



# MAKE YOUR MOVE!

## GYBING -PART 1

Simon Bornhoft breaks key transitions down into component parts to dramatically speed up the understanding, training time and probability of actually MAKING YOUR MOVES!  
Photos: Karen Bornhoft / WindWise

**I**n windsurfing we talk in terms of weeks, months or years trying to learn something, but in fact it's so often only seconds spent on the important part of our objectives.

As you might know, my coaching ethos is to break windsurfing down into achievable, transferable multi-level skills that link together to increase the prospects of actually learning something. Out of the many thousands I've coached, those who mix their precious sailing time with skills training always make the quickest progress. So this is how you actually learn something! Rather than just gybing and practicing common mistakes, genuinely try these WindWise skills and drills and I can guarantee you'll *make your moves!*

### WHO'S IT FOR?

First time or frustrated veteran gybers in non-planing and planing situations on any volume board. So get out there and go through the run-by-run suggestions, one accentuated point at a time!

### SKILLS & DRILLS

#### SESSION 1

- Upwind-Downwinders

#### SESSION 2

- Shift-&-Switching

#### SESSION 3

- Clew-First Beachstart

SESSION 4 - MAKE YOUR MOVE!

## UPWIND-DOWNWINDERS

We covered 'upwind-downwinders' in last month's tacking feature, but like a superfood they're also packed full of gybing goodness.

Head right into wind and then turn right downwind to get that body and leverage going!

### KEY GYBING PRINCIPLES

**Vision:** Look downwind and into the turn.

**Trim:** Adopt a super-wide foot spread with the back foot, toes on the rail, just next to the back strap on the leeward rail.

**Opposition:** Force that rig forward as the hips sink low and back to maintain that counterbalance.

**Power:** Wide arm spread pulling down on the boom.

**Stance:** Super-7 'drop-&-push' stance, flexing the back leg and extending the front to help lever and turn the board downwind.

For planing gybe entries there's a specific unhooking process prior to set up, plus the front foot would be in the front strap, but we'll cover this in the next issue. For now, just practice the upwind-downwinders! After 20-30 'upwind-downwinders' take a break and practice your shifting-&-switching!



## SHIFTING-&-SWITCHING

Just like tacking, it's imperative to isolate and repeat **the** foot movement. If you only do this when you gybe then you're talking mere seconds per year, so practice the movement until your muscle memory is second nature!

### RIGHT SKILL, RIGHT TIME

The shifting-&-switching takes place just after the dead downwind stage of the gybe.

Ensure the rig remains locked still at approximately 90° to the board throughout the foot change. Pull in and **down** on the clew hand with all your might to lock that rig in place.

**1.** Shift the hips sideways **across the board** into the turn to engage the leeward rail and help unweight the front foot.

**2.** As the board just passes the dead downwind stage of the gybe, switch the front foot heel to toe.

**3.** Once switched, make sure that back foot is on the rail again. Spread the feet, flexing the back leg and keeping the hips to windward, low and back as the front foot moves forward.

**As you change the feet, lock that rig still and make an executive decision!**

- If you're **NOT planing** or need to turn more – keep board clew-first (i.e. rig roughly 90° to the board), settle and then rotate the rig.
- If you're **planing**, mega-powered or well through the turn – immediately rotate the rig and drop low to collect the rig.

Practicing clew-first beachstarts is a very productive way to help improve your control at this pivotal clew-first point of the gybe.

## Q&A

**Q: Why won't the board turn?**

**A:** This is usually due to lack of vision and opposition. So, look and lean more in the direction you want to turn and lever the mast out of the turn, crucially pulling that clew hand in and down towards your head!

**Q: When do I change my feet?**

**A:** Use a reference to see when you've just passed the dead downwind stage, then switch those feet quickly.

**Q: When do I change the rig?**

**A:** After the foot change, but... **If you're NOT planing** – take a slight pause after the foot switch, keep on a broad reach and then rotate that rig. **If you're planing or fully powered** – rotate that rig early, carve off the new back foot and drop low to collect the rig.

## CLEW-FIRST BEACHSTART

Find shallow water with lighter winds and work on them until you can plane off the beach – clew-first! Here's what to accentuate.

### PRINCIPLES

**Vision and sailing line:** Look forward and keep on a broad reach.

**Trim:** Adopt a wide foot spread to help steer the board.

**Opposition:** Rig forward (mast downwind), body back and to windward.

**Power:** Pull down on the boom a *lot*, especially with the rear-placed clew hand!

**Stance:** Low super-7 'drop-&-push'.

### RIGHT SKILL, RIGHT TIME

1. Come up onto the board just like a normal beachstart, momentarily rolling the head in and flexing the back leg.
2. Rig at 90° to board. Pull down hard on the boom, sheeting that clew hand in close to your head.
3. Sail on a broad reach for 20-30m – looking forward!

4. Before rotating the rig, slide the old front hand up towards the mast.
5. The old back hand reaches underneath to grab the boom on the new side.
6. Low super-7 'drop-&-push', looking forward and encouraging the rig to swing round towards you.

### PROBLEMS

#### Why does the rig fight like a crazy dog with a stick?

**Counterintuitive moment:** Make sure you're NOT sailing with the clew facing forward along the centreline. Focus on pulling the clew more towards the wind so that the rig is roughly 90° to the board.

#### Why does the board spin into wind?

Too much weight on the back foot or the mast is pulled / angled too far back.



1.



4.



2.



5.



3.



6.



1.



2.



5.



6.

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Next month: we'll show how these skills and a couple of great fun exercises not only link into and improve your planing gybes, but also form the basis of slam, pivot and chicken gybes!

