

## EPISODE 2: UNDER PRESSURE!

IN JIM'S SECOND TOP TIPS INSTALMENT, HE GOES THROUGH THE GOOD AND THE EVIL REGARDING BOARD VALVES

*"A valve in my precious new board – what you on about? It's not a bleedin' pressure cooker!"*

(Random windsurfer, 2004)

Despite what we may think we know about our kit – reading all the write up's in the world and talking to all and sundry – that doesn't always fill in all of the gaps... One of these little holes in our knowledge could quite literally lead us to destroying our precious board into which we have put so much time, effort and money – the pressure valve! Most composite boards have a little hole, usually situated just in front or behind the mast track, into which a screw with a rubber washer (seal) fits perfectly. (See Fig One)

### THE PRESSURE VALVE ON A BOARD HAS TWO VERY IMPORTANT FUNCTIONS:

- \* It enables us to 'equalise' the pressure inside and outside the board by undoing the screw, which is essential in certain circumstances of extreme pressure difference, such as when taking a board on an aeroplane or in very hot climates where the board is in direct sunlight
- \* It enables us to keep water out of our board by doing up the screw and closing it.

Some of us may never really have paid this 'funny screw thing' much attention and might even have assumed that it was just more technical decoration – a bit like a rucksack with straps everywhere! Equally, some of us might be very aware of its existence and undoing it and doing it up all the time; both of these circumstances need some attention.

### NEVER UNDOING THE VALVE

#### PROS

- \* You'll never have the problem of having to remember to do it up before going sailing as it's always done up
- \* Less to remember...and to lose!

#### CONS

- \* Board will de-laminate (effectively deck pulls away from hull and board is 'soft' and ruined) if left in

direct sunlight in hot climate, or if you travel with it on a flight

- \* The rubber washer can perish over time and you will be none the wiser until you notice your board feels a little waterlogged and heavier, due to water leaking in

See Fig Two for a typical example of a washer that has started to perish and will, as a result, not act as an effective 'seal'.

### ALWAYS UNDOING AND DOING UP THE VALVE

#### PROS

- \* A good habit to get into especially if you travel a lot with your kit
- \* Allows your board to 'breathe' between sessions on the water

#### CONS

- \* Can wear out rubber washer faster than usual, and cross-thread/wear out the teeth of the thread in the aperture
- \* Could forget to replace/do it up before going back out on the water
- \* Loss of valve screw as it's an extra thing to look after

There are pros and cons all over the show...but for the good of your precious board and for your peace of mind, here are the points I consider to be most important in valve screw usage:

### SAILING IN THE UK

- \* Leave the valve done up
- \* Check the state of the rubber washer every 3-4 months and if board is 'dinged' then undo it so as to help the drying out process

See Fig Three for what a washer should look like when in good condition.

### SAILING ABROAD

- \* If in a very hot climate it's a good idea to undo the valve to 'equalise' the pressure when not on the water, especially if there is no shade and your board is in direct sunlight for prolonged periods of time
- \* Always take out the valve screw for flights, and store it in a good place so it doesn't get lost. See Fig Four for where I store mine when on flights.

## BOARD VALVES



FIG ONE



FIG TWO



FIG THREE



FIG FOUR

**Jimbo's Gems is written by Jim Collis:**

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