

GYBE TUNING

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Given all the gybing skill in the world, if I was to jump on badly tuned kit (that I often do using my guests stuff) I can fall off a gybe as a direct result of too little downhaul or even bad harness line position. As you well know tuning is of vital importance to your control, but it can also help your gybes tremendously, so here's how you can improve.

BY GUY CRIBB



INTUITION:

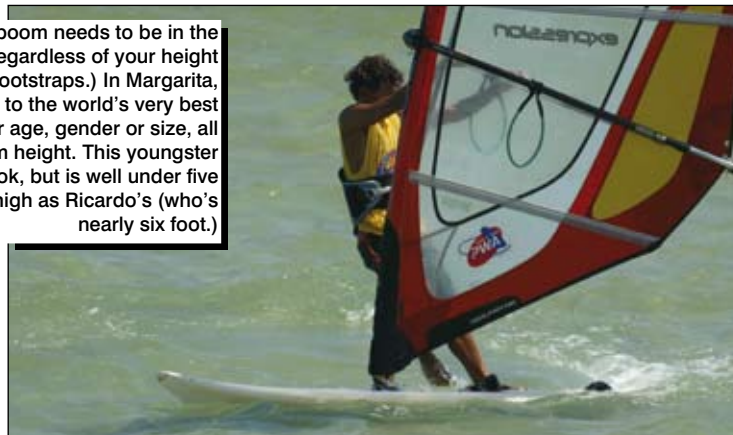
BOOM HEIGHT

There's a train of thought that everyone's boom height should be about the same, based upon the fact that almost all the professional windsurfers in the world use a boom height that has only a few inches difference between all of them, despite their different extremes of height. And there's loads more scientific theory to back this up too, some of which you can find in the Nik Baker feature. (See summary)

I'm not saying raise your boom to learn to gybe, but a key feature to control on the entry is pulling down into the boom, so it needs to be high enough to pull down on. If your boom is too low it there's too much weight on your front foot, making it harder to turn the board downwind and making you very vulnerable to catapulting. Your boom height should be at least shoulder height, and always in the top half of the cut out for general freeriding.



My coaching point is your boom needs to be in the top half of the cut out, regardless of your height (if you're planing in the footstraps.) In Margarita, birthplace and home to the world's very best freestylers, regardless of their age, gender or size, all the kids use the same boom height. This youngster can do every trick in the book, but is well under five foot yet has his boom as high as Ricardo's (who's nearly six foot.)



Move it up a little for earlier planing, down a bit for more control when overpowered.

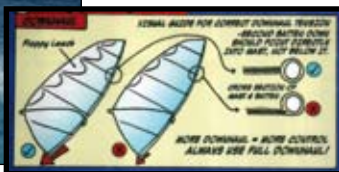


DOWNHAUL

Virtually every sail in the world has a fixed downhaul setting, which is basically full on. Anything less causes loss of control. Going into a gybe, you need as much control as possible, and if you want to have a chance of sheeting in during the entry, you'll need the correct downhaul setting. Some people still don't use enough.



Too little downhaul gives you no control on the approach and makes it impossible to sheet in going into your gybe because there's too much back hand power.



Crank it on until the second batten down from the top points into the middle of the mast, or on sails with 7 or more battens, use the third batten down as your reference.

FOOTSTRAP POSITION

Inboard straps are better for gybing, however not quite as good for control on the approach. As a general rule use inboard straps for learning to gybe as they help keep you over the board, making it easier to bank.



HARNESSES LINES

With your harness lines positioned correctly, the sail is naturally sheeted in and the rig is well forwards- equally good for early planing and high wind control, and of massive importance entering your gybes.



With the lines in the correct place it should be easy to let go with your back hand without affecting the trim of the sail, and thus making it easy to reach as far back as possible to have more leverage over the boom to sheet in on the entry- a vital requirement.



If your harness lines are too far forwards there's too much pressure in your back hand on the approach, making it hard to move your back hand back, thus ruining your entry. Use the Cribb Sheet to position your lines perfectly every time.

HARNESSES LINE LENGTH

Long harness lines (>26" short person / >28" normal person) are useful for a number of reasons. In gybing they're useful for two main reasons; they let you sail in a more crouched position with an upright spine- ideal for entering tricky situations like gybing, and because they're easier to unhook from whilst maintaining a low down stance.



Short lines pull your hips inboard, straightening your legs and leaning your shoulders back, a very unaggressive stance to adopt just before manoeuvres (whether it's jumping or gybing.) They also mean a huge pelvic thrust to unhook which can unsettle you and the board, right when you need the most control. Short lines also necessitate a lower boom, which ain't good, and there is a theory if you sail like this you probably wear speedos too.



