

Wakeboarding in salt water has different appeal to riders

WILL REES

STAFF WRITER

When it comes to wakeboarding in the Wilmington vicinity, a person has a variety of choices of where to ride. The most important of these choices is whether to ride in freshwater or saltwater.

For more serious wakeboarders, the preference is to ride in freshwater. This is because the water is less dense and provides a softer landing. In addition, the boats designed for professional rider towing do not hold up as well in saltwater due to its corrosive effects on inboard engines.

For people residing in the estuarine areas of Wilmington and Wrightsville beach, however, towing a boat to a popular freshwater area such as the Cape Fear River is not always a conventional proposal. The best thing to do is to suck it up and get used to the saltwater being forced into your nose and burning your eyes because it's all part of coastal wakeboarding.

When local resident and UNCW student Ryan Lawrence was asked how he felt about riding in saltwater, he said, "I grew up riding in the saltwater so its

natural to me, it makes me feel at home."

Clearly, riding in saltwater is not as bad as it is made out to be by freshwater riders but there are some things that need to be taken into consideration before venturing into the surrounding waterways.

For instance, there are many more condition variants in the local channels, cuts and sounds. The tides are a major consideration and the boat driver must always be aware of the fact that an area that was ten feet deep in the morning may only be three feet deep later that afternoon.

Boat driver and wakeboarder Jon Mitchell said, "I've seen people run their boats on ground, and I've seen people run themselves on ground."

Also, remember that oyster bars are very common in these waters and having a hard fall on one of these would be the equivalent of falling on broken glass.

Once riders understand all the factors of safety, they face the other issue of finding smooth water. The most important thing to take into consideration when looking for good water is the wind. In the summertime the winds are predominantly out of the south and southeast.



Skilled wakeboarders perform difficult moves, including the "Blind 180" as shown above. The Holiday Inn Cut at Wrightsville Beach remains popular to riders.

Therefore, the boat driver must look for channels that are perpendicular to the wind direction so that the wind does not have a large amount of space to build small waves known as chop. Upon finding an area with smooth water, make sure the water has sufficient depth to accommodate the boat and the rider. Many of the popular saltwater wakeboard cuts, such as the Holiday Inn cut and Peli-

can Drive, are becoming shallower every year.

When everything comes together with smooth, deep water, the most important thing to remember is to have fun. Wakeboarding in saltwater can be very frustrating or very rewarding, so remember, above all things, respect the environment and enjoy being on the water.

College football week 4

BEN JONES

SPORTS EDITOR

Southern Miss heads to Birmingham Saturday to take on Alabama. Alabama is still feeling the agony of the imperfect season now ahead of them caused by UCLA two weeks ago. A big show here could boost their confidence.

Alabama 27 Southern Miss 18

LSU has a new coach who can bring some of the "old glory" back to Baton Rouge. Unfortunately, this week they play at Auburn, who has a fairly new coach of their own. After a huge win last week at Ole Miss, the Tigers of Auburn have shown they have what it takes to de-claw the felines of Louisiana.

Auburn 28 LSU 17

Colorado faces their second PAC-10 opponent in a row Saturday, when they face Washington at home. Washington upset Miami last week, proving they really are a Top 15 team. Colorado, now 0-2, had better get ready for their third loss of the season.

Washington 31 Colorado 21

Virginia visits Duke this weekend. Virginia should roll with ease over possibly the worst team in the ACC.

UVA 35 Duke 17

One of the best matchups of the week is Tennessee versus Florida. Battle of the SEC

East is on the line when these two teams meet every year. Tennessee, struggling with essential player injuries, will not like the early season competition that the Gators plan on providing.

Florida 34 Tennessee 31

North Carolina has one game a year that they would prefer to trade out for another Tulsa or some other obscure team. Because they are ACC though, Florida State is a mandatory annual event. No exception to the previous battles, the Seminoles will show a dominating performance that the Tarheels cannot touch.

FSU 42 UNC 6

Just how good is UCLA? We find out this week when the Wolverines of Michigan roll to town. The number 3 team in the nation of this week will not fold as the previous number 3 team in the nation (Alabama) did two weeks ago.

Michigan 31 UCLA 24

The battle of Indiana takes place Saturday when Purdue faces in-state rival Notre Dame. The Irish played strong last week against the top team in the country. Can they do it three weeks in a row? Nope. Their starting QB is out with a broken wrist. Watch Heisman candidate Drew Brees pick apart the Notre Dame defense the entire game.

Purdue 35 Notre Dame 17

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