front leg to push the nose off the wind. Continue to pull your rig back to fly you and direct the sail's power to give you lift and drive through the air. Put pressure down through your toes and aim to get your arse below the windward rail.

- 4 From your tail-up jumping, in-flight control stance, direct a bit more pressure through your front arm and front leg while sheeting in slightly on the back hand. This will drop the nose as your body stays back while you look forward to spot your landing.
- 5 You can see that your nose should have dropped now, so begin to get the rig forwards by extending your arms in readiness for some power on your getaway and to distance yourself from the rig. The rig is moving forwards but your body remains back.
- 6 As you are just about to land, open out your back hand to sheet out. (It's a bad pic here, so do it more than I am please.) Once the nose touches down, extend your back leg to flatten the board and get the board to skim over the water (as opposed to nose diving).
- 7 On landing you'll want to head upwind slightly as you will have landed on a downwind course from all your scissoring and aerial toeside pressure. Continue to sheet out, and then briefly weight your heels while you glance upwind to take you towards your desired course. Get the rig away, and after you've got yourself all sorted, point your toes to ensure you get back into fully planing mode as fast as possible.

A big well done! The better you get at these nose jobs the better a wavesailor you will be, and the more opportunities you will have to rack up and complete more advanced stunts

HALL'S HOMEWORK

On my recent Jump & Loop course at West Wittering we had some great results from racing through the break and then trying to sky the biggest jump of your life, so when in the waves go for max speed and boost even bigger airtime.

I have recently acquired my first slalom board, an RRD X-Fire 112, and I'm absolutely loving the breakneck speeds and the sheer workout of it all. It's great for keeping up your windsurfing fitness and getting that all-important top speed and control required for wavesailing. My fastest clients get the biggest air and are also more likely to make it back out through the break.

When you have wind and not many waves then please ensure that the carving tack is in the bank – both ways! And keep your front foot carving skills in both straps by working on your strapped-in downwind 360s. Lighter winds means working on your tacks and front-to-sail skills to help you nail those 360s and heli-tacks. You choose how much you improve by working on the targets that you set, and if you snooze you lose.

SKYE HIGH AND NOSE DOWN

Some words of wisdom from our resident pro...

"Big high vertical jumps with a death-dive nose-first landing are about as retro as you can get. They look amazing when you do them right. Go super-vertical on the way up, getting the mast tip pointing straight down at the water, then switch it so you come diving down at the water."

"Lower level nose-firsters are one of the most useful tools in the box of tricks. In most Euro style conditions it's impossible to get to a good ramp without having to pass a load of smaller waves / whitewater. Perfecting nose-first, fully planing landings will mean you carry more speed through the break, and when you do get the golden ramp you'll be in the best position to hit it hard and boost maximum airtime."

Looks like John and Jem concur, and John's skills in nose-first jumps certainly helped him move from amateur student wavehead to many times UK champion and top-class PWA competitor.

RRD Boards, Naish Sails and Xcel Wetsuits sponsor John Skye

"Get down, James Brown"

Jeز Wilmott, Windy John, Jem Hall – Neilson Vassiliki, circa 1997



Jem Hall is away in Punta San Carlos, Baja

PHOTO: CLARK MERRITT

NEXT MONTH

Jem is out of office in Baja, Mexico on his inaugural clinic to Punta San Carlos as a guest of Solosports, so there will be no 'Wannabe' article next month. But don't worry – he will be back in September, and you can rest assured that he'll be gathering pics and intelligence for his autumn 'Wannabe' articles.

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

RRD Boards, Ezzy Sails, Big Salty Weather, Flying Objects, USPmedia, TV, Prosport Sunblock and Grasshopper Porridge sponsor Jem Hall

Check out www.jemhall.com for more info

If you seriously want to improve and have a fantastic holiday book one of his '09 wave coaching clinics at Baja, Ireland, Mauritius or Brazil now as they are about to sell out! boards