



Treble chance: Jenkins will attempt to break speed records on land, ice and water in his unique wind-powered vehicle

## Jenkins driven by winds of change

By Gary Jacob

RECORD speed challenges, it seems, are like buses. You wait for ages for one to come along, then any number may arrive at once. After Sam Whittingham, of Canada, and Steve Fossett, of the United States, comes Richard Jenkins. His attempt will be to become the fastest man in a wind-powered vehicle on land, water and ice.

The design for the sleek Windjet craft, which Jenkins's

team hope will smash the land record this month, is based on a blend of technology from Formula One, aircraft and sailing. He has chosen to use the runway at RAF Waddington, near Lincoln, where strong cross-winds, which drive the craft forward, prevail.

The record, which is held by Bob Schumacher, an American, stands at 116.7mph, set in Nevada in 1999. Jenkins has reached 120mph unofficially on land, where the craft, costing £100,000, is able to travel

at five to six times the wind speed.

Jenkins, 24, will be squeezed into the fibreglass vehicle, which will weigh about 40kg, with him encased inside the shell. The sleek, cone-shaped craft is seven metres wide, nine metres in length, and had an eight-metre high wing mounted, similar to the shape of an aeroplane wing, which is flexible enough to adapt to the wind direction, and strong enough to endure speeds of more than 140mph.

Modifications to the craft will be needed before testing begins during the winter on ice, where the craft can travel at nine times the wind speed. The tyres, similar to those used in Formula One, will be replaced by skates for the attempt to beat the record of 143mph set by John D. Buckstaff in 1938.

Jenkins will then attempt the record on water — 46.52 knots, set in 1993 by Simon McKeown, of Australia — next summer.