



# THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

by Guy Cribb

**"KAULI HAS A GREAT PHYSIQUE TO WEAR HIS HARNESS LOW - HE'S SLIM AND HAS A TRIANGULAR SHAPED BACK. BUT THIS IS NOTHING COMPARED WITH HAVING A BEER GUT - THAT WOULD REALLY STOP THE HARNESS FROM RISING! "**

If you're one of those people who think "I can't use longer harness lines because my arms aren't long enough" then if these stats below were true no doubt you'd be pleased:

**Heights and harness line lengths**

Jason Polakow 185cm/6' uses 32" lines  
Ricardo Campello 182/5'11" uses 30" lines  
Robby Swift 174cm/5'9" uses 28" lines  
Kauli Seadi 170cm/5'8" uses 26" lines

Those are the correct heights of four of the most phenomenal windsurfers ever, but the harness line lengths are incorrect.

Did you know that your height is almost identical to your arm span? And that none of these JP riders have disproportionately long arms? So how and why is it that these harness line lengths below are the real ones?

**Harness line length**

Jason Polakow 26"  
Ricardo Campello 28" \*  
Robby Swift 30"  
Kauli Seadi 32"

The Neil Pryde rider with the longest arms is using the shortest lines. The rider with the shortest arms, is using the longest harness lines. Strange but true.

Don't worry - I am not about to suggest shorter people need to use longer harness lines than tall people - despite what the evidence above could demonstrate. We could manipulate these stats to show older people should use shorter lines, or men with beards should use longer lines.

I'm going to try to identify why these riders use the lines they do, but most importantly, how you can adjust your technique to start using longer lines too. Especially if you've tried before and felt like your arms weren't long enough to reach the boom.

*\*For the record, Ricardo has recently changed from 28's to 30" lines.*

**THE LONG AND SHORT OF PRO WINDSURFING**

I am very privileged to of just rejoined JP and Neil Pryde International team and use Kauli's gear and set up - Neil Pryde Fly2 sails, JP Twinser Quads and to round it all off, Kauli's 32" lines. OK I admit it, I want to sail like Kauli does. And I figured if I used the same gear as him and the same harness line length, some of his style would rub off on my sailing. Even if it was 1% I would be happy. Even happier if a bit of Jason's style was there too, some of Antoine's speed perhaps, a bit of Swity's airtime and Ricardo's radicalness. Yup, I am buying into it - if I use their gear, it's true, I expect to sail more like them.

So off I went to Brazil with my INTuition guests for one of the best INTuition courses to date, armed with Kauli style 32" lines. I was accustomed to using 30" lines wave sailing, and 28-32" lines slalom racing.

And there is a time and a place for all of that. But I had never used 32" lines for wave sailing. My rig was so far away from me it might as well of been someone else's.

His lines are seriously long! My arms weren't long enough to reach the boom, until I adjusted my seat...



# Guy Cribb INTuition



Longer lines are easier to hook in and out of, allowing a smooth transition from blasting to turning

I might be wrong, but I think they use their lines because:

**Jason** – has been sailing for decades, revolutionized wave sailing and pushes the boundaries of big wave riding further and further every year. If you see him sail he's usually up to his thighs under water on boards that are well and truly 'sinkers' wobbling around for ages before he catches the next wave, which he then proceeds to destroy with an aggression and style that frankly is second to none. He's upright over the board and is getting the most out of his relatively small sail for the conditions. Rather like windsurf racing, the harness lines tend to be shorter in lighter winds when you don't need to be so far from the sail. It's how he does it. If he returned to international competition and had to sail in side onshore choppy venues performing jumps etc, I think we'd see his lines naturally grow.

**Ricardo** – Ric was firstly a surfer in Brazil, then in his teens became a windsurfer, arguably the most talented of our time. The triple freestyle world champion took the windsurfing rule book and ripped it to shreds, defying laws of physics and sailing to basically invent freestyle. He's now combined them to become Vice- World Wave Champion 2010. During that year he moved from 28" lines to 30" lines and prefers them whether he's crossing the choppy waters of his home sport Margarita, or going for triple forward loops in Gran Canaria – the only man insane enough to try them.

**Swiftly** – former world youth champion racer turned big wave surfer (he's a true Jaws local) and outstanding wave sailor- top five in the world for many years now, loves the 30" lines whether he's slalom racing or wave sailing. It distances

him from the rig for control and keeps him low to spring into radical maneuvers.

**Kauli** – the Brazil nut brought a new wave of radical innovation of equipment development, a surfing style that was tighter and more tweaked than anyone before and has revolutionised jumping and riding in the world cup. Kauli uses long, long lines, he could almost swing in them. His boom is far from high, in fact his sail design has a radically low clew and average height boom. His lines allow him to sail incredibly low down, coiled like a cat about to spring into action.

## BOOM HEIGHT

As these four riders have a disparity in height of 15cm they also have different boom heights – Jason's generally being about 5cm higher than Kauli's, Swiftly's and Ric's who all use basically the same position – half way up the cut out on Neil Pryde sails.

But the one thing they all do slightly differently, that ultimately solves the mystery of why the man with the shortest arms uses the longest harness lines is this –

## HARNESSE HEIGHT

Kauli's harness is lowest, then Swiftly's then Ric's then Jason's. They are all low, but Kauli's remains low, and if it slides up, he pushes it back down.

Kauli has a great physique to wear his harness low – he's slim and has a triangular shaped back. But this is nothing compared with having a beer gut – that would really stop the harness from rising! Position your harness tightly around your belt area, beneath your gut, for best results.

