BROKEN FINGERS

freestyle skateboarding quarterly



Darryl Grogan

World Championships Stockholm

Regarding The Iron


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BROKEN FINGERS

freestyle skateboarding quarterly

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Cover Photo: Darryl Grogan (English Handstand) Photo: Jim Goodrich
top: Daniel Greschner (No-handed Pogo) Photo: Agnes Jalmar Location: Nepal


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Darryl Grogan filming at the roundup Photo: Jim Goodrich

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Daniel Greschner (Swedish Nose Wheelie) Photo: Agnes Jalmar Location: Nepal



Reece Archibald (Irish Flip) Photo: Sequence



The Irish Flip

By: Tony Gale

This issue, we're sticking with the stationary truck tricks, and focusing on an oft-neglected innovation from the last decade - The Irish Flip.

What is it: Most people come out of a no handed 50-50 by either flicking the board into a half flip with the back foot or dragging the nose back over the top in an end-over-end motion, akin to a half impossible. For an Irish flip, you pull out of a no handed 50-50 in the latter fashion while leaving the back foot on the truck, and as the board finishes that half-impossible motion, the foot that was on the truck pulls up, kicking the board into an underflip.

Invented: Around 2004.

Originators: JJ O'Donnell & Tommy Harward

The Story: The mid-2000s were a frenzy of technical progression. Stationary tricks exploded, and it seems like Tommy Harward and Keith Renna were coming up with new truck tricks every week, half of which I still can't name or understand.

With this one, the basic concept came from JJ O'Donnell, who was never particularly known for truck tricks, and thus couldn't make it work. He shared the idea with Tommy Harward, and next thing you know, Tommy had landed one.
I half-remember JJ being mildly annoyed about this fact. I completely forget whether or not he was joking. Thankfully, Tommy named the trick after JJ's Irish roots, and that may or may not have placated him.

Variations: As Darran Nolan once pointed out, the greatest problem with the Irish flip is that it's very difficult to do anything with. As such, I've not seen much variation on the Irish flip. I've done them rolling, Reece Archibald has done varial ones, and a few people have done double ones. Then, of course, there's the mandatory rail or cross-foot landings, but I've never seen them done to casper (or even back to truck).

Now that I think of it, the first person to send me a video of them doing a 1.5 Irish flip to casper wins a prize.

Another option for variations is to do it from casper; I started doing them that way and calling them English flips not long after the Irish flip appeared (as, like JJ, I kinda sucked at truck tricks). The English flip is harder to do, but much easier to find variations with.

Relevance today: Other than Reece Archibald, not many people seem to really be doing this trick, which is a shame. Much like last issue's Madrid flip, it seems to be somewhat neglected, despite the freestyle hivemind's obsession with carousels, sidewinders, and all other things truck-related, and that's a real shame; while fiddly, it's both fun and impressive, and provides an interesting way to get out of one of freestyle's signature positions. Here's hoping the folks reading this - yes, you - can pick this one up and start popularising it for 2018.



Reece Archibald (Irish Flip) Photo: Sequence



Darryl Grogan (360 Fingerflip) Photo: Jim Goodrich

Kids in Köln



Darryl Grogan in Cologne Germany 1989 scanned from German Monster Magazine #43 Photo Helge Tscharn

Darryl Grogan Köln Domplatte



Darryl Grogan (Contemplation) Photo: Gustavo Morales

The Darryl Grogan Interviews

By Monty Little

My good friend Kevin Harris and I held a skateboard contest in 2012 aimed at helping to give freestyle skaters worldwide a stage to showcase their craft. Of the 32 contestants that showed up to that first World Round-Up, one stood out as the man to beat. Darryl Grogan's quiver of rolling tricks and handstands won him the title of World Champion that year, as well as the respect of the other skaters that were there. Here then is a glimpse into the life of one of freestyles pioneers.

How many of you remember your first skateboard? Darryl remembers buying his first skateboard in 1982 as if it were yesterday. He was living with his mom in Frankfurt, Germany at the time when he saw a Mike McGill F-14 Jet Fighter skateboard in a shop window. "I just had to have that board." Not having much to go on he borrowed a stack of old Skateboarder Magazines from a kid in the neighborhood and read them cover to cover. Initially, he was into vert. "There were no skateparks in those days only backyard half-pipes. I had to ride the bus a good hour to get to the nearest one which had no flat bottom like the ramps have today."

