

move of the month

OK, we've done it before – but always a sequence performed by a top pro, with little more than a few wows and whoops to accompany it. But now that the spock has become *de rigueur* for anyone wanting to get serious about freestyle, we're running it again because: a) it's the best spock sequence we've ever seen, and b) it's performed by **Jem Hall**, who as an instructor and coach is well qualified to write about it. Over to Jem!

THE SPOCK

No manoeuvre has received more attention over the last 3 years – the spock and its variants dominate freestyle contests at national and World Cup level, and you can't open a windsurfing magazine anywhere without seeing a picture of someone sliding backwards. Indeed, so much emphasis and importance has been attached to the move that some boards are now being specifically designed around helping the rider to perform it!

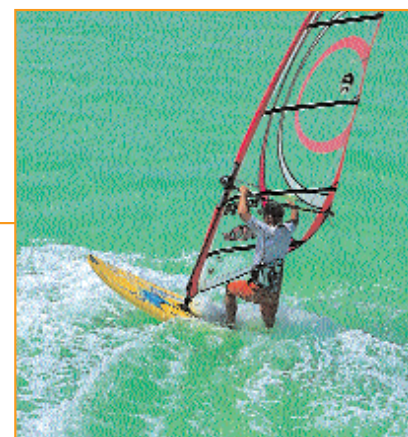
After working on the move for some time now, and being thrown off in many weird and wonderful ways as I got to grips with it, I now feel qualified to offer my top tips for getting through it. I've also gained a great deal of extra understanding of it from coaching people through the move, right from local sailors attending my West Wittering clinics, through to the top pros wanting to smooth the move out and develop consistency. During this process I discovered that – like many other moves – the spock can be broken down into simple steps. So let's start with some understanding as to what is actually going on here.

Essentially, the spock is a vulcan 360 with a rig flip. To break it down even further into its component parts, it is an over-rotated vulcan with the board continuing to slide through 180° in the water. The sail is essentially performing a helicopter tack.

So, before you can consider learning to spock, you need to have the two base manoeuvres under your belt. Namely:

- The ability to vulcan and get a good slide backwards on flat water, preferably on either tack so you can take advantage of wherever the flat water is situated.
- The ability to perform helicopter tacks both ways. This is because if you can vulcan on port then better sail rotation during the move comes from a strong helicopter tack on starboard.

Practice these moves and your route to the spock should be much smoother!



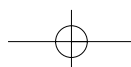
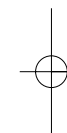
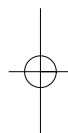
COMMON PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The board keeps travelling backwards and not sliding through: Aim to get the board round further by being more aggressive in over-rotating the vulcan.

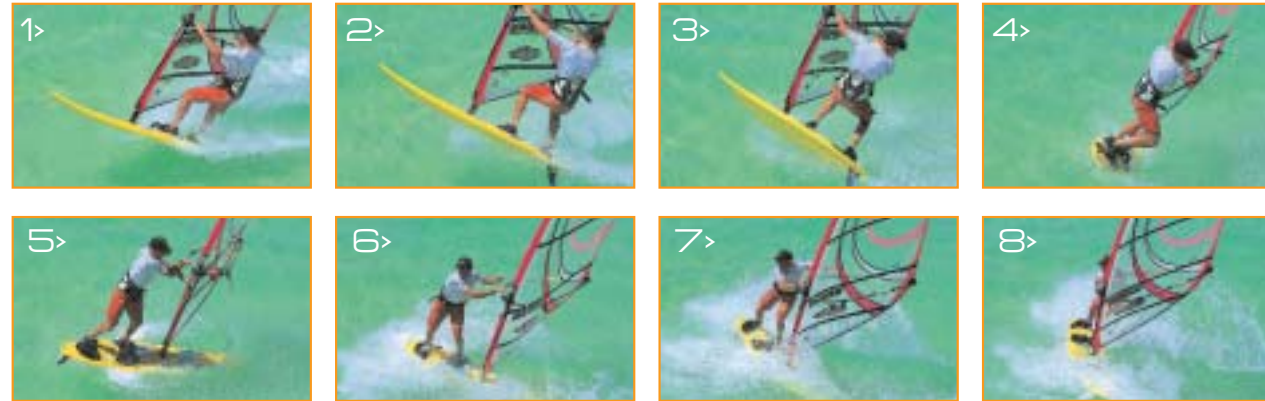
Sliding backwards, you then stop dead and get ejected out the back door: You are

straightening your back leg and/or pushing out with back arm. Keep your weight over the front foot with your back arm pulled in to the shoulder.

You get through the wind, but then the sail overpowers you into a side door ejection: Lean in to the sail, anticipating it powering up.



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HOW TO SPOCK...

THE APPROACH

- Your approach should be just downwind of a beam reach, so as to knock off some of the rotation and assist you in getting far enough round.
- Looking for a small piece of chop with flattish water after it.
- Get the front hand up by the mast and the knees well bent, while hanging down off the boom. This is the pop-it-up position that most aerial freestyle moves begin from, since it enables the rider to push aggressively through the back foot and then lift board from the water with the front arm and front leg.

UP AND AROUND

(Pix 1-4) Pop the board up from the water and initiate a vulcan. Look behind you. Drop the back hand off the boom and pull the front arm across the body, keeping the mast tight to the chest. The new front hand is reaching to the other side of the boom and continuing the boom's transition across the body until the new front arm straightens. (A bit like passing a plate across in front of you at dinner.) Your weight is on your front foot, and you're leaning forward, keeping your head in towards the mast foot. The back foot is tucked right up underneath your bottom.

Note: Concentrate on going for over-rotation of the vulcan rather than height. The windsurfing brain will make you extend your back leg when coming down from height, which results in a fast back door exit!

THE SLIP-SLIDING STAGE

(Pix 5-7) The nose is down now and the board is starting to slide. Maintain this by keeping the front arm extended and having all your weight over the front foot. Imagine trying to

lean forward and kiss the nose of the board. The head is looking over the rear shoulder in order to draw the rig across the body. The heels are beginning to be weighted at this point, so the board can slide without the rail catching.

GET IT THROUGH

(Pix 8-10) Keep the front arm extended, looking back, heels weighted with the bodyweight over the front foot. At this point you are moving towards heli-tack mode, as the front of board goes through head to wind. The top tip is to pull the back hand into the shoulder and keep the front arm extended whilst leaning into the sail. This keeps the nose bearing away from the wind, and stops the sail overpowering you, which weights your back foot.

Note: Pix 9-10 really emphasise how I am pulling in with back hand and not pushing out. This has been a really important tip in helping people get closer to completing the spock.

FLIP IT

(Pix 11-16) The fin will now engage, which stops the slide. Lean into the rig so as to counteract the push from the sail as it powers up. The board is just into wind, and your rig is ready to be flipped. Heli-tack time; sweep the sail towards the nose of board as the body turns and the arms follow through to rotate the rig. Let the rig swing back over the tail and keep the board flat with your weight over the front foot. Finish the rotation off by pulling the mast forward and to windward, whilst keeping the body position low.

Whhhhhhhooooooooohhhhhhhhh...

Claim it!!!

Hope this helps you out. Good luck!



BOARDS Test Team member Jem Hall is resident coach at West Wittering and also runs coaching courses overseas, c/o Sportif on 01273 844919. So if you want assistance in your spocking or any other techniques then check out Jem's new website at www.jemhall.com, or contact him on 07762 664077 • hugeforwards@hotmail.com • Jem Hall is sponsored by Pro Limit Wetsuits, North Shore, Chiemsee and www.fakefish.com •