



British Sailing Team Blog: Bryony Shaw

18 August 2011

August 2011

Bronze in Weymouth!

Now that the big test of 2011 is over I can reflect on my performance with a view to 2012. Bronze was a fantastic result and it highlights all the hard work and training that I have put in over this year. It is testament to all the Skandia Team GBR support staff, especially my coach Dom Tidey and our physiologists. Becoming the best performing windsurfer in Weymouth has been the ultimate challenge for this Olympic cycle, and this medal shows where my current standard is in the fleet. I am confident to say that I feel the track I have been on with my programme over this summer is only the beginning and there are huge gains still to be made.

The main area of gain I am happy to say has been in my fitness programme. This summer my physiologist team began looking into what could give me the biggest fitness improvements tailored around my personal requirements. This is a step up in terms of customised analysis and better team communication on where we feel I can maximise my power endurance across the entire season. Where previously my training has been based on what other athletes have found has worked for them (mainly male athletes), this approach has allowed a fresh overview. I trialed a new training method this summer and I am pleased to say that I have made huge fitness gains in a short period of time. With a year still to go until the Olympics I hope to complete at least 3 or 4 of these training blocks that are designed to fit in and around my travel and competition plans. This gives me vision and motivation that my fitness could at last start making the improvements like the other areas of my sailing.

I will also be looking to improve on my board speed that is essential to performing in Weymouth. This speed comes through hard work in many different aspects from engraining good technique, through to equipment testing and selection. It is also essential to have good training partners who will push up your weaknesses. Their roles can involve sailing close enough that it is necessary to work for your lane like in a race scenario, or sharing their ideas on how they are trimming the board or working the sail. My coach will go over video analysis with us, which is invaluable to provide a direct comparison on different styles and show us what technique is working and why. This summer I have had a regular set of partners to train with, including the two British development squad girls and the Ukrainian representative, Olga Maslivets, who based herself in Weymouth the entire summer. I have made hugely positive gains in board speed but it can always be improved on, which is why an effective winter programme is so vital.

My plans over the next few months are to compete at the European Championships in Bulgaria from 12-18 September, which will give me a kick start back into racing so there is very little let up. Then I will begin one of these training blocks set by my physiologist that will be monitored down in Weymouth. This will run through into my trip down under, which includes racing at the World Cup event in Melbourne, Australia. Then a flight to the west coast will take me to our World Championship venue, Perth, where I will train and compete until mid December. A world championship medal has eluded me my entire career, so I am more determined than ever to win out there.

11 April 2011

I would like to fill you in on recent events...

Palma was a disappointing regatta where a number of things did not play in my favour! But I battled through and my coach and I learnt some valuable lessons from the experience.

I entered the regatta during a period of rehab on my back therefore i was not in great physical shape, which is now well on the way to complete recovery I am glad to say. We took an old board with us that we knew was not my fastest, but unfortunately it proved to be slower than we could ever have predicted.

Day one and day five were both equipment disasters, with a rope & my harness line failing and my main batten breaking twice!

Hopefully this is all out of my system...!

My coach and I are certainly confident with the kit we will have for Weymouth, as it will be a very similar set up to Miami, where I had world leading board speed and finished a close second. This equipment we did not want to take to Palma as we have put it aside to save for the Weymouth qualification regattas.

I hope this sheds some light on my progress. I have shown some real resilience and a robust toughness to maintain my focus and confidence, despite this onslaught of set-backs. There was some concern for sure, but everyone has a bad week in the office ?

Thank you so much for your continued support,

21 March 2011

MY BUSY, and so far exotic, year has continued with some quality time in South America.

I've spent the last two weeks training in the Brazilian town of Buzios, which is east of Rio de Janeiro.

This was the second time I've spent a fortnight there this year, as there are no World Cups in February or March this year - an ideal time to get some quality time on the water. Some of my rivals have also based themselves in Brazil and we are getting solid preparation under our belts ahead of the main summer championships, which will be important events for the whole of Skandia Team GBR.

My priority was testing equipment and refining my techniques in the varied wind conditions that you get out there.

