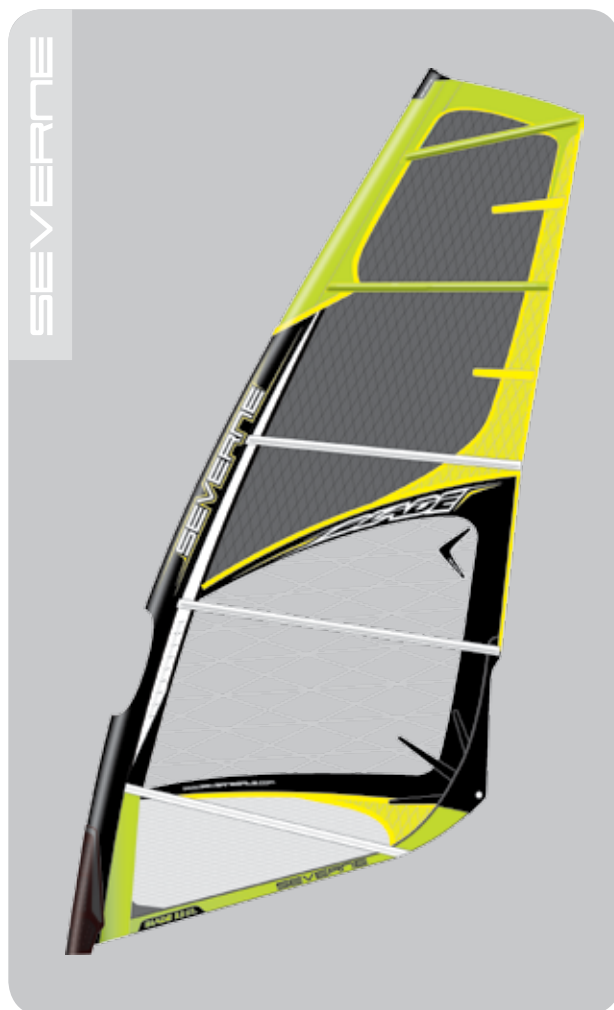


SEVERNE BLADE 5.3 (2011)



"It's not got masses of fullness, yet feels very efficient at getting going with great bottom end"

"Controllable locked in feel and very light in the hands. Can handle a lot of wind"

"Light and springy in the hands - can make you believe the sail is smaller than it really is"



The Blade is Severne's control orientated wave sail, featuring a lower power point and aimed at driving the board through turns. It is more powerful than the S-1, with a softer feel, and is the chosen sail of team riders Bjorn Dunkerbeck, Scott McKercher and the Moreno twins.

MANUFACTURER'S CLAIMS

"A control orientated wave sail with plenty of low centered power for driving the board through turns. Built tough with 100% X-ply construction for unsurpassed durability and featuring an extended area of lightweight e-series cloth eM³, the 2011 Blade is designed for riders looking for controllable power for use in any demanding conditions." severnesails.com

ON THE BEACH

As with the S-1, the weight of this sail really is incredible when compared to the rest of the group. At 3.39kg it's nearly a kilo lighter than a couple of the other sails tested, and only the Naish comes close. In sizes as big as 5.3m weight saving really does make a noticeable and very positive difference to the handling of the sail. It's worth pointing

out that the Blade certainly looks one of the most high-tech sails we have seen, and it's clear that weight saving hasn't been achieved through scrimping, but rather through use of exotic materials such as eM³, Dyneema and Kevlar. The Blade has one of the longer luff lengths in test (432cm) and the second longest boom length (177cm). It sets with a slightly tighter leech than most, and with a fair degree of pre-set fullness in the lower battens. When it comes to tuning flexibility, the Blade offers a reasonable amount of versatility in both the down haul and outhaul range to suit different preferences and wind conditions. We preferred it with slightly less downhaul and a little more outhaul to get a sharper, firmer feel, but it's worth spending some time experimenting to see what suits you best.

ON THE WATER

The Blade stands out with in this group for being both extremely light in the hands and exceptionally controlled at the top end. However, the merits of the Blade most certainly don't end there. This is a power wave sail test after all, and to that end the Blade fits perfectly. This isn't your standard arm wrenching, back-handed power wave sail though. Instead it delivers its power in an uncannily subtle manner. The incredible lightness of feel belies the amount of power this sail has on tap at the bottom end. Enough to rank it as the third most powerful in test, but easily the lightest feeling sail. At the top end the Blade scores second to none. It's not only stable, but remains so light and controlled in the hands that even our lightest Clones enjoyed using it overpowered. It actually has quite a springy, flexible feeling in the hands, and the power delivery is a bit softer than some (particularly Severne's S-1). It has a fairly solid profile, giving it a comfortable, locked-in feel. The power point is very stable and pulls quite low in the sail, which helps lock the board down and gives the Blade its extremely controllable handling. The power is ever so slightly on the back hand, which gives the sail a reassuring pull at the bottom end, but the springiness in the leech and light feel means that it never gets too much at the top end.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

The Blade is one of those rare sails that manages to combine great bottom end power with superb top end control. It is incredibly light in the hands and looks like a real high-tech product. The sail has a springier feel than most and a slightly softer power delivery, which makes it very forgiving at the cost of some responsiveness. It feels very efficient in the hands, and the name 'Blade' nicely describes the controlled, locked-in feel of the sail.