

Brian McDowell reports from the latest PWA Wave event...

PWA WAVE TOUR '07

GUINCHO



Some names seem to have been at the top of the PWA game for an eternity. Deservedly so you might say, as many of these seasoned fighters – such as Josh Angulo, and Britain's own Nik Baker – are arguably more radical now than when they graced these pages being touted as the new talents and hopes for the pro scene back in the '90s. Yet if you rock up at virtually any wavesailing event and watch the freesailing warm-up sessions, the ones who'd really catch your eye would be the new young generation. It's just that up until now, they simply don't seem to have made the cut in the tactical world of competition sailing.

This season's Guincho event was always going to suffer from being the follow-on from the history-making Cabo Verde spectacle. However, it definitely stood out for one thing – some serious new talent is forcing its way through and starting to show that, tactically speaking, it's at last got what it takes to topple the reigning hierarchy. The big names and reputations took a real savaging this week, with only Josh Angulo surviving the cut...



'07

Ricardo Campello going over the falls. Pic: Carlos Delicado



Victor Fernandez



PWA WAVE TOUR '07

Robby Swift



Daida Moreno



Thomas Traversa



Scott McKercher

Where?

Praia do Guincho near Estoril, Lisbon, Portugal. Stunning sandy beach near this classic playboy's resort that enjoys a powerful wind-funnel effect to accelerate the regular summer 'Nortada' wind.

When?

4-9 June.

Prize-money at stake

45k. Not a lot to split between the boys and girls, but enough to attract the main players to what is a high-profile event.

Titles at stake

None. Round 2 of the Men's Wave Tour, and the opening event of Ladies title race.

Most on-form player going in to the event

Josh Angulo won the last comp and the last event of 2006. But as Robby Swift said: "Victor Fernandez is always good in that sort of

jumping-biased environment. Plus, if the conditions shift he's consistent."

Most hyped rider before the event

Kauli Seadi.

Best looking freesailor before competition

Victor Fernandez at Guincho. But, if you look at the video clips circulating the globe, you'd say Kauli Seadi.

Missing in action

Bjorn Dunkerbeck. Finished 9th in Cabo Verde, also a no-show in Korea due to family commitments. No rumours about why he didn't rock up here to consolidate on a good start to the year in Punta Preta. But he's got nothing to prove to anyone, eh?

Contest summary

One single-elimination round for both fleets. Victor Fernandez beats Kauli Seadi in the

men's final, Josh Angulo takes 3rd, Marcilio Browne 4th. Daida Moreno beats Karin Jaggi in the women's.

Typical heat conditions

Not particularly spectacular or vintage Guincho conditions. It looked sunny and windy and the top guys made it look inviting. The truth was that it was marginal at best – strong rips, a lottery for ramps; an average amateur sailor would probably not have even got going. It was a testament to the sailors that they could make anything out of it at all.

Ben Proffitt summed up the archetypal scenario during the average heat: "Well, I think the top guys got to the final and the best guy won. That said, I do think there was a lot of luck involved for the early heats, because if you got a few runs with wind and a ramp you were probably going through, as it was hard to get jumps – yet, when you did get one it could be big. But that's how comps go. It needed to be pushed through or we wouldn't have had a

result! The video and pix will make it look better than it was..."

Staying up

Tour front-runners Josh Angulo and Kauli Seadi, ranked 1st and 2nd respectively overall. No change there after this event.

Going up

Ross Williams finished 11th in Cabo Verde, and now ranks 7th overall after Guincho, making him the highest ranked Brit so far this season. Jonas Ceballos from Gran Canaria (now 5th) who, being a port tack specialist, could easily go top three after Pozo, following on from his great result here.

Going down

Kevin Pritchard came into this event 3rd, Nik Baker arrived ranked 5th. They both finished =17th and went home ranked just 8th and 10th respectively.

Levi Siver and Jason Polakow both had a dire time, which will amp up the pressure for →



➤ Marcilio Browne



➤ Alex Mussolini



➤ Nik Baker



➤ John Skye

them in the port tack conditions of the upcoming Canaries leg. However, rumour has it Polakow won't even show up, and that he wasn't planning to anyway.

Young guns

Dominant! Brawzinho 4th, Thomas Traversa 5th, Boujmaa Guillol and Jonas Ceballos 6th... These guys all showed that they can compete in a tactical environment and aren't just radical freesailors.

