

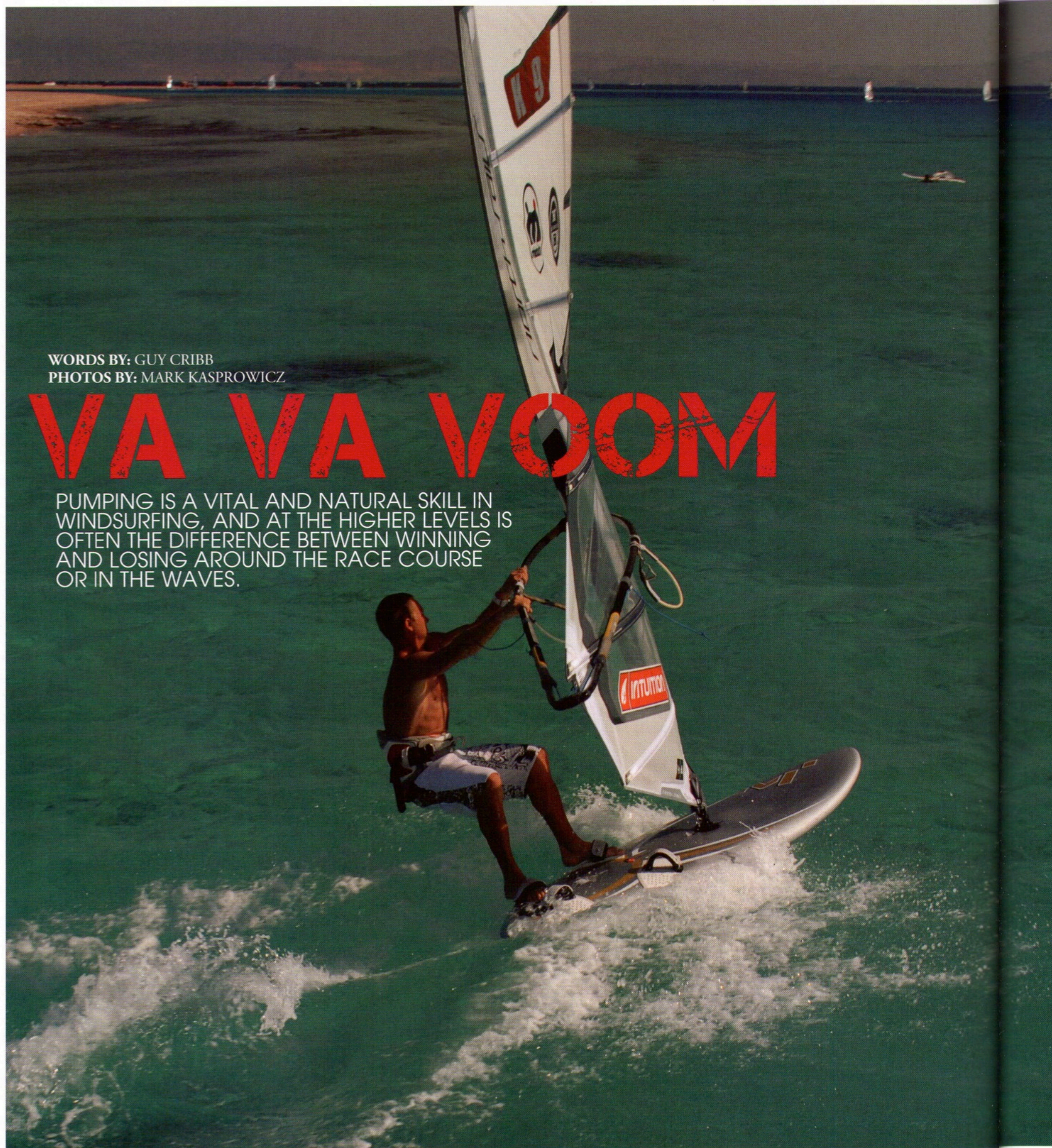
INTUITION SLALOM RACING

TECHNIQUE SERIES

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VA VA VOOM

PUMPING IS A VITAL AND NATURAL SKILL IN WINDSURFING, AND AT THE HIGHER LEVELS IS OFTEN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WINNING AND LOSING AROUND THE RACE COURSE OR IN THE WAVES.



