

# *Planing On – Sessions*

Welcome to the Sessions... All things International 14 related.

Article 3 – October 28, 2022 By Paul Galvez

## **Archie Speaks...**

*Six Time I14 World Champion Archie Massey sits down with Paul Galvez and talks about all things I-14. From early days to sharing his thoughts on what contributes to making these boats go well. This is long overdue. Enjoy!*



**Planing On:** Archie, it's been a while since you and I have chatted. Welcome to our little newsletter, "Planing On". Let's turn the clock back a bit and you may recall that you and I had an opportunity to sail a few events together. You were still living in the States at the time, and we decided to team up since your boat was stuck in the UK. My takeaway from that experience was that you were an extremely driven person and your brain activated in full RACE MODE the second we pushed off the dock.

**Archie E Massey:** And normally as soon as we reach the club and each night dreaming of more speed!

**PO:** I recall you analyzing all aspects of the wind shifts and current on the way out, constantly looking to improve our speed and height while just sailing to the starting line. I think most of us do this, but it seemed your process was much more elevated. I've been fortunate enough to have a quite a few good crews in my boats and they all have their strong points. You seemed to excel as an all rounder with an emphasis on excellent wind reading skills and your attention span is unique in that I saw almost no highs and lows, just flat-out highs. I could almost see the smoke coming out of your ears while processing all the information. Needless to say, I think we won everything we entered.

**AEM:** I still do that... From the moment of launch, we're trying to read the day's wind. How fast to puffs progress down the course? Do puffs lift port, starboard or just spread? Are there persistent shifts, random or regular? I like to proactively attack a course knowing my decisions are likely to play out well... I find it very frustrating if our focus is internal, still working on boat setup and we simply react to wind shifts after they've hit us. Ideally, we know our settings and we're just dialing the boat into the ones that feel best for that day's conditions.

**PO:** I recall one race in San Diego when I had a bad cold and probably should have stayed home in bed. I was tired and weak on the long-distance race, the last race of the day. We were winning by a clear country mile and maybe 100 yards to the finish when I started to toggle up on my trap and rest some. The look on your face was classic. A true WTF moment. I figured it was fine to ease up now since we had this, but you had nothing of it and kept pushing hard as if everyone was nipping at our transom. THAT is what I'm talking about.

**AEM:** You should have let me know! If I'm honest, it's not about the win, but the enjoyment of sailing well. I'll race as hard back to beach as the race itself, just because it's fun to sail smoothly and fast!

**PO:** Now that you've won the Worlds *just a few more times* since then, it's time to pop the hood on that mind of yours and see what makes what I would call a Chronic World Champion. We know you've won with different boats and different crews. It seems there may be a recipe for your success. Let's get to the nitty gritty shall we?

**AEM:** Sure. This is something Glen and I have also thought about recently... There are clearly large speed differences in the 14 fleet. Around the complete course, there is certainly a significant speed advantage held by the top few boats in what are now one-designs with the

Ovington B6s. What do we do that differs to 90% of the others? And even after a few make the jump in speed, one boat can still dominate one regatta. These days it seems to come down to preparation. How much tuning and sailing I've done in the run-up to the event.

**PO:** Six wins now... Let's just process that. You also dominated this last Worlds with string of first places in Flensburg. Did you even sail the last day? Was it a Tactical or Boat Speed advantage this time? A bit of both?

**Archie:** We were clearly going fast.. We felt the equal to Andy/Rob, and possibly higher and hence better VMG than Glen/Ed. The common factor with all my wins is arriving at the venue 2 weeks before the Worlds and setting ourselves up to win the first race. This time allows me to really understand my settings, new sails and the venue's winds. As a counter example, in Carnac, Harvey came straight from Rio with two days to spare. Our first few races had too little lowers, coming in with a pair of 5<sup>th</sup>s. By the end of the week, we were dialed in, winning the last two races, but Glen already had 4 bullets on the score card!

