

Wannabe a Wavesailor

CIRCUITS

PHOTO: WAYNE DODDGE



South Coast action and going for a layback jump

In this month's instalment of his comprehensive series examining every aspect of wavesailing, **Jem Hall** looks to inspire you to add some windsurfing specific training to your sailing...

Well, the forecast for 2009 being the hottest summer on record turned out to be nonsense, and as I write we've just had one of our windiest Julys for a good few years.

From the number of happy smiling faces I see at beaches around the country, it's been gratefully received, but the feedback I get - sorry, I mean the groans about how stiff and sore people are - really increase after a double or triple session over a weekend. So, ask yourself the question: are you fit enough to be not only a windsurfer, but more specifically a wavesailor?

Summer's warm water and smaller waves will soon give way to autumn and winter's colder conditions and the arrival of some proper swell pumping across the Atlantic or North Sea. This means wind, waves and gnarly days, so by failing to prepare you are therefore preparing to fail. Sure you hit the gym, go running, swimming, SUPing and work on your core strength and flexibility, but we all know that the best fitness training for windsurfing is windsurfing. So when the

conditions are not that windy or wavy you still need to approach these sessions with the same focus and desire to improve your wavesailing - that is of course if *YOU WANT* to be a wavesailor.

With that in mind, this month we'll look at how to get the best out of big boards and the moves that make you better in readiness for the wave arena. I'll also implore you to sail as you would in the waves - even though conditions may be flat or bump-&-jump. If you don't take the opportunity to go sailing, even in light winds, it will mean you lose fitness, balance, co-ordination, and - heaven forbid - maybe your windsurfing mojo.

Psychology

By their very nature wavesailors should be looking for action and covering their ground quickly. In many wave breaks you have to get up to speed quickly just to get out. Where the action is closer in, if you get planing quickly and up to top speed then you'll score a couple of sweet jumps on the inside. So first up, put a bit of passion and

commitment into your early planing and speed. As you now know you'll need all your fundamental windsurfing skills to be on fine form, so if you're not planing early find out why and fix it. (And yes, a clinic with me or buying *Beginner to Winner* will help you.)

A wavesailor's mindset is focused on getting the maximum amount of runs as possible through 'the break' in order to score more jumps on the way out and more rides on the way in. This means that those of you who do one-mile reaches out to sea to check your crayfish pots (or whatever's out there) are not pushing it enough. On some beaches I get six reaches in before Johnny Grooverider gets two. No matter what move you're learning, you'll get better at it by shortening your reaches - a lot. If your reach is short you're forcing yourself to plane earlier, get to top speed quicker (in all winds), and fly upwind no matter whether you're well or moderately powered. So please shorten those reaches, plane earlier, sail faster, and honk upwind - if *YOU WANT* to be a wavesailor.

MOVES THAT MATTER

Right then, you've got short reaching in the bag, your work rate and heart rate are going up, and you're now feeling the accompanying cardio benefits. So just what are the moves that matter in order to keep us wavesailing fit and our mojos intact? Many have been presented in previous articles, but this time you're going to do these moves in your new short reach, high octane, full power windsurfing circuit training!

Front foot gybes: These will get you carving fast and locking down that rail in readiness for those bottom turns. And in order to be going fast enough to gybe hard you have to be upwind enough to bear away... (Self-fulfilling prophecy, then.)

360s: In both straps, going out and coming in. This again makes you carve hard, and being in both straps means you can really show the sail to the water and feel the rail. Those of you who don't do *any* freestyle, shame on you, and take a look at your WASAT score.

Tacks: Now, I'm not sure if I've mentioned that you need to have this transition in your skills bank... [Just the 2,346 times. Ed.] If you don't tack you're not a wavesailor because you're not looking to get as many jumps and rides as humanly possible.

Pops and jumps: Get these sorted and do two or three per run on the way in and out to get more of that essential heart and lung workout. You'll also be getting that all-important out of the harness stance dialled, so when it's white-water city as far as the eye can see you're fit enough and have an uber-efficient stance to take it on. Lastly, the better you are at popping on all kit the quicker you'll learn to loop.

Duck gybes: These are fun and stylish – check out Messrs Goya and Naish for inspiration. They're also a great way to gybe onto a wave and often an easier way of exiting a waveride. Duck gybes will challenge your carving skills, make you more dynamic and get you looking where you need to be going.

Wymaros: If the wind gets lighter during a session then don't just stand on the beach – take action to make yourself a better sailor by throwing in some wymaros. They improve your loops and are great for raising the heart rate. (They're also covered in my new movie, *Winner to Wavesailor*.)