When you're wave sailing, you should be using a sail that is only just large enough for the conditions, to ensure all the tricks can be performed in relative control. So pumping is essential to maximise your speed and performance, getting out through waves or riding them. This article may help you with this, but is especially aimed at slalom sailing, where by contrast you should be using very large sails for the conditions, but will still need good pumping technique. Around a race course top speed is helpful, but the race will be won or lost through tactics, gybing and fine acceleration. Even when you're maxed out, you will need to pump to exit the gybes or gybe marks, as this is where most of the overtaking/ ground gained is made.

A pump should combine the following key points

- * Revving the sail as much as possible, achieved by sheeting in/ pulling as hard as possible on the back hand only
- * Increasing downforce/ mast foot pressure - to keep the board flat so it can freely accelerate, by keeping the rig forwards
- * Transferring all the power of your pump into the board efficiently, so as not to allow the power you've generated to dissipate and to keep the board trimmed flat to freely accelerate- by pushing through your legs into the balls of your feet



1) Pumping
not humping!



2) Pumping
not humping!



1) Humping
not pumping!



2) Humping
not pumping!



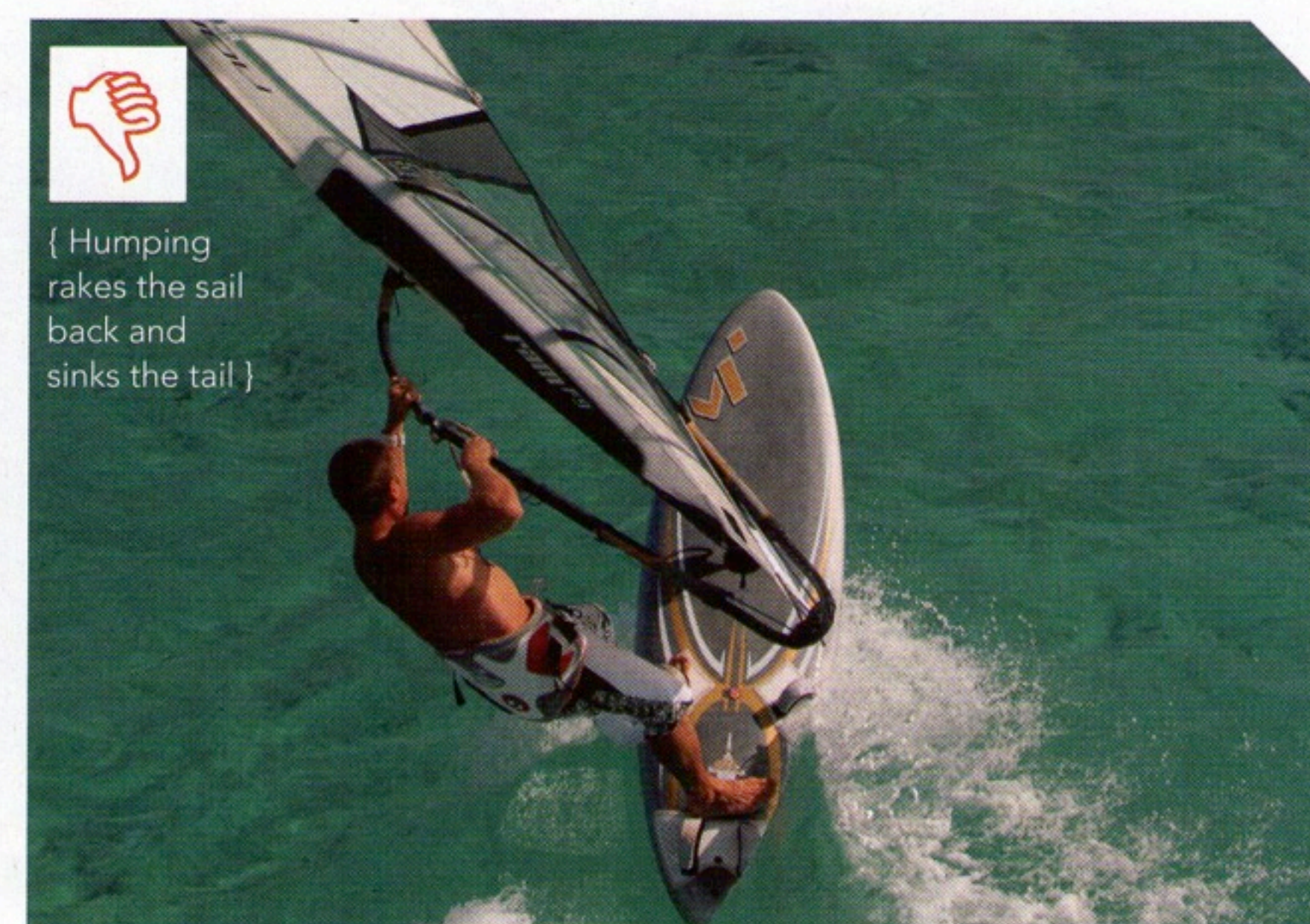
However 'humping' is the technique I see many windsurfers using- which is a greater physical strain on the body that produces little output. If you find yourself pulling on both arms evenly (this is hard to spot without video analysis) you can not be sheeting the sail in enough- you're probably pulling the mast and clew back towards you equally, or just doing pull ups on the boom, humping like a porn star.