Flensburg is my perfect venue. As you alluded, I love reading wind and Flensburg is shifty as your like. We had an incredible run of luck, reaching the top mark first in every race except the last, where Douglas/Mark and George/Jack snuck in from the right. It's rare that I've felt so free to tack and position ourselves on my whim and it all ultimately turns out well. We never hit a corner, but positioned ourselves between the fleet and what was coming down the course. High-wiring and heads definitely out the boat, never once looking at the sails!

**PO:** Your crew Harvey Hillary is already synonymous with Coaching some of the highest-level skiff teams <https://www.harveyhillary.com/bio>

We all remember the Higher and Faster videos with the funny faux hawk guys. He's come a long way since then. Have you found that Harvey's skill-set is helping you push harder now more than ever? Other than great boat handling in the front, what else is he responsible for?

**Archie:** I would be lying if I said we were pushing harder than ever. We both now have families and have only sailed the once since the Worlds! I'm really fortunate to sail with Harvey and all my previous crews, from George to Matt to Dan. Harvey and I are kindred spirits with a love for sailing, a love for adventure and 'successfully' balancing all that with family life, who we're trying to instill the same passions.

Harvey and I talk through everything from championship management, boat prep, sails, the days strategy.. We're a great sounding board for each other's ideas..

Come the race, and beyond his core crewing, Harvey is ultimately responsible for two areas: Ensuring the boat is set to our numbers at all points in the course, and ensuring we're going as fast as we can, always enabling me to keep my head out the boat. Obviously, I provide feedback from the helm on boat speed and feel, but ultimately Harvey is proactive with making the gear changes as the wind fluctuates. I suspect we make more changes per beat than most,

i.e. 5-10 changes. Harvey also keeps me informed on what's happening to boats hitting the corners. Sometimes, he must temper his comms if they're doing too well 😊.

**PO:** What is your standard routine in prepping for a major regatta like the Worlds? Are you looking at all the details you have access to like weather/wind/wave data history for the venue or do you just show up and roll with whatever comes your way and not stress over any of it?

**Archie:** That's a top question.. answerable at many levels..

Far out, we'll work with Dave A and discuss sails that will be all-rounders, but certainly tuned to the expected conditions. For example, Perth sails had a shorter top-batten and were flatter. Flensburg's were larger headed and intentionally more depth.

As mentioned above 95% of our prep occurs at the venue. For years, I've made broken promises to myself to get all the boat work done, a two-boat tuning campaign and sails compared. Life gets in the way and the Worlds provides a great break from life's distractions and we dedicate our time to the regatta. I've never been able to recreate this vibe for Nationals (POW) but am hoping to this year!

Once at the venue, we knock through our job lists and focus almost exclusively on long tuning runs, either alone or with others. Constantly changing one variable and trying to spot a difference.

**PO:** Any Personal Training leading up to the regatta? Running/Cardio/Weights? Any strict diet programs to try and maintain a target weight you are striving for?

**Archie:** Hmm... Prior to Sydney, yes. I'd very intentionally aim to surf 3 times a week and sail 3 times a week. I plan to stay fit, but since having a family, I simply aim to do exercise twice a week, generally mountain biking and sailing. I'm afraid I have no interest in the gym!

In contrast, Harvey is an active CrossFit goer. I recall one race in Perth where we'd had a capsize on the first run in a big breeze day, rehoisted and whilst dropping in the chop into the bottom mark the kite was alongside the hull. I was just waiting for the kite to catch and pitchpole us. Harv somehow managed to get it back in the sock and we rounded to go back upwind. I'm 100% sure that without his dedication to staying fit and ultimately strong, that would have turned into a very long day on the water for us. It saved us.

**PO:** Let's talk about the Ovington B6. Ovington added the foredeck to the original design which looks smart. I'd hazard to guess this adds much more rigidity to the structure in an effort to maintain rig tension. Am I right? Other than this obvious change, any other deviations of the original USA design?

