

VB 2010 Training and statistics



the main contenders are squaring off for the first Suunto Dive-Off, during Vertical Blue 2010, which starts in just four days time

Less than nine years ago, in 2001, the Constant Weight (CWT) world record was 82 meters, set by Eric Fattah. Today the record is exactly 50% more: Herbert Nitsch's 123 meters.

Both athletes will be competing at Vertical Blue 2010...

The Constant No Fins (CNF) record has improved even quicker.

Only eight years ago, in 2002, Topi Lintukangas' 60-meter dive redefined this new discipline. A wonderstruck William Trubridge watched the record video and was inspired to start freediving. Today he has added exactly 50% more, with a world record of 90 meters.

But they're not stopping there... Herbert has remarked that he thinks 130 meters is possible with a monofin, and William has set his sights on the goal of at least 94 meters, which would be the first 300-foot barefoot freedive and surpass even the deepest dive ever made with bi-fins.

Will they reach these targets at VB 2010?

Is there a limit...?

Certainly ten years ago even the most imaginative freediver would have set the supposed human limit shallower than the depths currently being reached. Will the same be said ten years from now? One indication that we might be due for a plateauing effect of world record depths, at least in CWT, is that the Variable Weight Record has remained mostly unchanged in the last ten years. Perhaps we are approaching depths where head-down equalisation difficulties, extreme narcosis and risk of decompression sickness will prove insurmountable hurdles, even for the most experienced freediver...

Another interesting feature of modern freediving is that there seems to be a leading pack that has consistently maintained its advantage on the rest of the competitors. For example, in the history of freediving only four men have EVER broken records in competition. They are Herbert Nitsch, Martin Stepanek, Carlos Coste and William Trubridge. Will this elite club add a new member at Vertical Blue 2010?

It has been William Winram's goal for many years, as he chases the continually receding CNF record. He is still deciding exactly which wetsuit

to use for VB 2010, and says "I am working on relaxing and not thinking about the depth." Meanwhile Ryuzo Shinomiya has been hammering out 95-100m CWT dives, and today was seen cruising up from a 100m Free Immersion dive that lasted almost four minutes. Guillaume Nery dives too early in the morning for anyone to witness what he is up to, and Dave Mullins has the ultimate tactic in secrecy - he is training 15,000 km away in Lake Taupo, New Zealand (where rumour has it he is reaching 100m in icy water and at slight altitude) and arriving in the Bahamas the day before the competition.

The water in Dean's Blue Hole remains at 24°C, but the allegorical waters of rivalry are already starting to simmer...

underwater photo © Ryuzo Shinomiya

Nicely written, nice job! Exiting! only the lower left photo doesn't work on my Fire Fox browser yet.
by Kars van Kouwen on 2010-04-13 17:25:02

- the photo now works, nice one
by Kars van Kouwen on 2010-04-14 11:38:45

In 2001 I predicted that the constant weight record progress would slow down around 125m as athletes would experience numerous simultaneous limiting factors. In February 2001 in a documentary interview I stated my goal was to hit 100m in CW and 10 minutes in static, although I also stated that these were not close to the limits, that much more was still possible. So 10 years ago some people had in fact imagined the current records as being possible.
by Eric Fattah on 2010-04-14 12:26:28