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# **Talking Heads Exclusive interviews** with movers and shakers

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in your understanding? Danu Chotikapanich: You've certainly started with a tough question! With such a mix of construction technologies across younger and more mature sports, it's always difficult for us to be completely precise on overall market size.

Probably the best summary I could give you is that we see the overall watersports board market (circa 1.5 million boards per year including soft and inflatable boards) still being dominated by surfing, with these products making up around half of the total number of boards built. Cobra are very pleased to support our customers in surfing, standup paddle boards (SUPs), windsurfing and kite surfing and currently supply a very significant market share of the noninflatable composite boards.



# Reports



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Here is a very simple question – what do composites actually contribute to windsurf, surf and stand up paddle (SUP) boards?

**DC:** I would summarise by saying composites allow us to create strong, light and beautiful equipment for watersports.

Talking Heads **Exclusive interviews** with movers and shakers

Expert Opinion

Historically, surfboards came first, with solid wooden boards said to date back to 6th Century Polynesia. Hollow wooden boards didn't really appear until around the 1920s and 30s with the first composite boards following just after WW2. These early PU foam-cored boards used polyester resins and fibreglass fabrics – a technology that is still used today. Cobra began production in 1978 producing hollow windsurf boards for Windglider and very quickly moved to epoxy sandwich composites and expanded polystyrene (EPS) cores for its boards. Developing this lighter weight core technology, as windsurf and surf boards were joined by new products such as SUP and kite surfing boards, allowed more material to be used in the outer sandwich layers of the board, producing tougher and more durable boards with no weight penalty. Lighter equipment is easier to handle, faster, more responsive and ultimately more fun in the water.



30th April 2020 Editor's Viewpoint

Exciting new approach to low-cost composites disassembly A new technology developed in the UK allows composite structures to be separated or disbonded quickly and chea

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20

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And what are the key considerations that users are looking for?

highest levels of quality and consistency in every component we manufacture.

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Biocomposite of the Year 2019 award announces nominees **Display Name** 24th October 2019, 10:21AM test IC

friendly manner using sustainable materials. With the recent launch of the Windsurfer LT windsurf board, you've spoken of taking this sport back to its roots. What

More frequently, a lot of buyers are also looking for a sustainable board that is manufactured in an enviromentally

surfboard) a degree of flex in their boards. Buyers are also looking for quality and competitive pricing. As a result Cobra

has developed mass production techniques and efficient production lines, but we also work very hard to maintain the

**DC:** Users are looking for a challenging blend of light weight, strength, durability and in some cases (such as a

are its key features and advantages?

Hyosung plans world's largest carbon fibre plant Echo

2nd September 2019, 10:24AM I wonder where all those people wi ll stand while the (hopefully fully a utomatic) machines are running..?

### ICRACM-2019 anang desai 5th November 2018, 04:26AM

pl inform venu in varanasi and i wo uld like to attend the event

#### A new raw material from the ocean? loscalzo.vincenzo035@gmail.com

14th September 2018, 18:26PM After the millions tons of plastic ps eudo-islands, in ocean to create a f alse food to marine fauna, the gift a a new material from ocean, mad

What we were aiming for when we started the project was to get more people into the sport and also to keep them in the sport. We decided to create a true multi-use board, suitable for SUP, beginners and One-Design racing. It was shortly after we'd started that the Italian Windsurfer class association asked us about an updated board design and we were able to say we already had something in mind that would be perfect. As I said, this board really opens up access to the sport because it's fun to use in much lighter winds than some modern designs. It's great for learning, freestyle, racing and if there's no wind at all you can even take it for a paddle. We've used modern composite construction to make the new board significantly lighter.



e from alga fibers is indeed a gener ous gift that nature provides to the plastic and textile technology of rei nforcement! Welcome!

Scaling-up carbon fibres to move the needle for automotive loscalzo.vincenzo035@gmail.com 14th September 2018, 17:50PM The recent achievement at ORNL i s a positive challenge to CF technol ogy. The potential of the the benefi ts of THE INNOVATIVE technology with the low cost of textile fiber ha s the potential to cut the manufact uring cost by 50% open THE HIGH SERIES markets VIA the atmosphe ric plasma oxidation technology de veloped by ORNL and RMX Technol ogies and adds to the evolution of CN carbonization to other chains p rovided by proper lignine sources, capable to spin at few thousands m/min... It takes time and convinci

#### What are the other areas you are involved in in the composites market?

**DC:** Throughout our 40 years in composites we have been involved with a staggering range of composite products. As well as our involvement in all types of watersports, we've built stadium roof structures, parts for paramotors, folding boats, a new design of ground effect aircraft and more recently we've been developing some really beautiful hi-tech carbon fibre furniture pieces too. In 2005 we decided that automotive composites were a key part of our growth strategy and I'm very proud of how we have developed Cobra Advanced Composites (CAC) since then. We won our first OEM contract for carbon prepreg parts in 2006 and have gone on to create a truly world class manufacturing facility that supplies, tooling, parts and complex assemblies to premium automotive OEM brands in Germany, Italy, Japan and the UK.

#### In October last year you founded the new Cobra Composites Structures (CCS) business unit. What led to this development and what are its aims?

# **Events Calendar** 2020

10-12 November 2020

11-13 November 2020

JEC Korea 2020

8-10 June 2021

Automechanika

Birmingham 2021

ng strong technologies.

**DC:** CCS was formed in response to strong demand from our customers for Cobra's product development expertise, production efficiency and quality focus to be applied to large structural composite parts such as roofs, facades, bridges and large vehicle components for rail, bus and truck applications. With lightweight advanced composites delivering design freedom and faster installation in architecture, as well as providing fuel savings and efficiency gains in transport applications, these are composite applications with significant growth potential, and we feel that Cobra is the perfect partner to support customers from initial design concept through to finished composite structure. Cobra Composite Structures is currently working on a several interesting projects including components for a specialist vehicle project to support airport ground operations and some light weight architectural façade systems.



You are also very active in moving composites to sustainable production. Can you list a few of your achievements to date in this area, and your goals going forward?

**DC:** This is an area that the whole Cobra team is very passionate about. We formally added our commitment to sustainability and corporate social responsibility to our code of conduct in 2007 and we've been expanding our sustainability activities relating to products, processes and the workplace ever since. We've been working with biocomposites for more than 10 years now – both in terms of sustainable reinforcements such as cellulose or coconut husk fibres and also by using bio-resins with an increasing percentage of sustainably produced plant-based carbon content. We've worked alongside our suppliers to develop robust manufacturing processes with bio-based resins and have now switched the majority of our production to these greener resins. Independently certified Gold Level Ecoboards are already produced at Cobra but we'd always like to do more. Ultimately, we'd like to be able to match the current boards' performance with a fully recycled EPS core and a 100% plant-based resin and hardener.



Finally, tells us a little about the special publication you are planning to mark the 40th anniversary of Cobra in 2018, '40 Key Projects and 40 Key People'.

DC: In 2017, we decided to mark our 40th Anniversary year by bringing together 40 key projects, and 40 of the people that have been instrumental in delivering them, into a book that captures all aspects of Cobra's history. The research stage was absolutely fascinating as I was learning some things about the company for the very first time from when my father set up the business.

I don't want to give too much away but you'll be hearing a lot more from us during our 40th year as we release some of these 40 year projects and technology updates on our website and social media channels, as well as through the press.

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