

10 April 2011 - Naked Truth

If you've struggled to find hard facts about how to sail faster, this is due each speed sailing camp working in isolation (even amongst the kites), and you get the feeling there's a deliberate veil of secrecy.

So you won't find information gift wrapped on high-end equipment design, "secret spots" or technique, besides a select few sites such as [Eric Loots's](#) (if there's others then please let me know).

It's probably due to the years of R&D that went into it and the win at all costs attitude, which is not conducive to intermediates taking it to the next level and growing the sport.

There's a lot of undiscovered talent out there which we're unlikely to find due to all the hurdles and information black-out they face; this is not unique to sailing though.

Those with the deepest pockets are most likely to claim the fastest speeds, but this closely resembles the harsh reality of business.

Adopting an open cards philosophy is likely to alienate you from the strongholds and sponsorship as they want to safeguard their technological advantage.

Unless you have plenty of free time and lots of spare cash, it's better to speed sail for personal triumph and for the love of the sport, else you're likely to get frustrated and lose interest.

One plus of these various ring fenced camps is it breeds out the box-thinking through necessity; that's why South Africa developed phenomenal technology during the apartheid years despite the embargoes.

I don't condone "apartheid", but it illustrates what can be achieved when resources are pooled with a common goal.

If you glimpse at the past, you'll realise the mountain of effort that mankind has spent in his pursuit of speed (all forms); it's in our nature and it's the purest form racing (man verses the elements).

It's precise and measurable with clearly defines targets.

Have fun speed sailing and best of luck achieving your personal goals. Post your questions and I'll do my best to answer them.

9 April 2011 - A few more weeks before blast off

The mean temperatures are creeping lower and some weak fronts have narrowly missed (KZN has had some SW busters), but nothing substantial has hit inland yet and there's been LOTS of rain, which does not bode well for wind.

The long range prognosis (2-3 weeks) looks better, but that far ahead it's 50/50. What is certain is the dominant SAH (South Atlantic High) that generates the Cape Doctor is beginning to shift and weaken which paves the way for us wind starved Vaalies to get some frontal wind.

I'm going on holiday with my family (school holidays) to the KZN south coast during the last week of April where I'll hopefully get in some kiting before heading back.

It'll be 5 straight months of NO speed sailing by then, and only 3 short sessions since December. This coupled with the long work hours since January is not a good combo.

I expect Joburg to be chilly upon my return, but I'll be ready and amped for big wind in May.

We'll hold the speed event when the first powerful (30+) front smacks us, regardless of the day of week. This way we're assured to hold the event and it'll be warmer.

I don't want to be pedantic about the timing as we might wait for months for it to land on a weekend and thereby miss out completely like last year. Mother nature will determine the dates.

1 April 2011 - Windy Season Starting !?!

The wind drought inland is almost over; it's going to blow moderately at Sterkies this weekend, then at the Vaal on Tuesday (East), and again at Sterkies on Wednesday, maybe Thursday too. It's still early days, so I don't expect these fronts will pack much of a punch yet (peak in the 20's?), but it bodes well for May onwards.

Since we didn't hold the speed event last Spring due to lack of wind, everything is already organised since then.

I'm brimming with excitement about this next event, as I know it's going to nuke, and I'm keen to see how the 2 new disciplines (course & big-air) pan out.

The race notice and more information about the event will be released nearer the time.

I wish you all a Happy Easter and safe travels during April; it's littered with [public holidays](#) :)

Further a field in Germany, have a look at what they are busy building.

Behold, a 2.1km long by 150m wide curved speed course. It's main aim, to smash records ! Judging by the adjacent wind farm, I'd say they've got a chance of doing it.

According to speedwindsurfen.de it's been 2 years in the planning and making, and cost a whopping 130,000 Euro. You could buy several container loads of kites with that.

It's built in the state of "Schleswig Holstein" and was privately funded by various sponsors.

They state that it's expected to become "the new mecca of speed **windsurfing**".

Based on their wording I assume that only windsurfers will be allowed to use the canal.

I had a gut feeling 2011 was going to be an epic year for speed sailing; first SR2 and now this.



28 March 2011 - Equinoxes and Solstices

From my experience, you'd be better served looking for a non-sailing sport during our Summer, or use up those voyager miles.