Being on the Tropic of Capricorn, Buzios is an ideal venue for warm weather training. Another favourite venue of mine has to be Martinique, a French Caribbean Island, the windsurfing there is really testing and the surf is amazing. It peels over the reef on the Tartane peninsula... perfect for a bit of cross training. I would go there again, maybe even on a surf holiday if I got the chance. I love surfing so being able to combine my two favourite activities in one trip is a dream set up!

When not training recently I've been picking out carpets with my boyfriend for our Tunbridge Wells home, now that we're coming to the end of a major renovation project. It's quite fun, actually. We have a new TV too and we're just putting the finishing touches to the place. It's taken up all of my boyfriend's time over the last few months so when I'm not away competing or training it's about trying to find quality time to spend together. Greg has also started getting into his rugby and is playing for Tunbridge Wells' London 1 South team, so I get down there when I can and watch him play. I'm his WAG, often with Molly, a small fluffy black terrier, in tow!

Once the UK waters have warmed up a touch I plan to get out on my new wave boards and sails from Fanatic and North. Surprisingly enough I still love a good blast off the south coast in search of a few waves and having a laugh with my mates on the water, whether they are kiting, wavesailing, or pulling off mad tricks in front of sea-front strollers and café goers.

On a good forecast I'll call up my mates, we'll head down to whichever beach is working in my packed Kombi Van from VW Commercial Vehicles, pull the kit out the back, rig what's best for the conditions and head out for an action-packed day.

You can order your tickets now to watch the Olympic windsurfing and sailing down in the lively seaside town of Weymouth and Portland for next summer. The viewing will be a real one-off spectacle with races everyday over the two weeks being held on the "stadium style" race area. Big screens showing the on-water action, on-board GPS tracking of the competitors, with live commentary to entertain the crowds. The final medal race and victory ceremony of the windsurfing being on August 7, 2012, where you can witness me receiving my... gold medal ?

10th January 2011

CARIBBEAN BREAKTHROUGH

The focus for my final training session of 2010, to prepare for the all-important "Pre-Olympic" season, has been about time on the water and ultimately enjoying my windsurfing. Having worked hard throughout 2010 on my training, racing and sponsorship relationships, this winter has certainly not been a time to let the foot off the gas.

Consistency has been the key focus in my training plan and heading out to Martinique, a French Caribbean island, was the ultimate venue to get quality time on the board. My training group included

my coach Dom Tidey, who has at least fifteen years of Olympic campaigning experience, four of which have been working with me, and we are confident that we're on track to dominate in 2011. The three girls from the French Elite Squad who invited me to join their training camp have all shown their strengths throughout this season, and with their coach Stephane it was a fun crowd to be with.

Although we were hoping for the wind to blow around 20 knots each days, it did not always play ball and most of the two weeks we trained in around 10-12 knots. To be honest that suited me just fine as I had a bit of a breakthrough in this wind range, which has been an inconsistent area of my sailing for a while. We did a lot of upwind speed testing and so I was able to really analyse my stance and technique, and by the end of the first week of Dom coaching we had identified 1 potential speed gain. So the second week I could spend engraining and refining it on both port & starboard. This was an invaluable improvement and one that I hope I can take into 2011 and repeat in a race situation.

Martinique is a beautiful island, of which we did get to do a bit of exploring. One day we waded up to the base of a waterfall, another day we did a long distance windsurf to another bay and had lunch there, and down from our apartment there was an awesome surf beach so I went surfing most days! In our little village of Tartane there were lots of little stalls selling tropical fruit, freshly caught fish, home made jams, straw bags, coconut shell purses, locally distilled rum & fruit flavoured punch ... so we had some great gifts to take home with us.

These last few weeks have been about staying fit and active. I have just been part of a training camp down in Weymouth, seeing the team specialists including our psychologist, physio, massage therapist, strength & conditioning trainer, physiologist, nutritionist & my coach. It was great to catch up with some of the sailors and windsurfers about their winter training & Christmas festivities. I have been busy with my other sponsors Skandia, Fat Face & VW, and I have also done some cool press interviews including Hello! Magazine, which is part of their February issue...! Check it out on my Facebook page - Bryony Shaw Windsurfing.

