

BACK TO SAIL

by Guy Cribb

Cribby's INTuition Stylemaster series floods into the autumn with this class dish, best served on a small wave. Like all windsurfing moves, it's easiest to suss in light winds, firstly on a floaty board, but then it can be enjoyed on any size of board if there's a wave pushing you along. Perfect for the autumn!

Study the sequence overleaf carefully because although you may have seen photos or video of this move previously, you'll see from the sequence exactly how to get to the 'back to sail' position - simply a step over the rig to the new side, rather than anything radical like spinning around as I've seen some people trying.



CATCH A WAVE

This move is easier on the face of a wave.

To catch a wave, slow down outside of the impact zone (where waves are breaking) and look behind you, searching and waiting for a wave or swell to catch up with you. Just before it catches you (about a board length away), tip the rig forwards and pump to get you going. Push hard through you front foot to push the board down the wave face.

As you feel the acceleration sliding down the wave face, turn upwind slightly so the board is pointing about 45 degrees downhill, instead of straight downhill. This will keep you on the wave face rather than sliding out in front. Now that you're surfing along the wave, regardless of the wind the board can stay planing. Try to always keep the board actually on the wave face and not out in front of it.





Stand forwards on your board with your front foot slightly in front of the mast-foot, but still on the windward side. Catch a swell/wave and slide your front hand right to the front of the boom (Boomshaka!)



Let go with your backhand and reach over onto the opposite side of the boom. Hold this pose to re-balance as the sail sheets out.



Rake the rig back for a second to make room so that you can step over it...



I just give the sail a bit of a push in this shot to increase the power, helping me ride the wave, but most importantly, I'm keeping my weight on my heels here to stop myself from being flattened – see top tips below.



Stand totally upright as soon as possible, facing forwards with your back flat against the rig, not sticking your ass out.



With your back against the sail, you can afford to ease right off with your backhand now, even letting go of one or both hands for a moment for extra cred. To control the power of the rig, you can sheet in or out by twisting your body.



This is when a 100% carbon mast makes all the difference, reducing the swing weight and enabling me to recover from here...



Grabbing the boom back on the original side, I'm home, dry and superstylin'.

COMMON MISTAKES

The board turns into the wind. This often happens in light winds when you 'over sheet' or push the rig too far to windward, which in turn pushes the tail away from you and the nose into the wind. Try to increase the power of the sail and weight onto your front foot by tipping the rig further forwards.

The nose dives. This usually happens either on smaller boards or stronger winds, as the power of the sail pushes you forwards onto your front foot. Twist your body to face directly forwards so that you can sheet out, reducing the power so that you can lean back to get your weight onto your back foot.

The rig falls to windward when you throw it behind you. Whilst you're throwing it behind you, try to throw it further forwards instead of into the wind.

The rig falls to windward whilst you're sailing back to sail. Other than the obvious reason of leaning too far to windward and pushing it down, it might be because you've 'over sheeted' (i.e. pushed the clew of the sail over the tail of the board to windward and 'stalled' the sail). In this situation, facing forwards to help sheet out will actually give the sail the power and position it needs to remain upright.





Step over the mast with your back foot. Whilst doing so, aggressively throw the rig behind you with the intention of catching the mast with your front hand. Allow the boom to slide freely through your backhand so you don't lose contact with it. Throwing the rig to windward like this helps create room for you to step over it.

Your back foot should land as far back on the board as possible, with the weight on your heels. Pushing gently against the boom with your backhand will increase the rig's power, if it needs be 'popped' back up to you (if you have thrown it too low to the water).

Grab the mast with your front hand.



To flip the rig, hold the mast as high as possible with your front hand (better leverage over the rig than if your hand was still low down (mine is a bit low in this shot)), and tip the mast forwards. Push your ass into the rig behind the centre of effort and the rig will naturally begin flipping.

It's tricky to handle the swing weight of the rig during this kind of flip, as you don't have very good grip holding the mast. As you can see in this shot I choose to grab my uphaul, knowing that by holding that I'll recover from even the dodgiest flip. Push your ass hard against the rig to push the clew through the eye of the wind, speeding up the flip.

Here's when the flip can go drastically wrong as the mast is leaning so far over. I manage to recover it from here because I'm hauling on the uphaul with all my might to get the mast back upright.

KEY POINTS

Use a Wave

Surfing a wave will keep your speed up and thus naturally bring the sail in line with the board more, giving you more room to stand on the wrong side of it. Without a wave, you're travelling slower so the rig will naturally want to flag out at right angles to the board, leaving you no room to stand. In this respect this move is best accomplished either in light winds or with waves, even if they're tiny like in this sequence.

Push Through Your Heels

Whenever you're standing on the wrong side of the sail in any freestyle move, keeping your weight on the windward rail of the board helps tremendously. When the rig pushes you, your weight gets pushed onto the leeward side of the board, digging the rail in and stopping the board from slipping downwind, thus increasing the oomph of the rig and flattening you. Not best explained in text, but no doubt anyone who's been on the wrong side of the sail has been flattened, and if you'd have kept your weight on the windward side of the board, you might have got away with it. So, in this move, when you're on the wrong side of the rig, push through your heels.

Stand Up Straight

Once you've got into position on the back to sail side, stand up straight and lean back onto the sail. This helps get weight on your heels and uses your body weight to counteract the force of the sail, rather than relying on strength in your arms.

Twist To Face Forwards

This will help control the power in the sail and naturally improve your balance.

Flipping The Rig

Slide your mast hand as high as possible on the mast before you flip the rig and it will give you better leverage to keep control during the inevitably heavy swing weight of this 360degree flip.

SUMMARY

This is the perfect move to try next time you're sailing on the coast with even the smallest of waves, especially if the wind has dropped and you're wondering what to do next. If the UK ever has a sunny evening again, get out more and become an INTuition Stylemaster!

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