"Very wrong- ridiculously short lines, terribly low boom, and the ugliest budgie-smuggling look known to man"



"long lines let you stay lower for more control, and board shorts cover your knob"



MAST TRACK

Basically, moving the track forwards gives you more control, and backwards makes the board livelier. For example,



forwards for big wave sailing



back for freestyling



Entering a gybe you should try and get a much control as possible, so move it forwards. This naturally keeps the nose down for a smoother turn. Bringing the mast track back makes you turn off the tail, sharply and out of control.

INTUITION:

SAIL NAKED

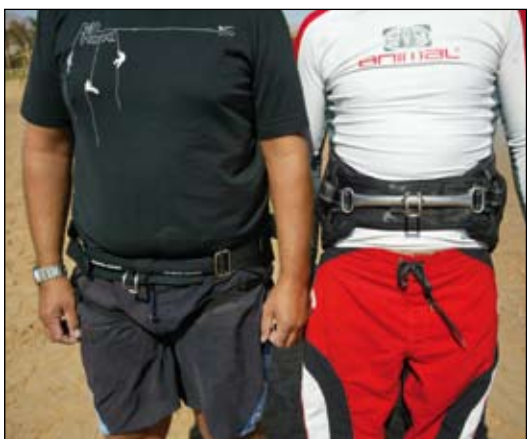


Since you need to take both feet out of the footstraps with ease, and smoothly move them awkwardly across the board, it is best to sail barefoot when learning to gybe (assuming your board has good grip.)

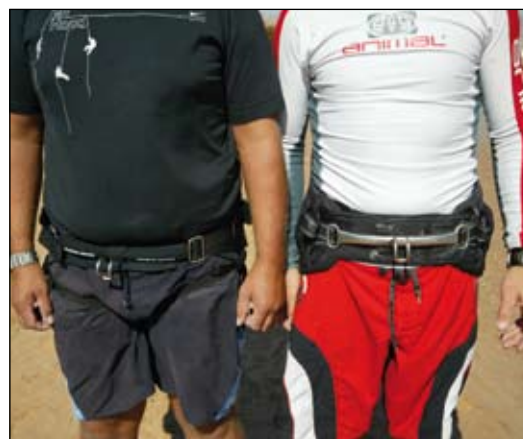


Note that 99.9% of the world's best sailors sail barefooted for the extra sensitivity.

HARNESS



A low hook helps increase downforce / mast foot pressure, for more control. This dramatically improves board speed too, both of which are vital for carve gibing. That said a seat harness (lowest hook) generally has such a low hook it becomes trickier to unhook from, potentially unsettling your control on the approach. Wear your waist harness as low as possible, literally on your pelvis, well underneath your belly button not like a bra.



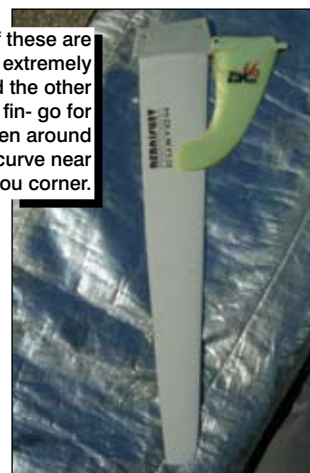
BOARDS, SAILS AND FINS



The best board to learn to gybe on is one that stays planing longest and/or is most stable when off the plane, not one that carves tightest. A 120ish litre board is usually about right for an average weight sailor.



Neither of these would be much good- the 10.6m is too cumbersome and the 4.7m would need too much wind- a 6.5m ish in about a F4-5 is ideal.



Again, neither of these are ideal- one is an extremely upright race fin, and the other a dedicated wave fin- go for something in between around 35cm with plenty of curve near the tip to help you corner.

SUMMARY

If you didn't follow INTuition's Pro Technique series, you should download the Tuning with Nik Baker feature from www.guycrubb.com/technique/magazine article. Also for the best general tuning tips please get my "5-A-Day" feature- www.guycrubb.com/technique/magazine articles. These will give you loads more understanding about tuning in general and help make more sense of this feature.

GUY CRIBB INTUITION ©

Taking The World By Storm

The best way for you to improve your windsurfing is to join Cribby for some of his acclaimed INTuition coaching, either overseas for a week of non stop winds and sunshine, or in the UK for day courses- please check out guycrubb.com for more info.

Guy has taught thousands of people to carve gybe, use the footstraps, crack the waterstart (without all that swimming) helped loads of beginners and coached some of the UK's best windsurfers to become awesome wave sailors.

Having won twelve British Champion titles and been running dedicated coaching courses for over a decade, he's the man to radically improve your windsurfing.

www.guycrubb.com Bookings- Planet Windsurf 0870 749 1959