

ON THE ROAD TO PERFECTION

It's all about balance; and I do not mean only your balance on the board.



Important is to sail comfortably and fast

In the next few articles I would like to give some advice to all of you who want to improve your sailing on longboards.

1. TRIM

One of the things I like about sports in general is that people who know how to do it look unbelievable effortless doing things some other can only dream of. Many years ago when I was maybe not a beginner anymore, but most definitely not an expert, I remember sitting on my raceboard (mistral OD at that time) in the sea in Sopot recovering from another crash. I just lost another episode in my „fight against nature“. I was trying to catch my breath to get the sail one more time out from water and sail back to the beach to finish the day as a loser. Just as my vision stopped to be blurry, there was a 50kg, tiny blond Polish chick sailing around with big smile on her face. Like it was not blowing 7B and there were no waves. First I thought it was some kind of hallucination because it was not possible. But damn; it wasn't. My physical exhaustion turned into general depression very fast. My first thought was: Ok; it is time to start playing chess or do bowling. Then the second one: That is a stupid idea because I will probably suck in those sports as well. And then a few expressions in

Polish, Slovak, Russian, English, German, Hungarian that are only transmittable after 22.00. And then the main question: How the F... is this possible? The only doping I knew Poles were using was evening beer with syrup and I was on that medicine as well. So where the hell was the difference? I came back to the shore and would have offered a beer, gold and my own slavery to that girl if she had told me the secret of "the game". She was laughing and she still is when I see her around nowadays.

So what was the answer ???

I do not remember clearly but it was something like: ... aaah, I don't know, I just sail and because I have no wetsuit and it is a bit chili I am trying not to fall too often..." I was ready to go and jump of the bridge or end my miserable life some other painful way. Friends saved me because they planned another one of those legendary parties, which you do not want to miss, that ended about an hour before training the next morning.

Miracles in sports do not happen very often. As some famous sportsman once commented on his luck in the game: Yes I was lucky. But you know what is funny, the more I train, the more luck I have. So I started to train harder, but not only that. Hours and hours of training can help, but they do not guarantee perfection. It depends also a lot on training new things when looking for the balance in windsurfing.



Perfect mark rounding key to success

Balance in windsurfing is partly about the strength and technique of a sailor, but mainly about equipment tuning. If you are able to sail effortless to the top mark, then if you have strength to pump away from you opponents on downwind, you have a chance to win. If you execute the bottom mark rounding with perfection, there is nobody who can challenge you on the first part of upwind. To be able to do that your technique has to be perfect. And when sailing on course you have to be able to concentrate on the wind and opponents, and not on the board handling. That is all a nice theory, but how do you find the right balance. Rather than copying the style and setting of the fastest man in the fleet, the aim is to find your own balance and match the speed of the fastest one in the fleet. Each person has a different approach to

boardsailing. When we talk about raceboard, there are many ways to set up your equipment, choose the angle or speed both upwind and downwind. That is one of the things I love about longboard sailing. You can have a guy with great speed but smaller angle and somebody fairly slow but with good angle and they meet on the top mark after 5min upwind leg. Finding your own balance and the best speed possible is an endless battle. Mastack position, boom height, harness line position, fin size, centerboard angle, sail profile, footstraps position... those are the main variables in the quest for perfection. They need to be adjusted differently if you are 50kg Polish blonde mermaid or 90kg bodybuilder beast. There is no perfect recipe on how to do it, but it is important to try one step at the time. Try to focus on one thing every day and try to change it. Go more forward with your mastack then normal, then more back, and then use the same position again. If you get faster or more comfortable on any setting, remember why it happened, get used to it and try something else. It is best to do all this in a group or with a training partner. Because you will probably feel as the fastest sailor on Earth when beeing alone on the water and you will be almost sure Antoine, Robby or Bjorn do not have a chance to match your speed. When you look for the right trim while sailing in the group, there always has to be one person as a reference point who is not changing anything during the training session (or that particular part of the training session). Few years ago there were big modifications in sail sizes in Raceboard class windsurfing. Many manufacturers adjusted to this change with new board designs. Until now many sailors just put the bigger sail on the board and neither did adjust it with the rest of the equipment, nor did adjust their technique to the new environment. And it is not only the sailing technique on one tack. There is a big difference in maneuvers. There is a lot to talk about and I will do that in series of articles and videos, which should help you to get faster and be more comfortable on the board.



Extreme sailing on longboard

Next time we take a raceboard out from the box and I will show you how you can change it from a racing machine to a winning machine.

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