That summer he visited his dad who lived in California and went to a freestyle contest at the old Skatepark Paramount. Having never seen freestyle before he was blown away by all the crazy tricks that skaters like Per Welinder, Kevin Harris, Primo, and Keith Butterfield were doing on the flat ground. When he returned to Germany, the first thing he did was to buy a Sims Rocco freestyle deck and turn his attention to learning freestyle in his driveway. At the time he was the only freestyle skater in his area, so he had to learn on his own, focusing on kick-flips, shove-its, and finger-flips.



Darryl Grogan in Costa Mesa California 1989

Returning to California that next summer Darryl found out about a freestyle contest that the California Amateur Skateboard League (CASL) was putting on and decided to enter the non-sponsored amateur division. He had never skated with so many freestyle skaters before, so like a sponge, he absorbed the different tricks and styles that he saw, and to his surprise, came in 3rd place.

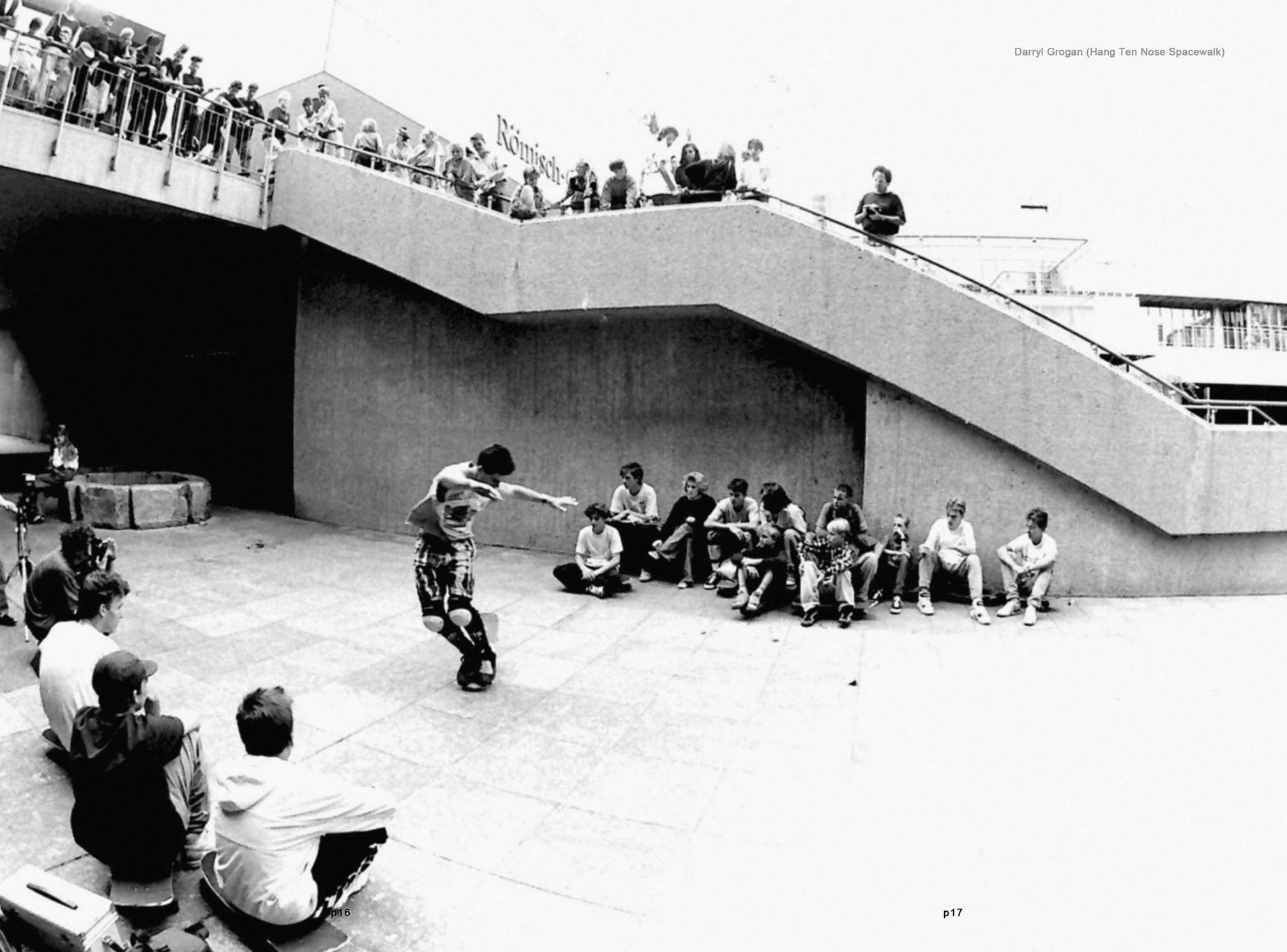
After returning to Germany, he kept practicing freestyle so that he could enter another contest in California the next summer, which he did in Venice. Darryl felt very strongly that he needed to be closer to where the action was, so in 1984, he moved to California to live with his dad. With lots of sunny weather and other skaters to learn from his skills took a huge leap.