This lower hook position changes the angle of the lines from boom to you when planing. They



32" lines in control with triple  
Wave World Champ Kauli Seadi

point more downwards, and less horizontally. This basically means your weight swings from the boom more, increasing mast foot pressure which is great in large doses for every aspect of your windsurfing.

## GIRLS

The hour-glass shape of a woman has many benefits and attractions, but it is not a good shape for wearing a waist harness. If you put the harness on the widest point, naturally it is going to slide up into the narrower area, before finally becoming jammed under your ribs. It's not comfortable and it is very poor for your windsurfing as once the harness has risen the pull of the lines is more horizontal than vertical, and as such no longer naturally suspends your weight from them, but puts all your weight on your feet rather than the mast foot. No wonder it's hard to plane.

As an intermediate to advanced windsurfer it is paramount that you maintain good mast foot pressure/downforce on the board, for control.

There are many girls who have overcome these 'high hook' problems with extensive time on the water, a straighter body shape and by adjusting their boom heights higher than normal.

However girls with the wide hips should definitely try seat harnesses. I have changed so many guests windsurfing for the better, and one of the most instant results is getting girls to try seat harnesses. It turns on the power, acceleration, top speeds and jumps instantly. Whether they stick with the seat harness or return to a waist harness is irrelevant- the fact that they have felt the benefit of using the lower hook is enough, they all now understand the importance of pushing their harness down if it slides up.

## WHO SHOULD USE LONGER LINES, AND HOW LONG SHOULD THEY BE?

If freestyle, wave sailing or racing is not your thing, long lines still might be.

The benefits of longer lines are mostly:

- Easier and smoother to hook in and hook out- whether you are going for a triple loop, a carve gybe, or not planing, smoothly unhooking is crucial to maintain board control.
- Improved control when overpowered by being further away from the rig with a lower centre of gravity.
- Increased control in choppy water by having your legs more horizontal.
- Improved range of rig movement, helping pumping for example, and getting the rig forwards for early planing. (I should mention if there is one drawback from longer lines it slightly reduces your early planing- easily overcome through improved technique or raising your boom.)
- Increased wind range of your sail.

So if you think any of these features might help your windsurfing, join the world's best sailors and their decisions to use longer lines. I get my very shortest guests (>50kgs) to use 26" lines, and most other guests to use 28- 30" lines. Only extremely tall or competent windsurfers are using 32" lines.

Be warned- Neil Pryde and North harness lines are notoriously short! So if buying Da Kine's go for 34" lines as they are the equivalent of other brands 30s!

If measuring them yourself – use this image as a guideline – these were my 32" lines earlier this month.



32" lines in the hands of Guy Cribb

## ASS - THE HOLE OF THE TRUTH

It is drilled into beginner windsurfers not to stick their ass out, for good reason.

This sticks with windsurfers as they try to progress, but the truth is as soon as you start using the harness, you've got to start sticking your ass out. Reason being, when you stick your ass out, the harness, that is positioned around your waist (belt height) moves away from the boom. With the lines connected this increases the tension in them, taking it off your arms. Fact. Any INTuition guest



Massive range of rig movement. (Yes, there are more amusing captions for this image, but it does show the agility such long lines gives you.)

will tell you what a massive difference it makes to your stance actively pushing your ass out. You can put the theory to the test this minute – wherever you are – please stand up:

- Put your arms out in front of you as though holding the boom.
- Imagine you're wearing a harness and the hook is belt height.
- Push your ass out to increase the distance between boom and harness hook- therefore increasing harness line tension.

Now lean your shoulders back – which is what so many amateurs will tell you to do, and note how your harness hook becomes closer to the boom, decreasing tension in the lines/putting more weight on your arms. Disaster.

There is a time and a place to have your shoulders back – but it's not when you're trying to increase tension into your harness, whether beginner or expert.

When I'm sailing I am actively trying to increase harness line tension, not just with my body weight but with my strength pushing my legs straighter/ pushing my ass out. A by-product of my ass going out is my arms bending, so I often find my elbows are bent, even using 32" lines.

## LOW HOOK

It is crucial your harness is worn like a trouser belt and not like a bra. OK, after falling off a few times it will rise, but you need to push it back down, or grow a suitable beer gut.

To develop your ability to use longer lines and/or generally improve your windsurfing, wear your harness very low (and keep it low) then push your ass out.

Here's a young Brazilian dude borrowing my gear in Jeri – prob about 15 years old, 5'8" , 45 kilos demonstrating good stance and remarkably comfy on the 32" lines.



I asked John Skye what he uses for wave sailing: "I have been using 34's for the last few years.

Largely because as you said, once you tried longer lines, its really hard to go back, feels wrong! The main benefits I saw were in one handed jumps, like Backies.. you keep your distance from the rig, which I think gives more control. Also when its crazy windy I think its good to be away from the rig. I think maybe 34's are a touch too long for me and sometimes I think I should try 32's, but for the moment I am not changing. Drawbacks... maybe in light winds its better to be a bit more upright, but I often knock the boom up a couple of centimetres with a 5.8 anyway."

## SUMMARY

Put your harness on around your pelvis/belt height.

Tighten your harness when wet.

Keep your harness low.

Try longer lines.

Push your ass out when sailing to increase harness line tension.

Use a Cribb Sheet to position your harness lines using science not hope.

Guy Cribb is a brand ambassador and rider for JP-Australia, Neil Pryde, holiday Extras, Animal, Adidas Eyewear and Pol Roger champagne.

Guy is the Godfather of INTuition and the world's leading windsurfing coach.

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