# MAKE YOUR MOVE

## THE MOVE

We'll cover rig rotating skills more deeply next issue. For now let's build the whole move using the component parts. These and your skills training will MAKE YOUR MOVE!

### ENTRY = DOWNWINDER

Rig forward, body back going into the gybe – exactly like the 'downwinder'

### MID GYBE = SHIFT-&SWITCH

Oppose by forcing the mast **across** to leeward as body looks and moves **across** to windward, switching the feet just after the board has passed the dead downwind stage of the gybe.

### END = CLEW-FIRST BEACHSTART

Once clew-first rotate the rig, scooping it back then forwards as the body sinks into a super-7 'drop-&-push'.

## SIMPLE SUMMARY

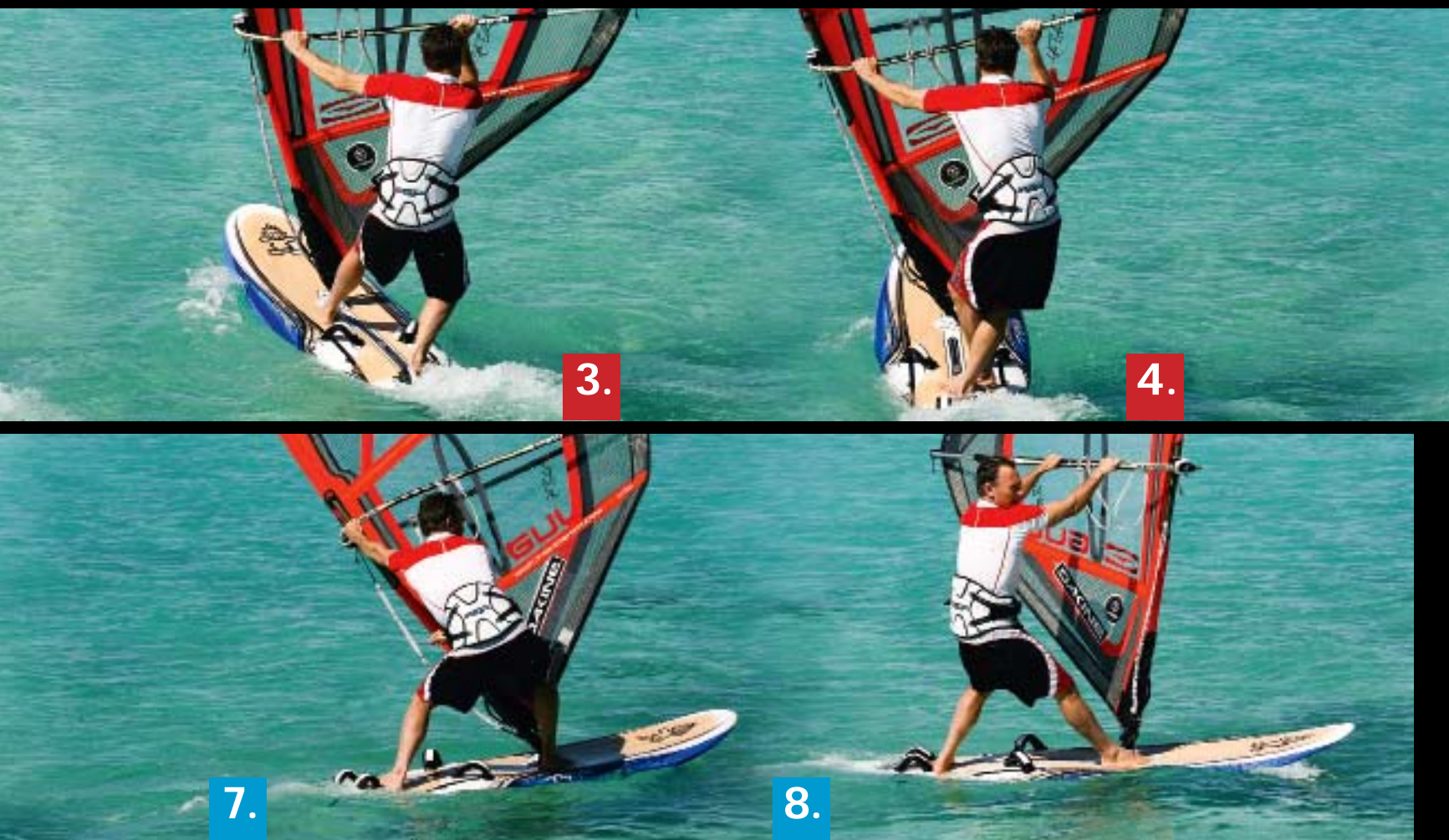
Learning the component parts allows you to get on with just focusing on a simple mantra that links into every gybe: **look, lean and lever...**

**LOOK** – where you want to go!

**LEAN** – the body in the direction of where you're looking.

**LEVER** – wide hand and foot spread to help lever the rig in the opposite direction of the body to create counterbalance.

**So, if you want to turn right – look right, lean right and lever the rig in the opposite direction (left!)**



**SIMON BORNHOFT** | [sb@windwise.net](mailto:sb@windwise.net)  
**WINDWISE**

[www.windwise.net](http://www.windwise.net)

For more information on Technical, Tubing and Travel, visit Simon Bornhoft @ WindWise.net

**07764 574 201**

If you have any questions regarding your technique, or any subjects you'd like covered in the magazine, you can contact [sb@windwise.net](mailto:sb@windwise.net)

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Founder of FastFwd – the new RYA National Coaching System.

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