In 1986 Darryl followed in the footsteps of other family members by joining up with Uncle Sam, taking basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Determined not to put skateboarding entirely on hold, Darryl snuck his skateboard on base in his laundry bag. "Most nights we would have some free time to socialize or visit the PX to buy stuff. While everyone else was gone, I would practice freestyle on this small smooth concrete area that I had found."

He kept entering contests getting better as time went on, then in 1987, he landed a sponsorship with Schmitt Stix and Vision Streetwear. Realizing that he did have a future in skating, he started working on harder tricks. One he was determined to learn was an English Handstand something he saw Per Welinder do. “I started off by placing my board on the grass so I could learn how to go up into a handstand without cracking my head open." He went on to say “At some point, you just have to take off the training wheels and give it a try.” After banging his head a few times, he got the hang of it.

Looking back Darryl remembers a few skaters that stood out in his amateur days like Fabian Kravetz who had several impressive and unique rolling tricks. Although Darryl had enormous respect for Rodney Mullen, he strived to have his own tricks and style, so as to not mimic Rodney something Fabian also tried not to do. Another skater was Stefan Johansen who's footwork was incredibly smooth and far beyond what everyone else was doing. And then there was Jeremy Ramey a younger freestyler who had some very difficult and progressive handstands.

His skating took off when he turned pro in 1989 at the Savannah Slama, in Savannah Georgia. "I remember being in 2nd place after my second run; then the organizers decided to take the top five guys and have us all skate another two runs. We were all dead tired, and after the dust cleared, I came in 5th place." Later that summer he competed in his second pro contest in Munster, German where he placed 4th. "The contest was insane with over 8,000 spectators watching contestants from Japan, South America, Europe and the US." That turned out to be a year to remember as he got to travel the world and was even invited that fall to compete in a contest in Tokyo, Japan along with Rodney Mullen, Per Welinder, Kevin Harris, Don Brown, and Pierre Andre.



Darryl Grogan (Hang Ten Nose Spacewalk)



Darryl Grogan (Tuck Knee Nose Wheelie) Photo: Jim Goodrich

Darryl went to a full-size board in 1990 because it fit his skating style better as he was never really into stationary tricks typically done on a smaller freestyle deck. He soon became known for his many Impossibles variations, several of which he created. The Impossible Cross Foot, Impossible to One Foot, and the Half-Cab Impossible were all tricks Darryl was the first to do. He also invented the 540 Finger Flip, Olie 360 Finger Flip, Double 360 Finger Flip, Double Pogo Finger Flip and the One-Handed 180 Handstand Kick-flip.

Unfortunately, freestyle always took a back seat to Vert and Street with sponsorship dollars few and far between. With the industry slump in the early 90's and sponsorship dollars drying up, and freestyle contests almost non-existent, Darryl decided to go back to school. It was then that he discovered he had a real passion for the visual arts, and decided to major in film. After graduating, it was only natural to combine his love of skateboarding and film by making several 16 mm skateboard films. Over the next seven years, he filmed some of the top vert and street pros skaters like Marc Johnson, Andrew Reynolds, Gershon Mosley, Chad Muska, Rune Glifberg and Tony Hawk to name a few.