{ Pumping
keeps the
rig forwards
and revs the
engine }



{ Humping
rakes the sail
back and
sinks the tail }



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PUMP UP THE VOLUME- NUMBER ONE!

Number one tip- **MOVE YOUR FRONT HAND BACK:** right back to the front harness line. This, above all other tips is the most important thing, nothing will have as greater effect as this single movement. If you remember just one thing to increase the power of your sail or pumps, whether beginner or expert: remember to move your front hand right back to the front harness line. It allows the mast to move forwards (increasing early planing) and naturally sheets in the sail (more revs).

Use a Cribb Sheet to position your harness lines correctly: ensuring your front line is not too far forwards. Some less experienced schools of thought will put your lines too far forwards, which pulls the mast back towards you: choking power, ruining speed and acceleration, and preventing you from moving your front hand back enough for the ultimate pumps. Check out www.guycribb.com for more on Cribb Sheets and technique.

LEARN TO PUMP

The best way to learn to pump is to come on an INTuition clinic. Failing that put your kit on the beach pointing on a reach (or if there's too much power turn upwind slightly) and follow this procedure. Alternatively remember everything in this feature and try it on the water...

The correct starting position for a pump is absolutely crucial. If you get this right, you'll find you may be planing even without having to pump. It's one of INTuition's Core Skills- The Missing Link.

Check it out on the INTuition Gybing and Core Skills DVD or at www.guycribb.com. It's the missing link between planing and not planing.

The Missing Link will increase the power of your sail so much that some intermediate windsurfers will find it frightening to be so close to a catapult. But advanced windsurfers, and certainly slalom hopefuls, will need to get used to this far out position. Once there, you'll find you rarely need to pump to get going, as the rig position is powerful enough.

VROOOM VROOOOM VROOOM

Your goal now is to rev the engine to the max, pulling as hard as possible on your back arm to sheet the sail in as fast as possible. If you manage to pull the clew at 5mph towards the tail of your board, you've increased the wind by 5mph. If you pull it as hard as you bleeding well can, tearing the boom from its hinges, at around 20mph, then you'll have significantly increased the power of your sail. This is what I call revving the engine, and a windsurfing day doesn't go by without loads of revs.

