

Endurance over explosiveness: Belgian SUP Tour legend Gunther De Bin's shift to long distance racing

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- [SUP Race](#)

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Gunther De Bin, 55, from Flanders, a racer and Coach at [SUP Club Supfever](#), is one of the Belgian SUP scene's most respected figures. Known to many simply as GUN, he was once a regular at the front of the [Belgian SUP Tour \(BST\)](#) pack. While injuries led him to step back from regular racing, he has remained deeply involved in the sport through coaching, guiding a new generation of paddlers, all while continuing to pursue ultra-distance racing with remarkable results.

Now focusing on two or three international ultra-distance events each year, Gunther demonstrates that performance is as much about endurance and mental resilience as it is about speed. His recent successes at some of the toughest endurance challenges, including the Great Glen Paddle Challenge and the SUP 11-City Tour Non-Stop, reflect his continued strength and dedication to the sport, raising an intriguing question: could this mark a return to the Belgian racing scene?

Hi Gunther, welcome to TotalSUP! What was it about that first encounter with stand-up paddleboarding that made you want to keep going?

I've always been passionate about sports – boxing, cycling... you name it. But after several thromboses and the need to take heavy blood thinners for life, I had to look for a sport I could still do safely and competitively. A good friend of mine, Ronald Schuurbiers, owned a SUP school in Zeeland and put me on a board for the very first time. It was fun, but I didn't feel an immediate spark. I simply couldn't picture what a SUP race would look like.

After some research, I decided to give it a real shot: three months later I drove to France to compete in the GlaGla Race in 2019. That's when everything changed. The moment I fought my way to the first buoy, it felt like a scene straight out of Braveheart. The adrenaline was unreal.

What hooked me right away was the dynamic of the sport: in every race you get the chance to make up for mistakes, turn things around – or lose it all. In the end, it's always the strongest and the smartest who rise to the front. From that day on, I knew: this was my sport.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour

After stepping back from the Belgian SUP Tour (BST) scene due to injuries, what inspired you to stay involved through coaching, and what has that experience taught you?

In my daily work in the healthcare sector, I support people in getting their lives back on track and bringing out the best in themselves. Together we look for a goal on the horizon and work step by step towards it, no matter what has happened in the past. I bring that same vision into my work as a SUP coach. The step towards coaching on the water was therefore a natural one for me. SUP is an intensive sport that demands a lot, both physically and mentally. I've learned that coaching is always tailor-made: everyone develops in their own way and at their own pace.

For one person, that may mean paddling a recreational tour with the right technique. For another, it could be taking on the challenge of a first race or the Belgian SUP Tour event. And for others, it might be the dream of achieving a podium finish in the SUP 11-City Tour. Whatever your goal is, we'll go for it together. And that together goes beyond just my guidance. We do it as a group: supporting, motivating, and carrying each other through both achievements and the joy of the sport. Because it's that very journey that makes reaching the goal truly meaningful.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour

You now focus on just a few international events each year, mainly ultra-long distances. What draws you to these longer challenges over shorter races?

Over the years I've lost some of my explosiveness. It takes me a bit longer to get up to speed, but once I find my rhythm I can hold a strong pace with ease. In long-distance racing, it's not just physical strength that matters, but above all mental resilience.

That's where the gap with the younger, more explosive generation can be closed. In fact, age can even be an advantage: you gain perspective, find calm in the effort, and even learn to enjoy pushing yourself to the limit.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour

First of all – massive congratulations on your recent achievements! Both the Great Glen and the SUP 11-City Tour are notorious for their intensity. How did you prepare mentally and physically for those back-to-back challenges? What did crossing those finish lines mean to you personally?

My physical training is a mix of different disciplines. My weekly schedule always includes core-strengthening sessions, SUP training, and long endurance rides on the gravel bike. In the build-up to a race, I usually do these sessions with the club or with friends. But as race day approaches, I increase the volume of my endurance training and choose to do them more often on my own. This way I prepare not only physically, but also mentally: I learn to find calm in being alone. I also include mental challenges in my SUP sessions, such as paddling with my eyes closed.

These exercises prepare me for the unexpected situations that can occur during a long race. They teach me to stay composed, even when I feel like I'm losing control. It helps me in focusing on body awareness and balance. For me it means that no matter the obstacles or limitations along the way, you can always reach your goal if you go all-in and truly believe in it.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour

What lessons from these ultra-distance events do you bring back into your coaching and training with other paddlers?

The core of coaching towards personal goals is, for me, quite simple: keep enjoying what you do and listen carefully to your body. That's why I encourage variety in training conditions – paddling on canals, lakes, or the Westerschelde – so it never becomes monotonous.

I also advise mixing disciplines such as walking, cycling, and running, and recommend seeking each other's company outside of class days to keep training fun. Equally important is building a solid foundation with plenty of zone 2 training.

For me, success isn't about always pushing harder, but about finding the right balance. The body needs enough time to recover, both mentally and physically. That's where real progress is made.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour

Do these amazing results hint at a potential return to the Belgian racing scene? Are you planning to continue focusing on ultra-long distance events?

As I mentioned before, I strongly believe in supporting each other in reaching personal goals. The Belgian SUP Tour's format is perfectly suited for this.

It brings together athletes of all levels and distances, allowing everyone to find training partners to measure themselves against. At the same time, the positive vibe lifts each other up and drives collective progress.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour

The Belgian SUP Tour (BST) has built a strong community over the years. What do you think sets it apart for both athletes and spectators?

The Belgian SUP Tour is accessible to everyone. As an athlete, you get to line up alongside your idols. You're at the start with athletes like Donato Freens (current world ranking leader), [Joep Van Bakel](#) (two-time Masters World Champion 40+), [Michel Keersmaekers](#) (one of the world's top ultra athletes), and the new kids on the block from Belgium and the Netherlands.

It's something unimaginable in cycling, football, or almost any other sport. I, for one, have never raced my bike against Evenepoel or Pogacar or had a boxing match against Mike Tyson.

Do you have any plans or goals for the racing season's grand finale?

Everyone in the club has experienced their ups and downs over the past year in terms of training opportunities (injuries, workload, busy schedules, priorities, etc.). It would be wonderful to close 2025 together in a sporting way at the [Belgian SUP Tour's SUP4Life in Ghent on 14 December](#). A perfect way to dive into the new year with full energy and to kick off our goals for 2026 with focus.

Special mention...

After years of success with NSP, I want to thank them for all their support. But our paths are now parting ways, and I can't wait to hit the water with my new SIC Maui XRS V2 14/22, provided by Frank Hettinga from EasySup.

Gun's SUP challenges are powered by Quickblade Paddles UV82 model.



Image source: SUP 11-City Tour