



Wave Witch Operator's Manual

The Wave Witch families of designs, including the popular Cobra Wave Witch, feature a relatively long and sharp bow. This fine entry helps give the boats their excellent paddling characteristics and their ability to punch through soup and breaking waves on the way to the takeoff zone. It also gives them different characteristics on the wave compared to more wave-ski like hulls.

The most common problem the novice encounters is burying the nose while taking off or turning away from the wave. Leaning back and turning (using the rudder) before the nose goes under will avoid this.

Another fairly common problem is getting stuck sideways in the soup, side-surfing. Bracing into the wave, rolling the boat up on its rail, and turning away from the soup using the rudder will usually get you back in control.

Remember - " Turn and Burn" - the rudder, together with the planing hull and hard edges, give the Wave Witch an incredible degree of speed and control, so learn to use it and you will get the most out of your boat.

Speed is your friend - at speed, the spray rails develop a lot of lift and prevent the nose from going under, the whole boat becomes more stable, the rudder more effective, so don't be afraid of going fast and working over the wave.

Basic rules/practical advice:

Take off at an angle unless you are sure you can turn before reaching the bottom.

Turn before you reach the bottom of the wave.

Lean way back to keep the nose up while making bottom turns or big cutbacks.

Don't use a seat back/back band while surfing as it restricts your ability to lean back. Lean forward while dropping in, and lean back to turn. If you enjoy the support of a seat-back while paddling, loosen it up or shift it so you can lean back, before taking off on a wave.

In the soup, use the rail. Lean into the wave, brace, and put the boat up on edge. Turn rudder away from the wave. You can usually get through the soup and back in the clear. This also works when you are about to get nailed by the lip.

Learn to use the paddle as an outrigger, an extra planing surface. You are incredibly stable when riding on both the hull and a planing paddle.

Your boat has a rudder - so use it - and use the paddle only for stability and propulsion, not steering.

Experiment with fin size. Try the boat without the fins. In our experience, fins are not necessary in small surf, but do become useful on large, steep, faces. The fins we provide with our composite boats are the smallest O'fish'l makes and seem to be adequate for all conditions normally encountered. These fins are about 1/3 the area of the Cobra factory fins, and owners of the Cobra Wave Witch may wish to consider modifying the factory fins. Oversize fins may make the boat difficult to turn in some situations.

Since all varieties of the Wave Witch have rudders, and may have fins as well, it is recommended that you do not beach the boat, but rather carry it in and out of the water. The composite models all have braided handles in the cockpit; the recent rotomolded Cobra boats have a finger slot. Both varieties may easily and comfortably be carried by using the thigh strap as a shoulder sling.

The composite Wave Witches used for surfing (optional on the Horizon, and unneeded on the Pocket Rocket) have a breakwater molding attached to the deck in front of the cockpit footwells. This breakwater serves to keep slop out of the cockpit and significantly reduces the impact of breaking waves. A similar aftermarket molded fiberglass breakwater is available for the Cobra Wave Witch and is highly recommended by the designer.

Important Safety Notice!

We believe the use of a paddle leash is essential!

A leash between your paddle and the nose of the boat will prevent loss of the boat and prevent damage to you, your boat or other surfers.

Even if you lose your grip on the paddle, the boat will not blow away as rapidly as the paddle acts as a sea anchor.

We recommend nylon or Dacron braid rather than stretchy plastic leashes.

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