Coinciding with the revs, you need to tip the rig right forwards to keep the board flat and free to accelerate, with increased downforce or mast foot pressure.

So the correct arm movements for pumping, and you should try this now even if you're sat on the bog, is: from two slightly bent arms nipple width apart, elbows pointing down, move your back hand towards your front elbow, as if playing the violin. As you do this, extend your front arm forwards and away from you.

Check out the images of good pumping above to see the arms and rig moving forwards like this, and note that at the end of the pump both hands are between my line of sight and the mast. Check yours- if you're doing it wrong, your back hand may still be behind you.

When learning, it's much better to limit your number of pumps to one or two big, good ones, always concentrating on returning to the Missing Link, rather than just going mental yanking away.

Also, at the end of each pump, try to hold that revved/ sheeted in position for a second before getting on with the next one. Learn to pump focussing on using just your back arm to rev the engine. Once you've got it sussed, then your focus might change to how hard you rev the engine, or increasing the number of pumps, using your shoulders, hips and weight to help put power into your revs.



INTUITION CORE SKILL - THE MISSING LINK

* Move your front hand back to the front harness line, so that your hands are just less than shoulder width apart

* Drop down as low as possible

* Pull gently on your back hand and feel the power pull you onto the balls of your feet, extending your legs

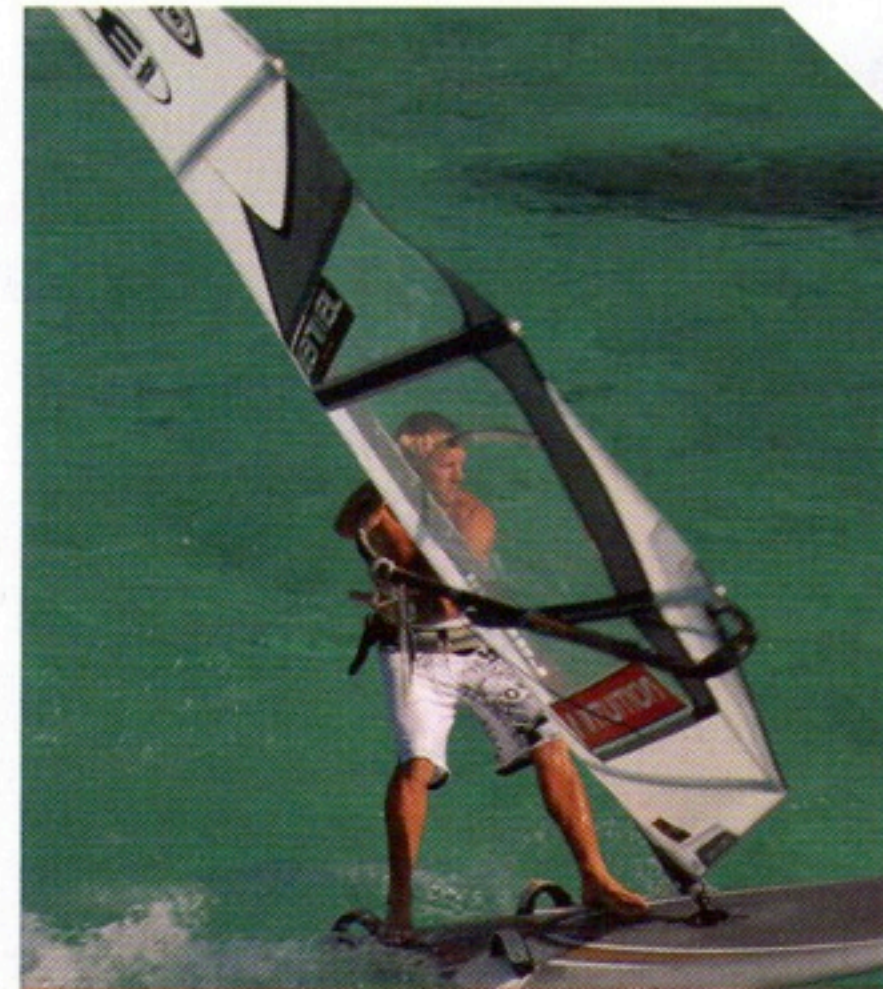
* Get both feet in both footstraps (tip- to get the back foot into the back strap pull a few more revs on your back hand- this will shift your weight to your front toes for a second allowing you to move your back foot.)

