

In Search of: The Ultimate Noserider

By Jim McClaren

It's a hell of a lot easier to noseride on a good noserider than it is to noseride on something else. Give yourself an unfair advantage by getting the very best tool you can find. If you're just learning the basics, try to borrow a few different models and sample them all in similar conditions — preferably on three-foot, mushy walls. One or another will stand out as being much easier for tipriding.

The makings of a solid noserider are summed up in the details of length, outline, rocker, and contours.

LENGTH

Lots of people have this built-in aversion to surfboards that are too big to fit in their cars. I'm not altogether sure about why that is, but it is. And it's something you've gotta sweep out of your brain in order to think noseriding. Everything in this world involves some sort of trade-off, and the trade-off with noseriders is that you give away the option of whip-zip-flip maneuverability. Big deal. What you gain in the inherent "nosiderability" of the longer plank more than makes up for the huge lock-to-lock turning radius.

If you want to impress your girlfriend on the beach with your manly ripping, fine. Just don't try it on a noserider. It won't work. Hell, on most of those low key summer days with small, soft, slow waves, your manly ripping is gonna look more like futile flailing anyway. Which won't impress your girlfriend nearly as much as an outrageously extended five through three different sections will.

Go long, compadre.

OUTLINE

Another major item is the overall outline of the board. Noseriders look dunky. Like they couldn't outrun a two-legged dog. Looks, however, can be deceiving.

Noseriders have big, blunt front ends, and tails that aren't much narrower. Add near-parallel rails running from one end to the other and it adds up to a real boxy appearance. They're not sexy. People think to themselves, "I'd never wanna be caught dragging THAT thing down to the beach." And so they miss out on a whole world of fun.

Noseriders typify "The form of function." Everything about them is for a good reason. That big, round nose translates into a platform suitable for extended perching. That full plonshape allows confident strolling and overall planing speed. The wide tail just loves being bear-hugged by the lip, which locks you in for extended toe-hanging.

ROCKER

Without a doubt, rocker is the most misunderstood aspect of a good noserider. Most people either don't think about rocker at all, don't think it makes much difference, or have the concept of what good noserider rocker should look like exactly backwards.

This is understandable. Good noserider rocker is so damn counterintuitive that it doesn't look like it could work. The very best noseriders have a peculiar "bent" look about them, like maybe there was something wrong with the blank. This, more than any other feature, distinguishes a good noserider from a funkdog, and it's the one that everybody gets wrong. Here's the secret: tail kick! Have your shaper flop the blank around and shape it backwards. Yes, backwards. That's the only way to get that absurd tail kick I'm talking about. It worked for Lance Carson. It'll work for you.

Noseriding is slicing through the water. In a nutshell, noseriding sucks. Yep, sucks. That's what's actually happening when you're noseriding in full trim, screaming down the line. The nose of the board is sucking up. The tail of the board is sucking down. And in order for all that to go on, you gotta have major tail rocker. People who don't know about what makes good noseriders (a whole lot of folks) are invariably dumbstruck by the weird tail kick on a smokin' tiprider. But that's the key: flat in front, flipped up in the tail, with a gentle, even curve through the middle.

Got it? Flat nose. Kicked tail.
Onward.

CONTOURS

Alright. Here we are. In the land of bottom, rail, and deck contours. The final ingredient in producing a noserider that will excel in the water can be visualized most easily by looking at the rails.

The rails of a noserider are exactly the reverse of a normal surfboard. Which figures. When viewed from the side, noserider rails start out hard and completely dropped in the front, then gradually transition over the full length of the board to hard and completely raised in the tail.

Flat-bottom nose. Round-bottom tail. Hard edges on each end. Not so hard through the middle. Softest (but not too soft) in the center and hardening as they approach each end. The nose doesn't want to be too thin, either. In order for all the necessary lift to take full effect, the nose has to have a shade of thickness. Just a shade thicker than normal should do. Boards with real thin, bladed noses don't noseride as well as something with a little meat up there.

Looks like the perfect recipe for a sluggish piece of crud that will pearl if you looked at it crooked. But we all know about looks now, don't we? Sometimes they can be very deceiving.

What we get is a goofy-looking critter that's real long, has a blunt front end with turned-down rails, a flat bottom, mutant rocker, and a round-bottom tail with turned up rails. Yark! No wonder nobody makes 'em that way anymore. They look too weird. Who's gonna buy 'em? Well, if you really want to noseride... you are.

An immense platform of a nose. Parallel rails. Kicked tail. Flat up front. Easy, no?



BOB LANGRISH