



sb technique

SWIFT EXITS

MAKE YOUR MOVE!

As winter tightens its grip we all want to spend what time we can blasting over the cooler water rather than submersed in it. **Simon Bornhoft** offers some crucial skills and drills to ensure speedier waterstarts. Photos: **Karen Bornhoft / WindWise**



SCENARIO 1: FALLING IN MID-GYBE

A common dismount is when body and rig fall into the turn mid-gybe (usually due to not leaning the rig out of the turn enough to counterbalance). A good sailor will do all they can to hold on to the boom and then pop back up onto the board and sail away clew-first. If you want to achieve this, get brilliant at clew-first beachstarts!

SKILLS & DRILLS: CLEW-FIRST BEACHSTART

We've covered this before to help with gybe exits, but this hugely valuable skill links directly into clew-first waterstarts and gybe recoveries. Here's what to accentuate.

KEY PRINCIPLES

VISION: Look forward and keep on a broad reach.

TRIM: Adopt a wide foot spread to help steer the board.

OPPOSITION: Rig forward (mast downwind), hips back and to windward.

POWER: Pull in and down hard on the rear-placed clew hand to keep the rig 90° to the board.

STANCE: Super-7 'drop-&-push' stance. In strong winds, angle the shoulders back to counter the rig's pull.

MAKE YOUR MOVE: CLEW-FIRST WATERSTART

By accentuating these principles and practicing the clew-first beachstarts in shallow water, you'll develop the muscle memory and a much higher chance of saving more gybes by being able to clew-first waterstart away. Plus you'll have the ability to recover and control the rig when everything isn't quite set up right.



Clew-first beachstart 1



Clew-first beachstart 2



Clew-first beachstart 3

RIGHT SKILL, RIGHT TIME

#1

Hold on. When you feel yourself falling in, do all you can to hang on to that rig!

#2-3

Boom horizontal and broad reach. Your first forceful thought should be to keep rig / clew clear of the water. This often involves pulling down on the front arm to help release the clew and 'try' to get the boom horizontal. But moving the back hand down the boom earlier in the gybe will help you use the boom like a set of handlebars to force that board onto a broad reach.

#4

Body near clew hand. To help control the rig, keep the upper body closer to the rear-placed clew hand to stop the rig being pulled out of your hands.

#5

Extend the rig forward. Like a normal waterstart, extend the arms and roll the head under the boom and accentuate flexing the rear leg.

#6

Stay broad and pull down. Once up, keep broad with the rig at 90° to board. Pull down on the clew hand as though you're trying to rip the boom off the mast, and keep that clew hand in close to your head!

#7-8

Rig rotator. Look forward! Slide the front hand up towards the mast and rotate the rig downwind as the body remains upwind. The old back hand reaches underneath to grab the boom on the new side as the body adopts a low super-7 'drop-&-push' stance.

CLEW-FIRST PROBLEMS

Q: Why can't I hold the rig before and during the rig rotation?

A: Counterintuitive moment: don't sail 'clew-first' with the boom end pointing towards the nose. **Pull the clew hand in to keep that boom approximately 90° to the board.**

Q: Why does the board spin into wind?

A: Too much weight on the back foot, or the mast is pulled / angled too far back.



#1



#5



#2



#6



#3



#7



#4



#8

SCENARIO 2:

FACING THE WRONG WAY?

How many times is the kit set up just right, but you want to go back in the opposite direction? Being able to spin board and rig round without dropping the sail saves time, exhausting swimming and the possible impact of oncoming waves. Being able to do a waterstart gybe is one of the most time-saving (and energy-economic) skills you can learn.

SKILLS & DRILLS: WATERSTART GYBE

Rather than dropping the rig in the water, trying to flip it over and then swimming the whole lot round, good sailors will fly the rig regardless of which way the board is pointing and then gybe the rig for a speedy exit.

#1

Elevate the rig by sliding the mast to windward. Never lift it straight up.

#2

Adopt a wide grip and keep the boom pretty much parallel to the water.

#3

To turn the board, keep the upper body close to the clew hand (left in pic) and push the mast hand (right in pic) away from you, then swim towards the nose.

#4

Once past the nose, keep the boom level and angle the mast towards the tail.

#5-7

As in a gybe, rotate the rig by sliding the front hand right up to the mast and scooping the mast back and then forwards as the hands switch. Keep the arms extended and kick with those feet to reduce the chances of the rig falling down into the water.



#1



#5



#2



#6



#3



#7



#4

STUCK?

The most common mistake is not keeping the boom level and trying to rotate the rig too soon. This ends up with the mast diving down into the water and more swimming for you!



SIMPLE SUMMARY

- Whenever you're down in the water and find yourself 'clew-first', try to keep the boom as horizontal as possible and the upper body more towards the clew hand.
- Once you're out of the water, keep that rig at 90° to the board and pull down on the boom with real gusto!
- Practice both clew-first beach and waterstarts and those waterstart gybes in shallow water. They will keep you sailing longer, you'll stay warmer, and they'll vastly improve your confidence.

QUESTION TIME



If you have any questions about this feature, your sailing, or have any requests for specific topics, email sb@windwise.net. In the meantime, thanks for all the positive feedback this year, and I wish you a wise and windy 2011! See you on the water.



To help Make Your Moves grab a copy of SB's Intermediate or Advanced windsurfing books or sign up for a personalised progression session on a WindWise holiday or UK course. Check windwise.net for full 2011 schedule!



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If you have any questions regarding your technique, or any subjects you'd like covered in the magazine, you can contact sb@windwise.net

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Founder of FastFwd - the new RYA National Coaching System.

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