**Archie:** I can't really talk to the original USA design, but I can make comparisons to my old B5.

Between, Glen's winning streak and Andy Fitz saying, "Every time I thought I was getting worse, I'd get a new boat and start winning again!", I ultimately set my mind on a new boat. Perhaps old George 1<sup>st</sup> was letting me down. It was also only able to carry 28 on the forestay compared to Glen's 43!

Back when Paul Bieker was penning the B6, we exchanged a few emails and he shared his philosophy: wider transom, smooth lines and less rocker. i.e. easier to sail and earlier to plane.

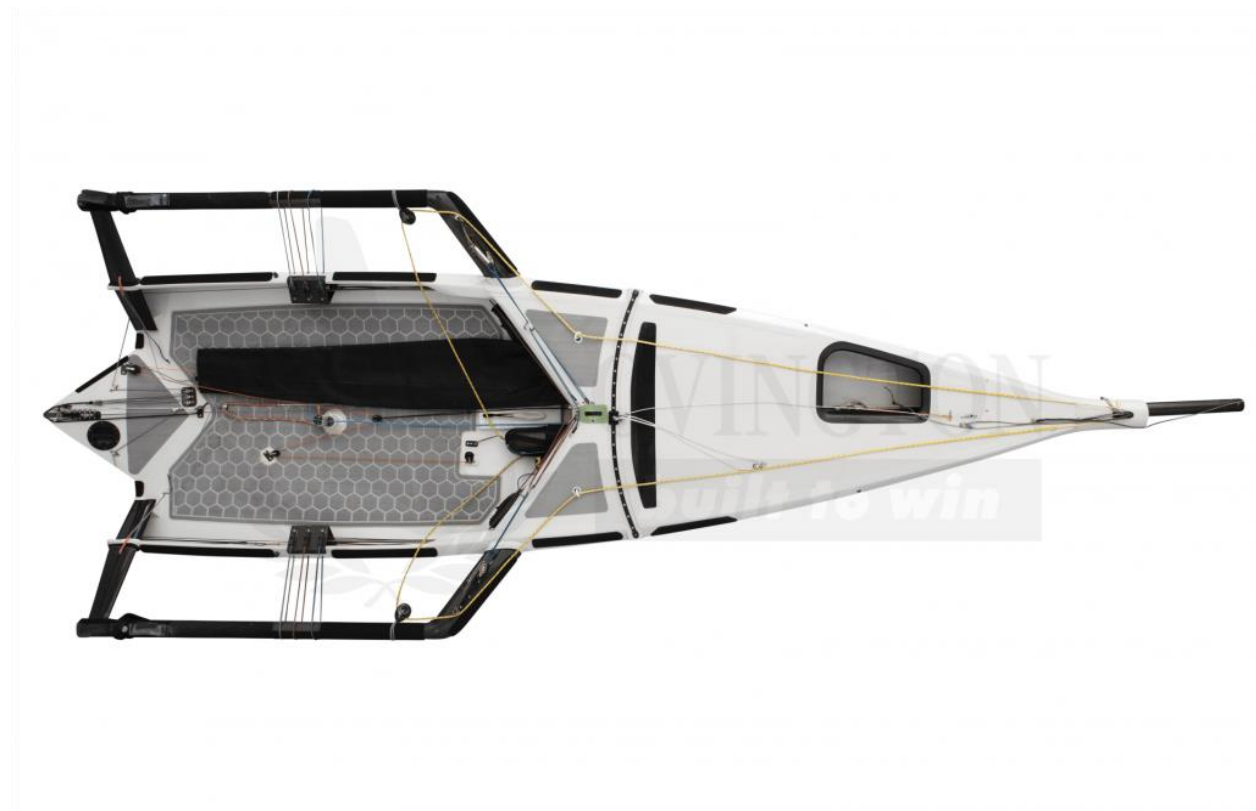
I'd waited 6 years to try it and it met all these goals. It's phenomenally easy to sail, very forgiving and clearly has a lick of pace! It also holds up to 36 on the loos, which seems sufficient to stop jib sag in all but the choppiest winds.