Front to sail and heli-tacks: If the wind stays light then work on these to improve your chances of making a 360 and to have another tack in your armoury.

Freestyle: This may be a swearword to some of you, but if you're working on vulcans, willy skippers, flakas, forwards, etc, then you're out of the harness and popping and working your legs and core, and therefore getting fitter for those big days. Your brain also needs fitness, and freestyle keeps it fresh and active so you can continue to learn in the wave arena.

You may only be just learning to wavesail, or don't often get the conditions to go wavesailing, but if you do all the above you will smooth your path to becoming a wavesailor. If you live inland and always have two hours to get to the coast, then ask yourself if a bit of bump-&-jump or slalom at your local lake will serve you well!

"If you always do what you have always done, well then you will always get what you have always got." Anon.

KIT

After a wave or flat water course the board my customers are most likely to buy is a 100-115L freemove or freestyle, as they acknowledge that they now require competence in gybes, tacks and stunts in light to moderate winds. So get out on a bigger board of 63-67cm width, but use a medium sized sail to make you work on your planing, subtle speed and upwind skills. If you equip it with a small fin from 23 to 27cm then it will be more like a waveboard and will also pop and carve better. The bigger board will float through lulls better, keep speed and be easier to jump, tack, duck, heli and generally throw around when used in conjunction with a medium sail of 5.2 to 5.8m or so.

With the huge success of events such as the National Windsurfing Festival (www.nationalwindsurfingfestival.com) and slalom clubs popping up everywhere, there's a lot to be said for getting out on a fast freeride or slalom board with a big rig. When well powered this kit gives you a real workout – especially if you go for extreme upwind and downwind runs and keep the sail fully sheeted in ALL the time. Going fast and keeping control at speed will ready you for the hectic conditions of stronger winds. It's also a great buzz going downwind over chop and swell and generally wondering whether you have left anything in your wetsuit, and also gives your core, legs, back and triceps a damn good working over.

If it's very light then get out on a floaty board or SUP (with windsurfing mast-track) and do some of that light wind freestyle you've been putting off.



PHOTO: ADAM THUJUN

Work on ALL your jumps

Wannabe a Wavesailor

SESSIONS

So how would a sample session go?

- Getting planing. Do it out of the harness and get into both straps before you hook in. If you can pump well, then do just that or pump in the harness – but do it all with urgency.
- Get up to speed quickly, arms together and straight, then get low and put the hammer down while trying to pass as many people as possible.
- Fly upwind, look where you want to go and really point as high upwind as your fin, technique, board and sail will allow. Push the angles!
- Turn round as soon as you are upwind enough. If it's marginal, tack (yes, on the outside where it's bumpy).
- While on your way out do some jumps and one-handed jumps, even if you're a bit underpowered. When planing on your way in do some more jumps so that you're two-sided.
- If the wind drops during your run out, do four tacks in a row after only sailing a couple of board lengths after each.
- Do some wymaroos or front to sail if it stays light, both ways. Then see how high you can point while not planing (covered in *Beginner to Winner*).
- Duck gybes. The wind is back so do duck gybes at the end of your short reaches, and both ways.
- 360s. Do them whenever you have enough speed. Don't get anal about the water state – just get speed and carve hard into them.
- Tack on the inside, then on your way out bear away and go very fast for 70 metres, then head upwind and point very high. Then bear off and try a forward.

Now you're getting the picture. Sail with passion, commitment and with a focus and you'll get a muscle strengthening and cardio session in one. You'll now also understand why I advocate an hour of power, as after these sorts of sessions you're not only physically but mentally tired.



Duck gybes are fun both onto a wave and at the exit of a ride

PHOTO: OCEANSOURCE.NET



Drop into a one-handed 360 to show that sail to the water and feel the rail

PHOTO: OCEANSOURCE.NET



More tacks mean more jumps and rides

PHOTO: ADAM THULIN

NEXT MONTH

Jem is in his Baja, Mexico, office with his clients on the inaugural clinic at Punta San Carlos as guests of Solosports, so there will be a 'fully frontside' focus in the next Wannabe articles.



Full front foot gybes help your front foot bottom turns



PHOTO: OCEANSOURCE.NET

Locking down freeride / slalom kit is a great all-over workout

HALL'S HOMEWORK

All of the aforementioned if you please, and if you can't get out on the water then get on your running shoes, hit the gym, hit the courts, do some weights, bang out some chins, press-ups, squats, lunges, planks, or get all bendy with a yogi – but please keep moving!

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

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 details.

If you seriously want to improve and have a fantastic holiday book one of his '09 wave coaching clinics in Mauritius or Brazil now as they're about to sell out! 2010 will be on sale soon... boards