

THE AUS-120 COACHING PROGRAM COMES TO MAURITIUS!



About 6 months ago I got some emails from some sailors in Mauritius asking about formula sails and fins. With +10,000 islands surrounding Australia, I'd be lying if I said I didn't have to quickly throw Mauritius in to Google Maps and just check exactly where it was..... They had heard about me from my blog (www.CarbonSugar.com) where I've written a lot about training for Formula Windsurfing so it was good to see I am still generating hits on that site when I've had no time to write anything on there in the past year!

The dialogue continued for a few months and eventually the guys over there asked if I would be interested in coming to Mauritius to coach their elite Formula Windsurfing team. Coming up in August is the Indian Ocean Island Games; a mini-Olympics for the nearby islands of Mauritius, Seychelles, Reunion and Madagascar involving many sports – with the two sailing disciplines this time being Lasers and Formula Windsurfing.



I have a good background in coaching having coached Australia's most noted women's Olympic rep Jessica Crisp to her first ISAF World Cup win in 2009 on the RS:X, and running RS:X/BIC Techno programs in my home town and a few Formula clinics around the globe for over 3 years. I saw this as a good opportunity both to get myself tuned up for the upcoming Formula World Championships in Puerto Rico in early July and also to get out of the European cold back to a

tropical island with climates I am used to. 14 hour flights later and I am in Mauritius trying to remember the horrific, tiny bit of French I learnt in Year 6 at school.



The Mauritian team consists of 4 guys, all kitted out with the latest equipment thanks to their Sailing Federation and Gaastra and blessed with a sailing club to launch from in Grand Baie, an incredibly beautiful, green-water bay that opens out

in to the ocean full of dolphins, flying fish, turtles and local fisherman. For the 12 days I have been on the island we've had +20 knots each day, making it the perfect place to get my 11m dialled in and also get a chance to tune up the HWR which I



have not spent so much time on having just picked one up at the FW event in Riccione the previous week.

My training regime consists of 2 sessions per day; in the morning we spend time working on technique and stance – drills, drills, drills. Making the boys sail endlessly around some slalom buoys making sure their gybes are perfect each and every time. After a fantastic lunch provided by our good friend Michael's seafood restaurant down the road, we're back on the water in the afternoon to do a bunch of short races, where



I make some specific rules for the race to practice which particular skill we've been working on in the morning. If the wind is too light in the morning for an early session we spend the time on the beach going through tactics and rules and discussing situations that happened during the races the day before and how we can improve in those situations. There is no down time!



With this system in the 12 days I have been here we have made some really good progress, which is great because actually these guys are at a really high level already, pushing me in many of the practice races – amazing since they are so far isolated from the bigger international events elsewhere in the world.

On the ONE day of my trip we had no wind we spent the day exploring the main part of town on the other side of the island and seeing the local culture. My accommodation for the trip was to stay in a luxury resort on the waterfront in Grand Baie (Veranda Resort), with all meals provided and a very pimping room outside the multiple swimming pools to relax in after training each day. Having lived life like a king here it was interesting to see the other side of Mauritian life heading in to town and seeing the differences when you visit the more poverty stricken areas where people are living in tin sheds without roofs and mud all around. I guess this is still Africa in some respects...

Right now I am on the plane back to Italy before I start a horrific series of flights to get to Aruba for the PWA World Cup starting next week. From here I go Mauritius, Paris, Milan (9 hour stopover), New

York, Puerto Rico (to drop off formula gear), Miami then finally Aruba. My rule of thumb is if you are flying more than 40 hours then you are definitely going to lose ALL your bags!!!! Let's hope my rule is wrong this time.

So happy to have seen this amazing island although next time I will be bringing a Quad 82 and 5.0m because each day we sailed past some amazing reef breaks with logo to mast-high sets coming in from either end of the island. The coaching gives myself a refresher on all the things I need to think about when racing so I feel like I've learnt as much as the guys I'm training have while I've been here. I am confident the Mauritians are going to take the Gold medals home when they travel to Seychelles in August for the Indian Ocean Games... in the meantime, enjoy some photos from the island.