**PO:** Truswell's creation (Custom Hollom) is gorgeous. It wins the beauty contest for sure. What do you think of the Hollom design? Have you sailed one?

**Archie:** Stop-press.. Glens building a Bieker 😊. The Hollom was such a thing of beauty that I once felt that he had a natural advantage. With the B6, I'm now back to my old view, if the hull and foils are polished and sails fit the mast, it should be fast enough. As for the Hollom, I've barely sailed it.. I sense that it's good in chop and two sail reaches. The V'd hull lifting it higher out the water. It's allegedly harder to sail. Some excuse!

**PO:** Let's talk about **your boat specifically**. Standard Issue Ovington B6 or did you add some special sauce? Are you carrying any corrector weights? Any other mods from original?

**Archie:** We taped on 1 Kg at the Worlds, having started with about 4 Kg. As we were the first boat off the production line, we had a few teething issues. Otherwise, I've added my usual mods..



I have a *twin-sheeted jib system* to enable in-boat sheeting angle adjustments. Key for long-races where the wind is bound to change. The other key mod is a *halyard lock at the jib head*. There is nothing worse than a stretchy jib halyard. We went with a *Kite Cunningham* during Flensburg, (for light winds). I'd like a well-developed twisting tiller adjuster, but don't want to spend the hard yards developing it.

**PO:** Are you still running a CST Hi-Mod mast? Standard issue? If so, which one? What do you like about it so much? It looks like you are also running fully adjustable shrouds. On the fly or between races?

**Archie:** Yes, it's standard issue latest HM CST before they went skinny. The jury's out on the skinny rig and I'll be trialing one over the winter. My B6 mast is stiff and that allows the same sail to fit well across the wind range. It is probably the first mast I've owned that the top section holds up to vang load and only releases when I pull on Cunningham. All previous masts have started to depower earlier than I'd choose, under vang load alone.

As I've done for a while, we fix our forestay and very much only play the shrouds. Running between 28 and 36 on the forestay. My rationale is that I like a perfectly balanced helm and by not raking it ensures that I accelerate straight in gusts and the feel in the helm is similar across the wind range.

### ***Bonus Material - See Archie's Tuning Guide (PDF) attached.***

**PO:** Looks like Dave Alexander is still making your rags. He always delivers a nice sail. I haven't seen your craft in the flesh but judging from the pics I see there are some subtle details on both main and jib clews. For the jib you have the in/out as well as the up/down to control your twist, then you have the long clew batten for better stability down low?

**Archie:** Dave's been great to work with over the years. Thanks, Dan, for the introduction and thank you Dave for all your support! 😊

As with all good design, it's evolution over revolution. Beyond the venue specific modes, we've developed.

1. The twin jib sheet system
2. The jib head halyard lock
3. Flatter jib entry, where we ultimately went too far.
4. Deck hugging jibs
5. 0.5oz cloth (for Flensburg). I've yet to sail with it in Big Breeze. Fingers-crossed!
6. Kite luff shortener (for the light winds)
7. Frisbee Kite for better VMG, vs a more rounded shape. The jury is still out.
8. Playing with Kite Luff lengths.
9. A gradual move to more prebend in masts. Having said that, I'm reverting to a little inversion in my mast these days to maximize forestay tension

What's next? Garda. I like the look of a Glaser mimic for that. Low center of effort, concave leech and under-area main... Dave, please expect my call!

**PO:** On the main, it looks like you intentionally leave a small gap between clew and boom whereas most crews cinch this up tighter. Is this my imagination or is it in fact intentional?

**Archie:** Great spot! Intentional. I gybe like you would a windsurfer. In big winds, I like to grab the boom, be very intentional with lining up the leach with the wind throughout the gybe and let it across when I'm ready. It makes it very controlled and ensures there is no pressure in the main head pushing the bow down. The gap allows me to get my hand between the main's foot and the boom. Also, the B6s already have a very high boom, so it's no issue having a looser clew rope.