30th November 2010

REALITY CHECK DOWN UNDER

Heading down to Australia for 3 weeks training at the 2011 World Championship venue in Fremantle was a vital bit of time on the board, training and racing against a small but elite group of RS:X women. It was a great opportunity to push my techniques in planing conditions to another level.

On arrival we were greeted with tropical conditions, beautiful turquoise water and white sandy beaches. I was so excited that despite jet lag advice and only 4 hours sleep I wanted to head out and join the French & Canadian RS:X women who were already out there training. I had a huge smile on my face that day and that smile stayed for the next two weeks training, as my speed was improving no end and I was certainly showing my form in the training sessions while the strong "Freo Doctor" was blowing. Women from other nations, including 2009 world champion Marina Alabau from Spain, joined us and the standard of the training group let me improve my sailing no end. Trying out new techniques and trying to get them engrained ready for the event was going to be a big test.

As we entered the event the forecast was looking a little different from what we had been experiencing. Offshore gradient winds from a direction that would fight rather than enhance the sea breeze were on their way, so the typical "Freo Doctor" was not going to show its true strength. The week turned out to be extremely varied racing, with us being sent to different course areas, early & late start times, some classes even being put behind schedule as the wind was not playing ball. This was, however, great experience to keep us on our toes for the all-important event in a year's time.

Result-wise I am disappointed to report that I finished 5th, but I was in a close battle going into the medal race in equal 3rd it just did not go my way on the day. As I was attempting a few new technical

adaptations through the week that were clearly not engrained enough for the higher pressure of a race situation, I am not too distracted by this result. There is very much a process towards peaking at the key events that matter in 2011, and I see this as a valuable learning experience.

So onwards and upwards after my reality check in Australia over to Martinique, the next venue for my winter training plan. I will be out there with my coach Dom Tidey alongside the women of the elite French team, including Charline Picon a close rival from the 2010 season.

4th November 2010

MY AUTUMN CHALLENGE

The priority for this month has been enjoying the chance to rest and recover from the season, but at the same time not losing my sailing fitness that I worked so hard to achieve this year. Allocating time with my sponsors, friends and spending time on my windsurfer has been a balancing act. I feel like I am in a relaxed place, however, having enjoyed a good amount of time at home in Tunbridge Wells, and monitoring our renovation project. With a good medal haul this year, and ultimately making the podium in Weymouth; I can be rest assured that my training is moving in the right direction.

Trying to avoid blisters is almost impossible for me if I take any time off, as my hands do not stay naturally tough. So counting only one blister so far this autumn is really good going. Other set backs can be forearm cramp from not pumping a lot during a rest period, which I have tried to overcome by staying fit and trim as well as maintaining time on the board.

Training with the youth team in Weymouth as they tried to peak for the RS:X Youth Worlds in Cyprus was a great opportunity for me, and it was interesting to help them test equipment so they could feel well prepared and ready to take on the foreigners! Writing this now, I am proud to be able to congratulate Izzy Hamilton for yet another youth title and Connor Bainbridge for finishing 4th, a position that I know too well having finished equal points with third at our Adult Worlds in September...

While they were in Cyprus along with my coach Dom Tidey, I hopped across the Channel to race at the French Challenge D'Autumn in Brest, Brittany. Charline Picon, who has been a big rival and friend of mine this season, invited me there so it was perfect timing. I stayed with the team from Marsailles, which was a big test for my limited attempts at speaking French! I was happy to finish 3rd, as the French have a good depth of talented women in their team. I was especially happy with my speed in planning conditions, which will be important in Perth, Australia, the venue for the 2011 World Championships.

I am travelling to Perth tomorrow for 3 weeks to do venue specific training and race at the test event against some of the best women in the world. The whole elite section of Skandia Team GBR sailors will be there along with a highly experienced support team. I have some relatives out there who I can visit, and I cannot wait to soak up some Aussie sun!