New faces

Camille Juban of Guadeloupe. Remember that name. He's a ripper and my bet is you'll see him shredding at PWA events for years to come.

Ross Williams: "That kid from Guadeloupe sailed well. He was doing push-tabletops and stuff in the warm-ups."

Robby Swift: "Yeah, Camille Juban ripped. Him and the new JP kid from Brazil, Ian Mouro Lemos – both have a lot of potential. They were a bit rusty but time will serve them well I think."

Kevin Pritchard: "Graham Ezzy rode well and apparently he's doing push-forwards and stuff. He impressed me and he's styling it at home on Maui."

Latest / greatest stunt

Pushloop-forward. No-one landed one in the fluky conditions here though, despite a lot of bruised backs trying.

Early round surprises

Antoine Albeau beating Nik Baker. John Skye beating Ricardo Campello. Jann Sorlut beating both Kevin Pritchard and John Skye!

Brits involved

Swift =9th, Skye =9th, Williams =9th, Baker =17th, Horrocks =17th, Proffitt =33rd, Pearch =33rd. No UK ladies there this year.

Best wipe-out

Baker's late under-the-lip hit which pile-drove him into the shallow sandbar. Hilarious to watch, but he probably saw stars afterwards.

Hottest heat

Paul Hunt (Judge): "I thought the Kauli vs Josh heat was one of the highest scoring and closest. Boujmaa's heat against Josh was also pretty good. Overall though the conditions weren't that great so it was hard for them to score anything amazing."

Frank Roguet (Senior Judge): "Actually one of the best heats was Karin Jaggi against Iballa Moreno as the wind was more sideshore; the girls definitely got the best conditions of the first day. Jaggi landed a perfect 10 back loop – and she did another amazing one in the first final, which was cancelled for lack of wind."

Robby Swift: "There were a lot of good heats, but nothing epic. Some were closer for sure – like the Polakow vs Angulo clash. Most people on the beach thought Josh had that one and the judges agreed."

Most controversial heat

Angulo vs Seadi semi-final. The judges reckoned that Seadi edged Angulo out with his jump scores. Angulo wasn't happy, but he probably respects Seadi's talents more than most on Tour right now. Many other spectators where somewhat puzzled.

Kevin Pritchard: "I thought Josh had beaten him through and through. He sailed a 'whole' heat – not coming in and changing gear the entire time. He was ripping up what were, to be honest, pretty sloppy waves, and put in a really polished performance. However I have to say Kauli's level of sailing was impressive and

throughout the contest he's raised the level of wavesailing on Tour – plus he's fun to watch!"

Swift: "I watched that semi from down on the beach and I thought Josh had it. I even told Kauli when he asked me that I thought he'd lost, plus I told Josh that he shouldn't worry when he came off the water. Kauli swam a lot of the heat, and only really had two good scoring jumps. Josh had some good jumps plus two sick waves that were long rides which were way better in my opinion."

Highest scoring move

All of Victor Fernandez's pushloop-tabletops in marginal conditions – especially given the strong currents around the punchy sandbars there.

How was the final won?

Swift: "Victor jumped well but it was really onshore and horrible. It was such hard work most riders would've struggled. The fact that he landed pushloop-tabletops and made something out of those conditions was incredible really."

Pressure barometer – 7/10

The long wait over the end of the week got

things cooking, but the buzz then tailed off with the forecast. It even looked like it might go port tack with a light cross-offshore set-up, which got the likes of Scott McKercher salivating! It was interesting to see who packed up early and who didn't. Fernandez did. Polakow did. Angulo didn't. McKercher, angry about his early exit from the single, didn't. Baker – the consummate pro and always prepared – waited till the bitter end, even though he'd have bet it was futile.

Time out

Surfing. Stand-up-paddleboarding. Enjoying ice-cold Super Bocks on the beachside terrace. Bat and ball on the beach. Polakow, a road bike addict, always travels with his machine and was always out and about, but never out of sight of the water ... just in case.

All in all

Scott McKercher: "Well some of us oldies didn't fare very well – but, in the 'real man's' conditions in Cabo Verde not many of the young pups came up with the goods, did they? "Tricky conditions. But the whippersnappers gave us a sign of things to come..." ☺



➤ Kauli Seadi



➤ Ross Williams