**PO:** Ovington issue daggerboard? You and Harvey clearly demonstrate what a flat and level, fully hiked boat looks like upwind and down. Are you in the flexi or rigid daggerboard theory and why?

**Archie:** Glen's the man to talk to having trialed every board stiffness. I'll take a standard issue board and would err on stiff over flexi. It provides a much more known quantity. My only criteria is that it's long! 6+ foot to get powered up in the light.

**PO:** Who made your current T-Foil? From my observations, you are known for sailing the foil very aggressively. Downwind for example, you like to sail with more foil then hike farther aft to keep the bow up. Not just adjust the foil for bow attitude. You've broken a few foils that I know of. Clearly it seems you are getting the most out of your foil. Walk me through your technique on this and why it works well for you. Please elaborate on both upwind and downwind technique. Looks like you like string control vs. tiller twist. Why?

**Archie:** Paul, are you writing this for the magazine or to uncover my every secret!? 😊

It would be a misconception to say that we foil harder than anyone else. That might imply that we sail with a bow down attitude. It's like saying you should lean forward whilst skiing, which is the worst advice. Really, they should say, "Don't lean back! Stand centered over your feet".

Similarly, set the foil such that the boat sails freely, never tripping you forwards and not stopping on too many waves. At the same time as achieving this, as you can, then back it off a touch. Whether it's upwind or downwind, 14s are powered up, so both crews must commit as much weight out laterally, whilst in the back foot-loop. In lighter winds downwind, where you don't need the lateral righting moment, you can afford to carry even more foil and start leaning back, such that your head is behind the rudder and the crew traps under the helm, loading the rudder to the max.



**PO:** Let's talk about the class. You've been involved in the Fourteens now for about 20 years? We've seen the class evolve to what it is today. What would you like to see change in the I14 rules to make it an even better boat?

**Archie:** Another good question... for which I have a range of answers... These days I favor class stability over a raw development race, for which I don't have the time or the money. We can move to a venue, but ultimately, it's hard to find a material advantage. I like this level of restricted development and that we can all race evenly with production gear.

That said, I get frustrated that we stay in the clubhouse when the Optimists are out in 30 knots. Surely, we can find a way to carry a smaller main and race in 25 knots and muck about in 30!

The other tweak I'd like to try is to extend the racks aft by a foot, so we can literally balance on the foil carrying almost all the crew-weight. That said, I don't really want to have any more weight on my front foot, so I'm unlikely to vote this change in.

**PO:** The class has always been a smaller crowd than most. The boats are technical, physically demanding compared to other fleets and some may consider them expensive yet in today's crazy world, it seems perfect. Any thoughts on how to grow the class and get more younger members involved?



**Archie:** We're very lucky that "14s really are forever". So, with many staying in the fleet up to 40 years, we really only need to attract a few people each year to be thriving! So, I believe that we all owe it to convert a few friends each year of like-minded technical skiff sailors. We should all sail more multi-class events to simply show-off our wonderful craft.

The other side of me says that we could follow the Moth and be THE two-person foiling dinghy of choice. Wouldn't that be fun.

**PO:** Archie - Thanks for taking the time to chat. For most people, winning is difficult. We all know it's about sailing smarter than those around you. You can have a very fast boat and be fast as hell but if you get a 2<sup>nd</sup> row start or go the wrong way a few seconds too long, the opportunities are lost. Keeping your cool when things don't go as planned is key. As someone in your position, with the experience you've gained, what else would you add to this to conclude our interview?

**Archie:** The great thing about a 14 is you can always sail it faster. Unlike a lead-mine, we're not talking 1%, we can easily go 2+ knots faster with a little tuning! The absolute key is getting a perfect fit between your main and mast, beyond that get a deep sense of when you're going your fastest for the wind-conditions and change something if you're not. Simple really 😊