In 1999 he moved to LA to be closer to the film industry as he transitioned from skate films to commercial videos which are to this day the mainstay of his work. Although his film career was progressing, it came with a few drawbacks, no time for skating. Lucky for all of us the internet became more popular, letting freestyle skaters communicate with each other which kept Darryl in the loop. That inspired him in 2001 to start skating again and to also collaborate with Bobby Casper to put together the Casper Skate Video. The video which featured many skaters went on to become one of the most influential freestyle videos of that era.

Then in 2012, Darryl heard about a contest in Canada called the World Round-Up that had a $10,000 prize purse. Seeing that Kevin Harris was one of the producers he decided to attend. The event was held in a curling rink giving Darryl lots of room for his rolling tricks. By the end of the four-day contest, he had not only won the pro division but took home $4,000 in his pocket. Over the past few years, Darryl has made several videos highlighting the World Round-Up which you can view on his YouTube channel along with more of his current work which is primarily commercial videos and documentary pieces: www.groganfilm.com

He is especially proud of a documentary project he started in 2015 profiling the inner workings of a dance production out of LA. The hour-long film is currently making the Film Festival circuit and is scheduled to have its first public premiere in the spring of 2018.

-ML



Jesse Whalen (50-50) Photo: New Weerayut

Regarding the Iron

By Bob Loftin

This is going to be another one of those “old guy trying to be wise” articles. I hope it speaks to you. I spend a lot of time alone, thinking. Sometimes I just have to write this stuff down.

I am sitting here listening to the Jay Mohr podcast—an interview with Henry Rollins. I’m about halfway through the interview and Jay just talked with Henry about this weight lifting article Henry wrote years ago called “the Iron.” I read it a few years ago. I encourage you to read it. Google “Henry Rollins the Iron” and it’ll pop right up.

The article describes Henry’s introduction to weight lifting and its effect on his life. One of the points of the article is the power we have to change ourselves for the better. There are other points. Read the article. Listen to the podcast too.

Henry did it through weights. That’s cool. He gained that empowered feeling by working out with iron.

Skateboarding was my “Iron”. I’m guessing it was for many of you too.

Until you are so old that both your mind and body are just shot and in full decline, you can improve yourself. I believe that. The method really doesn't matter, and the goals can be different. When my mind and body are both in full retreat, I may still feel I can improve myself. I’ll have to wait and see.

I’ve seen proof of this in other endeavors first hand. At 42 I began training in Aikido. A few years ago a man aged 52 joined our dojo. He was not in great condition. Overweight, somewhat broken down. He was not someone I’d have picked to stick around very long. Nearly 3 years later he’s still there. He is better in every way. He’s my hero of persistence. He inspires me. Aikido is his Iron.

Over many years of skateboarding I’ve seen a lot of people come and go. I’ve seen incredibly talented people reach levels of skating I will never approach, and they've done it in very short periods of time. It comes too easily for them. Talented dabblers. They rip, then they retreat. It wasn't their Iron.

The Iron needs to be hard. It has to be difficult. When you work with the Iron you will sometimes come up short. In other’s eyes you may always succeed—coming up short only to your own expectations. This is because it is your Iron, not theirs.

The Iron may be skateboarding. It may be a PhD in History. It has to stretch you. It has to hurt. The Iron is Eddie Van Halen practicing guitar in his room until his fingers bleed while his brother is out partying. The Iron is Jeff Phillips practicing vert skating in 1983 at the Blue Ramp in Dallas, in 100 degree F Texas heat in August while everyone else is on their asses.

The Iron has to change you. The Iron is about transformation.

Keep lifting. -BL



Vladislav Kanin (Finger Flip) Photo: Nastya Bashkova

Waiting for the Great Leap Forwards

By Tony Gale

As I write this, 2017 is drawing to a close and 2018 looms on the horizon. It's been a long time since I first logged into the pre-social media freestyle scene on F! forum, and this magazine is now marching onwards into its third year. A lot has changed over the years, and there have been points this year where I've had opportunity to reflect on where we are as a culture and community; competitions, traditionally the meeting place for far-flung freestylers from across the globe, also act as the purest of mirrors in which to not only see the health of the freestyle scene but some of the issues which we still face.

