

## Feasible freestyle Freestyle within our coaching

For years freestyle has been frowned upon and seen by many as a way for instructors to avoid teaching and have a chance to play. However, if used constructively, freestyle can reinforce all aspects of the fastfwd coaching model, enhance board and rig control, build confidence and encourage balance – all of which help to develop everyday sailing.

When we mention the word freestyle most start to think of the sail spinning and arial manoeuvres that the professionals perform. However, everyone can teach and benefit from giving 'feasible' freestyle a go regardless of age, gender and ability – and many instructors do.

For those who are a little apprehensive, instructors Chris Frisby and Ash Holmes joined me to demonstrate just a few of the many manoeuvres that can be used during coaching sessions to help with everyday sailing.

### Clew first beach start

A great exercise for developing the rig and body movement, needed when gybing.

- 1 Manoeuvre the rig into a clew first beach start position, place both hands with a wide spread grip on the boom with the board positioned on a broad reach to aid control. Place your back foot towards the back of the board. If it has foot straps, place your back foot just behind the front foot straps, as in a normal beach start. Let the rig move away as you bring your head up and over your

foot on the board (nose over toes) and extend the arms.

- 2 Bring the front foot up and onto the board, just behind the mast foot and next to the centre line. Keep controlled counter balance with a low body position.
- 3 When you are ready to rotate the rig, keep looking ahead. The finish is just like the end of a gybe – slide the mast hand closer to the boom clamp, let go with the front hand (the hand closest to the clew of the sail). Remember to bring the body forwards as the rig rotates back.



4 As the rig is brought forwards bringing the body back, counter

balancing throughout the rig movement.

### Front to sail

A good exercise to enhance control of both board and rig, wind awareness and balance. Front to sail is also the starting phase to many other manoeuvres.

- 1 Look and drive the board upwind, ensuring the nose of the board has gone through the wind before initiating the move.
- 2 With a positive movement from



the front arm, direct the mast forwards and low towards the nose of the board. You are now sailing front to sail.

- 3 With arms extended, feather the power to keep control. To increase the power, push out with your back arm.
- 4 To steer upwind, lean the rig to the back. To steer downwind, lean the rig to the front.

### Heli Tack

A Heli tack will encourage good board and rig control, emphasise movement, enhance balance and wind awareness. It is a great fun exercise for rig rotation during a gybe and once mastered, students should have the ability to use their skills for an upwind 360.



- 1 Look and drive the board upwind. A little back foot pressure pushing away will help ensure the nose of the board has gone through the

wind before initiating the move. Adopting a wider stance will also help this manoeuvre.



- 2 As in 'front to sail', a positive movement from the front arm directs the mast forwards and low towards the nose of the board. Transfer your body weight to the front foot. The sail should now be to windward of you.
- 3 Keep looking to the direction of travel, a relaxed back arm with light pressure. (Too much pressure



- 4 As the board and rig continue to pivot away from the wind, the wind will catch on the new side of the sail, taking you for

a short time into a clew first sailing position. Bend your knees and keep low. Hold the clew first position and change your feet as with a gybe, bringing the front foot to join your back foot with the original back foot placed forwards and towards the centre.

- 5 Keep looking forwards in the direction of travel. Release your back hand.
- 6 Ensure the board is trimmed as this will allow you a little more time to get comfortable with the rig and sail away!!

