



RRD BLISS WOOD V5 136

TEST TEAM NOTES:

The Bliss V5 is available in a LTD edition with biaxial carbon layers which is 20% lighter, however we tried the wood version. This board is a perfect contrast to sit opposite the Jaime on this spread as it presents a now very current choice that you have in your next freeride / freestyle twin-tip.

The Bliss has a really good combination of freeride and freestyle performance, but leans more towards the freestyle end of the spectrum. What is important in a pure freeride board is that ability to create speed and drive off your back foot, whether you're finishing a carve or stroking the kite and, although the Bliss has great freestyle application, we still really enjoyed the way it gets up to speed.

RRD have added a little more width in the tips and a slightly deeper rail channel to aid upwind performance but, just as we enjoyed last year, there's enough feeling of power under your back foot to create speed when you want to hit a section or a ramp but at the same time it offers lots of playful feel in the tips without making it technical to find grip. You can switch to toe-side easily and then not have to work too hard to get the board to grip and drive in that position that intermediate riders often find more difficult. You can then drive it round on a wave face and feel good.

The Bliss has a nice, fast central rocker section, helping early planing and mixes that with increased levels of freedom in terms of looseness to find a bit more creativity in your riding. The load and pop is very fluid with less sharp bite than a thinner rail and the balance is just right for both straps and boots. Whatever you're using you can wind up the rail load nicely towards the final section of your carve to offer a pleasing release off your back foot. That underside grip works

well with the channels and thickness of the Bliss to soften out your landings nicely and importantly is forgiving of slightly off-angle touch downs.

Where the difference between this more modern freeride board and a more traditionally railed twin-tip is basically in terms of locked-in grip and, as a result, speed. The Bliss tracks steadily and constantly, adding to your confidence - especially for tricks, but if you're simply wanting to go out and hack it towards ramps and load up for huge WOO scores, then you'll want something more locked in. The Bliss is however more playful and breaks looser more easily. There's less pushing and shoving and a board like this works in more dimensions. What you sacrifice a little in grip and bite, you make up for in forgiveness in landings and carving faces with its thicker, more rounded rails.

Although the Bliss is very bombproof, it is heavier than something like the Jaime, so for ultimate in boosting and board-off old school performance, this is where there's another difference, but the Bliss is far more suited to that cross-over rider looking to either step up to boots, or mix up their riding in both.

The RRD pads and straps are broad, soft and comfortable with generous adjustments. They're like your grandad's slippers - there's a lot of soft material there all round the foot and the pad has plenty of grip. RRD have also added a track system this year, which offers unlimited options on your stance positions.

SUMMARY:

The Bliss V5 is bang in the middle of this sector of modern twin-tips that work as well for boots as in straps. Mid-paced, this isn't a super-fast board, but there's great connection and you feel really fluid as a rider, whatever you want to do.

Although it doesn't bite super sharply, you can be confident to buy this as an early intermediate and know you'll be able to use it for a long time throughout the growth of your kitesurfing skills. There's more than enough performance to keep both an intermediate cruiser and their handle-passing partner very happy.

KW LIKED:

Easy balance of performance with a fun looseness and you can then get a lot more serious when you add boots.

KW WOULD CHANGE:

If you're wanting to just load up huge sent jumps, you may desire something faster, more locked in and a bit lighter.

BLISS BALANCE POINTS:

Build quality: 8.5

Fixtures and fittings: 8.5

Speed: 7

Pop: 8

Drive: 6.5

Flex: 6

Comfort: 7.5

Looseness: 8

Grip: 7

Upwind: 7.5

Slider proof: No

Boots applicable: Yes

Freeriding: 7

Freestyle: 8

Ease-of-use: 7.5

SIZES: 139 x 43.5, 138 x 42, 137 x 41, 136 x 40 and 135 x 39cm

Also available in women's 'Kiss' model: 136 x 40 and 135 x 39cm

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