Back in Issue 4 (which, at the time of writing, is still available on the Broken Fingers website - or, alternatively, available as part of the Year One collection), I wrote a brief retrospective on how things have changed since in recent years, and capped it off with the acknowledgment that it is truly a great time to be a freestyler. I still stand by that statement. This year has seen some of the biggest competitions in our recent history; the World Round Up and Paderborn in particular continue to go from strength to strength. We're also in the midst of a huge paradigm shift; companies that were mere fledglings when this magazine first went to print now account for the vast majority of professional freestylers in the world, with a range of products that's far above and beyond - in terms of both design, quantity and quality - almost anything that's come before. The level of skating continues to get pushed higher and higher too, with the New Breed of Japanese Wunderkinds ensuring the bar keeps getting raised - both by their own ability but also by putting the fear in professionals almost twice their age! Increasingly, it feels like we're in a new Golden Age; in private, some older folks have admitted to me that freestyle now is a bigger scene and a more spectacular activity than it ever was in the halcyon days of the 1980s. And, impressively, we have built this ourselves, with little to no outside interference. We still own this, and we should be very proud of that fact.

So what's the problem? Well, I'm starting to get a nagging feeling that we're losing steam. Comfort breeds complacency. Just as people who win competitions regularly have a tendency to repeat the same routine over and over again, I fear that our scene has begun to settle into the groove. As I type this, I can already hear Brett Novak telling me again, partly in jest, that "it's just a little wooden toy", and that I should stop overthinking this. Maybe he's right. However, a lot of work has gone into building what we have now. We've come a long way, and it seems a shame to spoil that. And I'm not saying I have the answers, nor do I neglect to consider the fact that most, if not all of us, have day jobs, families, other commitments and passions which eat up our time. I'm also not of the misguided belief that there could ever be a day where freestylers outnumber the street skaters or vert riders; I'm not even sure that I would want that if it was possible. However, I still don't think we can or should settle. We have built, collectively, a fantastic foundation on which we can develop further. As we move into 2018, I feel like questions need to be asked about what comes next; how can we ensure that in ten years' time, events on the scale of Paderborn still take place and freestyle can continue to develop, grow and progress unabated?

Of course, the pages of a magazine are not the ideal format for that sort of discussion - and even the presence of this "State of the Union" style piece might be an unwelcome intrusion - but if the questions aren't asked and the points aren't raised while things are going well, we risk stumbling blindly into a second Dark Age, and while the music may have been incredible, I'm not keen on the idea of revisiting the 1990s. Let us make hay while the sun shines.



Alexandre Brownzinho (360 fingerflip) Photo: Matheus Navarro



Edmar Marroca (50-50 Truck Transfer to Pogo) Photo: Matheus Navarro



Matheus Navarro (Stale Fish Coconut) Photo: Paulo Folha



Isnard Rocha (Underflip) Photo: Matheus Navarro



Luca Chiosi (Edge 360 flip) Photo: Matheus Navarro



Mike Osterman (50 pogo 360 fingerflip) Photo: Matheus Navarro

Tavinho Rodrigues (Rail handstand one handed) Photo: Matheus Navarro



Tony Gale (Swedish One-Wheeler) Photo: Martin Willners



Alexandru Lilea (Handstand Fingerflip) Photo: Martin Willners

World Championship at Stockholm

By Eric Schäder

For the second year in a row, I had the great pleasure to go to Stockholm for some serious freestyling on the surface that is probably the best in the world! The only surface I can think of that even comes close would be Shin-Yokohama in Japan (hint to all my Japanese friends).

So time again for another freestyle competition in Stockholm arranged by Denis Šopović. Just as last year, it was held during the annual event Bowlstock arranged at Highvalley Skateworld in the southern outskirts of Stockholm.

For those who don't know, Highvalley is a huge outdoor skatepark and Bowlstock is a massive skate event taking place over a weekend mid-August each year. On the menu this year was bowl, slalom, the bank slalom world championships and also the freestyle world championships. The cool thing is that they arrange everything so that no two different parts takes place at the same time, giving the people who come to watch the opportunity to see a variety of high-class skateboarding, and for us freestylers we get to hang out and skate while the other disciplines have their events. In-between the different competitions they also have live bands playing and food trucks for when hunger strikes.



