

## Glowing Rope

This years Freediving World Championships in the Dean's Blue Hole will be the first competition to use an incredible new product that has an enormous application to our sport.

Glow in the dark rope.



In March this year Dean's Blue Hole was covered by a thick layer of seaweed that had blown in from the Sargasso Sea on the spring tradewinds. It meant the sunlight couldn't penetrate to depth, and any dive past 50 meters was in almost total darkness. We were assured by the locals that this much seaweed had never before been seen on Long Island, but that didn't help our situation. I remember sitting despondently on the dive platform and saying to my training partner, "What we need is glow in the dark rope..."

Now that dream has become possible, and although we don't expect to have a problem with light at depth during world championships, this product will have us covered for if we do.

Its greatest application however will surely be in the lakes and quarries of North America and Europe, where light is lost after 10 meters, and deep freedives are conducted in complete darkness. Glorope only needs a couple of minutes of charging in sunlight (in our tests even a few seconds was sufficient!) in order to stay glowing for hours. It is true that after a period the charge starts to wear off, but although the line may not exactly be radiant it is still clearly visible in darkness, which is all that is required. Furthermore there is even a reflective weave, which makes it stand out like a beacon in any kind of projected light.

Glorope kindly agreed to sponsor the World Championships with a spool of 3/8" (10mm) dyneema glorope. The dyneema core means that the rope has a five figure breaking strength (>10,000kg!) and is about as stretchy as a brick tower, perfect for accurate line measurements. They have also sent us sheets of glowing vinyl stickers to cover the base plate so that the black tags are clearly visible.

At \$2.33/ft (\$7/meter) Glorope is not really any more expensive than standard dyneema rope of its thickness, and the glowing property will last as long as the rope does.

Visit their website at <http://www.glorope.com> for more information, or to buy online.

glorope



## Orca Free

Orca has been involved in freediving for several years, and is the wetsuit brand of choice for a large fraction of all the top performing freedivers, including the NZ and Russian mens and womens teams. Recently I have been collaborating with Orca to develop THE freediving wetsuit. We had a list of priorities that we would not compromise on, and they have all been met and combined in one suit:

**ORCA FREE...**

- **greatest hydrodynamic quality possible:** realised with Orca's silicon-coated SCS neoprene.
- **greatest flexibility possible:** using superstretch lining to reduce any resistance to movement to almost zero.
- **minimise water entry into the suit:** an inner back panel with a hole for the head to pass through funnels any water that enters at the neck back out of the suit.
- **maintaining thermal protection while keeping buoyancy to a minimum:** 2mm Yamamoto neoprene panels, and a super-tight fit mean this suit can be used in water down to 20°C, but has less buoyancy than a single 3mm jacket.
- **stylish graphics:** well... judge for yourself!



In these photos I am at Tenerife Top Training Center (Canary Islands, Spain), where as well as state of the art 50m olympic and 25m pools they have one of the most advanced flumes in the world. A flume is like a wind tunnel, but for the liquid element.



I tested the Orca Free for both DNF and DYN and it's performance was incredible. With the monofin on we dialed the water speed up to 2.5m/s and I clung to the railing while a river seethed around me. I expected to be flung against the back grating, but as soon as I let go and started moving I found I was able to stay in the same place, and even make headway into the current. The incredible silicon surface of the Orca Free meant that I felt like I was invisible to the water - it parted effortlessly around my body.



During DNF trials I was able to complete laps of a 25m pool with 2.5 relaxed strokes, and still maintain a speed of 1.0m/s. This suit performs, and the clever inner back panel means that you are warmer than one-piece wetsuits twice its thickness.

Now I am back in the Bahamas, and have starting depth training in the lead-up to the AIDA freediving world championships. Already I have cut 2 ascent strokes off (in an 80m dive) from what I was doing at this time last year. Anyone who was watching Vertical Blue 2009 might recall I had difficulty in CWT with water entering the neck seal and pooling in the suit I was using, but Orca have solved this problem as well as many other minor details, creating the ultimate performance freediving suit.

The suit will be officially released in January 2010, but Orca are doing a limited run of suits in time for the World Champs, so stay tuned to this space to see if you can pick up an advance model.

You can see more about what Orca are doing for freediving at [this link](#).

## 2nd Master Class - an account from one of the students

Two weeks ago Vertical Blue held the 2nd Master Class, organised by William Trubridge and Brittany Trubridge, with Simon Borg Olivier and Robert King as guest instructors.

The course was a huge success, with 10 students from all over the globe thriving on the new techniques, knowledge and expertise of the instructors as well as the perfect training conditions offered by Dean's Blue Hole. Personal best performances weren't sought out, but occurred almost daily for most students, and by the end of the course everyone had increased their operating depth, by between 5 - 25m. The yoga classes with Simon gave students a new approach to becoming in control of their own body, as well as insights into dives and breathing strategies.

Here is one warm description of the course and the Long Island experience from a close friend and Apnea Academy Instructor, Glenn Venghaus:

[click here](#)