* Stretch the rig forwards as far as you can until your back foot is being ripped from the back footstrap: one millimetre from a catapult - the most powerful position the rig can be in. If you do not reach this point, you are not making the most of the rig's potential power, so try again, tipping the rig further forwards and pulling harder on the revs, using your back foot as an anchor to prevent catapulting. This is basically an advanced Missing Link.

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Pumping on a race course is most important exiting the gybe mark, so here's a sequence of a good gybe exit, getting straight on with pumping.



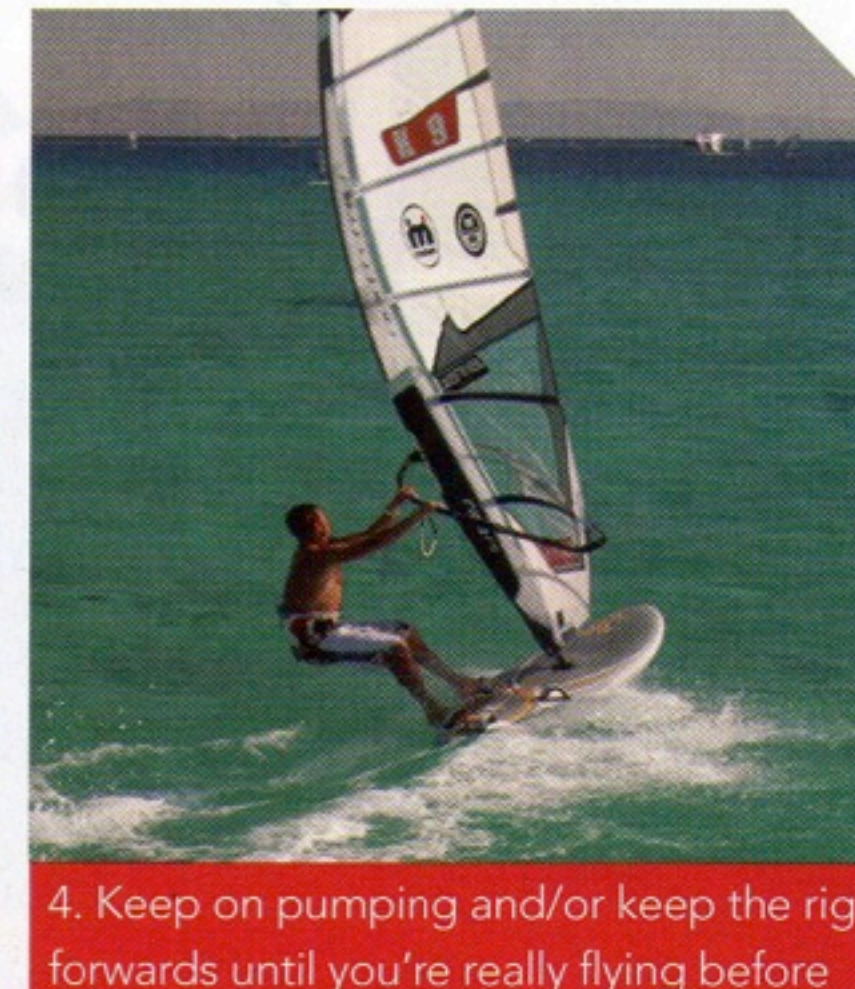
1. Flipping the rig with a Boomshaka, note the new front hand reaching for the new side of the boom in underhand grip- this helps reach as far back as possible to ensure a powerful exit.



