

ROUND HOUND

Winner of the Jam, Jamie Hay top turning at Gwithian



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WAVE JAM 3 IS BEST EVER!

We've had a shaky start to the Wave Jam series...Wave Jam 1 was held on a 30ft/30mph Westerly forecast and never really delivered: none of the best Cornish beaches working and squally winds playing havoc with kit choice. Wave Jam 2 had us biting off more than we could chew yet again, with a mast high and very offshore Woolacombe proving almost unsailable: the waves closely spaced closeouts, a one hit wonder... if you were lucky enough to make it out.

Harvey Dawkins aerial



So we were desperate to make the right call for Wave Jam 3, but the forecast was really tough: half the sailors fancied Rhosneigr (3.7m weather, endless stunt ramps and humungous jumps guaranteed) and the other half Gwithian (4m weather, mast high and down the line! Pure joy). A Thursday afternoon poll had Rhosneigr in the lead by 1 vote. The first thing I did on Friday morning, however, was to check the forecast again, and horror of horrors, the balance had swung well and truly in Gwithian's favour: Sunday's wind and sun had now slid 300 miles South to Cornwall, leaving Rhosneigr windless!

Two of Britain's top sailors, Phil Horrocks and Ben Proffitt, could only make Rhossy. But the one deciding vote in Wales' favour had been cast by Oisín Van Gelderan, and he had pulled out at the last minute. What would happen now that the votes were even? In the end I went with my heart, which was begging and screaming for two days of mast high Gwithian. It was a 'once a year' kind of forecast and we couldn't miss it.

SHOW TIME

We'd all had our instructions by email and text to get down to Gwithian, check out the conditions and meet up at 12 for a twenty minute, expression session. I'd travelled down with Russ 'Crazy Horse' Tetlow and Rich Potter, we'd left at 3am and managed to pull into Gwithian car park at 10am. It looked windy, very windy! With mast high boomers marching in, it was also a good sign that the local rippers were rigging up:

Ian Ross, Andy Fawcett, Duncan Coombes, Harvey Dawkins and Blackie were all up for it. After an awesome morning session we shot back up the goat track at 11:45. A quick meeting at the van and we decided to start the expression session at 12:15, when I'd signal the Le Mans start by waving my arms from the top of the cliff.

Ian Ross, one of the local sailors ripping



Jamie Hancock saying hello to the lip



Judging was to be done by photographers, myself and any other sailors lurking about. Not quite up to the PWA's way of doing things, it still worked surprisingly well: we chatted about who was sailing well and kept track of the top 3 order until the 20 minutes was up. Not a problem with Wave Jam 3's 'riding only' conditions, but maybe in need of a rethink if we get 30 sailors and a stunt ramp city. In this scenario we'd certainly have to keep numbers on the water down and run a few heats to be able to keep track and judge fairly.

At 12.15 they all blasted across the first 30ft of mirror flat water at 40knots maxed out on their 4m sails, danced across the first couple of lines of whitewater, then ground to a halt as the rip took charge just before the impact zone. We watched with horror from the top of the cliff (it was horror honest) as three huge set waves appeared on the horizon, building with perfect timing, to completely annihilate all the sailors in one fell swoop as the first wave unloaded. Waves two and three then finished the job off -depositing them all back on the sand. Classic timing, nothing any of them could do, it was inevitable and bloody funny!

Nick Moffatt showed his metal by being the first to get his breath back, shake the sea out of his head and make a bid for the outside. Successfully making it out, he ripped a wave all the way back in, including a super late turn under a mast high lip and we wondered if he'd perhaps got this one in the bag already.

Gwithian at low tide is a pretty gnarly place: the lovely peelers at mid-tide gradually give way to more violent close-outs as the tide drops down: the bigger the waves, the bigger the problem, and this was BIG -would anyone else make it out?

Jamie Hay did. Not once but twice. Jamie is bit of a hell man and has no fear; earlier in the year he broke two masts at a 'mast and a half high' Woolacombe before lunchtime, and still went back out for more. No broken masts this time though, as Jamie made light work of low tide Gwithian and romped to an easy victory. No one really put up much of a fight. The King brothers, Steve Jarvis and Jamie Hancock appeared half way through the session, after frantically rigging, but just didn't seem dialled-in, having only just got wet. If we'd run the expression session at the end of the day (when they'd had time to suss the conditions, tweak new kit, warm up and get their timing right) it might have been different,

but as it was Jamie Hay wiped the floor with everybody.

Rich Potter showed that his keen-ness and time on the water is paying off, as he busted into 3rd, after Nick in 2nd, with a mix of powerful, skatey turns.

Despite the great conditions, numbers on the water dwindled as trashed kit and tiredness took its toll. By 3 'o'clock it was raining and there were only a few diehards left; it was very challenging sailing, but those who knew Gwithian, knew that the best was yet to come. Sure enough the last few hours of light were the best of the day: empty waves walled up and peeled around the point just as they had done when we first arrived, only now the wind was cleaner and the rip less evil. Who cares about the rain? This was fantastic. It was surely the best we'd seen Gwithian break for a long time and Blackie, left out sailing on his own at the end, had the final word.

SUNDAY

Quite a few of the jammers were on a one-day pass and had to head home Saturday night, thinking that Sunday's forecast was a bit dubious anyway. For those of us left, Sunday dawned with clear skies and zero wind. Out came the surfboards and a couple of hours paddling into some pretty small waves at Hayle. It was soon lunchtime and thoughts were turning to getting some

grub and starting the long journey home.

We headed for Gwithian to grab lunch at the Sunset Surf Café and what we found on arrival was shockingly promising: sunny, head high, cross-off and enough wind to wobble out.

We rigged 5.0-5.7's and headed out. Within half an hour the water was packed -the more manageable conditions meaning everyone could get out for a play. The conditions were getting better by the minute and luckily we'd get an extra hour on the water due to daylight saving. The waves built to logo plus and were peeling far more predictably at that size, the wind was a steady 5, the tide was right, the route out back a hundred times easier and the sun was shining. The Kings were goitering off the biggest sections they could find, the local boys were finding their way onto all the set waves and going banzai, Cribby was signing his style on the waves with his full laydown bottom turns and smooth lines, Gwithian was being taken apart!

Congratulations to our first three winners; Jamie Hay, Nick Moffatt and Rich Potter -who kicked ass in mental conditions. Plus thanks to the Sunset Surf Café for prizes, Russell Tetlow and Niamh Hyslop for the pics and most of all, to the sailors who made it to Gwithian and put on quite a show. See www.wavejam.co.uk for more!