The probability of wind improves from April onwards, but the decent wind usually takes place between May and September.

There's usually 7-14 day gaps between the windy days, but over the past 2 years there's only been decent wind every 1-2 months, EVEN DURING WINTER.

This is caused by the South Atlantic High (that generates the Cape Doctor during Summer) blocking the passage of most of the fronts.

Hopefully this cycle will start to change this year.

Here are some interesting facts about the seasons :

The Earth's seasons are caused by the rotation axis of the Earth not being perpendicular to its orbital plane. The Earth's axis is tilted at an angle of approximately 23.44° from the orbital plane; this tilt is called the axial tilt. As a consequence, for half of the year (i.e. from around March 20 to around September 22), the northern hemisphere tips toward the Sun, with the maximum around June 21, while for the other half of the year, the southern hemisphere has this honor, with the maximum around December 21. The two instants when the Sun is directly overhead at the Equator are the equinoxes. [Wikipedia]

- 20 March Autumn Equinox
- 21 June Winter Solstice
- 23 September Spring Equinox
- 22 December Summer Solstice.

22 March 2011

I keep a close eye on the weather in a bid to find wind (short and medium term), and there's finally some on the way.

There's a couple of moderate wind days on the cards over the next 2 weeks, so try to get out and dust off those cobwebs.

I'm confident we'll get better wind this Winter as Autumn is coming early, and a few fronts have already made landfall in the Cape.

This has been the longest spell I haven't kited since I started, but hopefully this Winter will make up for it.

21 March 2011

- Other interesting news is that drag racing will literally take place in the desert this year, so tide will no longer be a factor, but the injury stakes are raised. I cannot give away more until there's a formal announcement.

- 250m is being considered as a new optional official distance for speed sailing.

- Kiting might be admitted into the 2016 Olympics.

- 500m, 1.5, 3 and 5km swimming races will be taking place at Sterkies this Saturday (26 Feb). About 675 swimmers are expected to take part, part of the proceeds go towards the Vulture programme. See [Swimmerguide](#) for more details. Photos to follow soon.

- We're have a hot spell in Joburg with temperatures reaching 30 daily, but this is likely to be the last before Autumn sets in. I cannot wait for the frontal winds to reach us, but I'm not keen on the colds and flu, shorter days and icy weather it brings with it.

- I'm working very long hours these days and my body is taking strain due to the lack of sleep, but I hope to ratchet this pace down a bit within a couple of months when new sites are bedded down.

- 2011 will be a very interesting year for speed sailing, check this out, <http://www.sailrocket.com/stories>, one can only wonder where we'll be in a few years from now. I love the lunatic realm and out the box thinking that speed sailing encourages. Here's an interesting video they've made explaining the design concepts :

[SAILROCKET 2 VIDEO](#)

. Paul Larsen (skipper among many other things) says it'll have a cruising speed of 60 knots, and is designed to have most parts fly clear of the water approaching top speed to reduce drag.

- "**Thalassa**" have released a documentary covering the **2010 Luderitz Speed Event**, you can watch it

[HERE](#)

20 February 2011

There's no wind inland during our Summer, so I thought let's have a mixture of whatever comes to mind to fill the void before our Autumn winds arrive.

I've kited 3x since Luderitz last year, twice were late afternoon wave sessions in Cape Town while there on business in late January.

The positive is that I've worked like a Trojan and made a lot of progress, but the trade off is that I've lost a fair bit of my strength and fitness by being desk bound.

Our evenings are getting cooler with each passing week, so Autumn might arrive early this year. The wind was so poor last year that I couldn't hold the Spring Sterkies speed event; this was the first time since the event started in 2008 that this happened. Hopefully this year will make up for it.

I bought our 1st boat in December to get us out and about during the Summer doldrums, and I've finally got everything sorted (skippers, COF, licensing, etc.).

It's an entry-level ski boat (130hp Yamaha Fazer XTC), but enough for us to get onto the water and have some fun.

We've been boating 3x and have really enjoyed it.



We went to Vaal this past Sunday afternoon (20 Feb) and the boys did some knee-boarding and played on my twintip.

I took my Airtool speedboard for a spin to try retain some of the feel while waiting for our Autumn winds to arrive.

Here's the GPS track of our outing; I only managed a 43.4 knot peak by sine-waving as our boat is not very powerful.