2. Pull the rig right forwards into the Missing Link- now you can see clearly how far back the front hand reached (still in underhand grip)



3. One big pump on the exit and into the footstraps as quickly as possible- if you have any forward speed, or are surely going to get planing due to the wind speed, get straight into both footstraps!



4. Keep on pumping and/or keep the rig forwards until you're really flying before hooking back in. In lighter winds/ bigger rigs, better to hook in too late rather than too early. Hooking in early can cause you to come off the plane just when you needed to work harder to keep it going. It's the opposite in strong winds/ small sails and boards where you should hook in early to keep the board going in a straight line, but still only after getting in the footstraps and planing.

Note for intermediate/ advanced windsurfers trying to turn their gybes into planing exits- your aim is to get into both footstraps before hooking in- this will help your acceleration rather than killing it.

MORE VA VA VROOOM

Under or Over?

Pumping is easier to achieve using overhand front hand grip, since this allows you to let the rig extend further forwards and naturally creates a bit more mast foot pressure (as you're pulling down). However, a good racing style gybe will see you exit with underhand grip, essential to reach far enough back down the boom for a planing exit, and best to help you stay low down and carving. So, which should you use to pump? Since pumping is most important exiting the gybe, I suggest you ultimately focus on the underhand grip. However to develop your skills initially, for instance when you're leaving a beach or waterstart, overhand grip is fine.

Look Upwind

Before you try pumping, you must be 75% sure you can get planing in the given windspeed. This is established by looking upwind for the gust. If you think you might get planing, give it a good go. If you don't think you could, don't waste your energy. (More experienced racers will combine more info to establish if they can get planing- even the wake from another windsurfer could be enough of a wave to surf onto the plane for instance.)

Flatpress

Check out the trim of the board- flat from nose to tail (by keeping the rig forwards and pulling on the revs) and flat from side to side (by pushing through the balls of your feet)- ensuring minimum drag for maximum acceleration. There's no point pumping if you're dragging a bucket!

Footstraps

Connected to the board with your footstraps is sooooo much better for pumping, as you can really efficiently transfer energy into the board. Never do more than one or two pumps out of the footstraps. If you find this difficult, you need to work on getting the rig further forwards with the Missing Link and keeping more pressure on the balls of your feet or toes.

Downwind

If you can pump on a broad reach, that will give you slightly more chance of getting going, however, especially in lighter conditions, never stay on a broad reach once you're nearly planing. Just as you feel the board accelerate, turn across

the wind, as when you start planing, you'll be doing about 15-20mph, and if you're doing this on a broad reach, in about 15 mph of wind, you'll be sailing away from the source of the wind and therefore taking the wind out of your sail. Turn across the wind as soon as you start planing, by pushing onto your back heel.

SUMMARY

Pumping is an essential windsurfing skill and becomes a more and more important attribute the more advanced you become at windsurfing. So start now, whether beginner or expert: increasing the revs will make you a better windsurfer.

Guy Cribb INTuition

Britain's Professional Windsurf Coaching. Guy Cribb won 13 British Championships in 20 years of professional windsurfing and has throughout the last fifteen years developed a unique windsurfing syllabus called INTuition. If you want to sail like a pro, you should sail with the pro.

Whether you want to learn effortless rig recovery in your waterstarts- with no swimming involved, or smooth carve gybing, footstrapping or sailing faster in more control, looping or racing, Cribby is the world's foremost expert in helping you improve your technique.

For all his clinics, including Slalom Clinics in the UK please email guy@guycribb.com. More INfo at www.guycribb.com | Copyright Guy Cribb 2009

Increasing downforce/ mast foot pressure- to keep the board flat so that it can freely accelerate, by keeping the rig forwards and hanging low from the boom

