

It blew from Monday to Thursday, with most days reaching 30 knots. It peaked at 35 knots the past 2 days, but just too late tide wise for me to take advantage. I still managed to clock my best speeds to date and was just shy of the 50. I had 49.13 on Wednesday and 49.52 yesterday, this places me in 10th place in the peak speed ranking worldwide. Practice definitely helps, and I've progressed a lot over the past 4 days. I now feel stronger and more confident to control the speed, and as a result I hardly wipe out now which helps prevent injuries.

I have bruised ribs from hard wipe outs on the first 2 days, but I've been fine since then until Wednesday, when I twisted my ankle in a wipe out caused by running too shallow and I did a cartwheel. The shape and line of the run changes constantly as the tide changes, so it's very tricky when choosing your line of attack, as what was deep enough for you last run might be too shallow for you very next one, and going too deep results in bone rattling chop and slow speeds. I did not fully appreciate the barrier until it was removed, as then you had a fairly predictable water state and line during high tide, the irony is that high tide was in the afternoon this week had the event still be running.

Next year they might create a new barrier further out so that the tide plays a lesser role and to create a straighter run, this will almost certainly allow for greater speed. Luderitz allows for greater speed than Walvis as the wind's at a broader angle, and it gets stronger wind more frequently; there's also no jellyfish and the water and climate's warmer.

There are a few things that took some adjustment after kiting inland :

1. Wind strength - we seldom, if ever, get wind inland that Luderitz gets on a weekly basis
2. Wind angle - the run is at a very broad angle (130+ degrees) compared to Sterkies and therefore requires a different technique, you need to keep your kite very low; if you did this at Sterkies you'd get dirty wind
3. Length of run - the run at Sterkies is 250 meter at most (run up included), so it's a big jump to suddenly keep the hammer down for more than twice this distance
4. Tide - the water state and line keep changing by the minute, so one needs to constantly adjust, no two runs are the same

My time here has run out and it's been a great trip where I've progressed more this October than since I started kiting 2 years ago. It's going to be tough to kite inland for a while as I've become accustomed to such great conditions here, it'll be a big step backwards. I always like to set myself goals and I feel I've achieved most of what I set out to do at Luderitz.

Luderitz – 17 October 2008

Written by Basil Cambanis

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I would still dearly like to bag the 50 knot peak and then work at raising my average speeds, but this seems unrealistic inland as we do not have the wind strength or length of run required; we're also heading into Summer which means 5 months of little or no wind, so this will have to be put on hold until Autumn next year.

I might consider doing another trip to Luderitz before the next event if I had a friend join me. I'd go when there's wind forecast for a few days in row, which often happens.