Alexandru Stirbu (Truck Transfer) Photo: Samuel Schäder



Denis Sopovic (Railflip) Photo: Samuel Schäder

A lot of skaters around the world had shown interest to come, but due to unfortunate circumstances and perhaps the number of different freestyle competitions that took place this year (like the World Round Up, Paderborn BBQ, Philly Freestyle Championships and the Japanese Championships) competing for their attention, not all skaters were able to come. Still, plenty of skaters came from Finland, Sweden, Germany, Romania, UK - and even as far away as Afghanistan.

The winner of last year's Master division, YoYo Schulz, was the favourite for that group but there were also interesting skaters like Krister Philgren making a comeback. Another amazing comeback was the legend Jari Paakkari from Finland in the amateur division and Mathias Dewoon - formerly known as Mathias Ösund - in the Pro division. Also of note was the group from Romania, as Marius Constantin brought his two friends Alexandru Lilea and Alexandru Stirbu, who both did great at Paderborn earlier in the summer.

And just like last year, Hazze Lindgren turned up to say hello and hang out. There is still work in progress to get him to do a comeback, just as with Martin Willners. Unfortunate events prevented our Brazilian friends to come this year, and sadly enough no one from USA or Japan made it either, so let's keep our fingers crossed for next year as you guys don't want to miss out on this surface!

All skaters met up on Thursday, the day before the competition, having a great session and just hanging out, but on Friday, the first day of competition with the qualifications, the weather was really against the skaters with rain starting and stopping all through the morning. And just when everything had dried up and the competition was going to kick off, it started again. Fortunately, Denis acting as the MC with Tony Gale assisting him and Denis' brother Harris as DJ kept everybody's spirit up despite the bad weather.

However, with Saturday the sun came out and that brought the crowds for a great day of skating. You could feel that everyone's spirit rose and the skating was great, especially among the Women's division Sussi Eriksson's happy music and shining smile spread the good spirit to everyone, taking her into the first place slot, and Cecilia Wolkert amazed everyone with her development over the last year, coming second.

In masters little could be done about Joachim "Yo Yo" Schulz taking first place. He still is in a class of his own, with Krister Philgren, who was making a comeback with a very nice flow in his run, coming second and - to my great surprise - myself in third place.

In the amateur division, Team Romania cleared up taking the first two spots, (Alexandru Lilea in first place, Alexandru Stirbu taking second) with Robert Wagner from Germany coming third.



Kasperi Jan Pakkari (M80) Photo: Samuel Schäder

In the pro division, no-one could tell which way it would go between Tony Gale and Guenter Mokulys until the prize ceremony, when it was announced that Tony came out on top and Stefan "Lillis" Åkesson took third place just before Mathias Dewoon.

Just like last year, I'd say the competition was a great success attracting a lot of attention from the crowds. And just like last year, a tremendously well done job by Denis. He deserves all respect for putting this together more or less on his own. I can only hope that the competition will return again in 2018 and then I expect you guys from Japan, Brazil, US and Canada to turn up as well. This is just too good to miss out on.

As a small side note, I'd like to add that just as happy and surprised that I was for my third place, I was even more happy about my youngest son Samuel who competed in the Bank Slalom World Championships. Last year he came 7th and this year he came 6th despite the fact that he only get to do this once a year on his bowl skate in competition with slalom specialists. If we just had changed those bearings a little earlier, I'm sure he'd make it to the finals and top 5. He has one more chance next year!

-ES

Full results from the finals:

Results Pro
1. Tony Gale (UK)
2. Guenter Mokulys (Germany)
3. Stefan "Lillis" Åkesson (Sweden)
4. Mathias Dewoon (Sweden)
5. Felix Jonsson (Sweden)
6. Marius Constantin (Romania)

Results Am
1. Alexandru Lilea (Romania)
2. Alexandru Stirbu (Romania)
3. Robert Wagner (Germany)
4. Andre Hansson (Sweden)
5. Jari Paakkari (Finland)
6. Sayed "Freestyle" Karimi (Afghanistan)

Results Masters
1. Joachim "Yo Yo" Schulz (Germany)
2. Krister Philgren (Sweden)
3. Eric Schäder (Sweden)
4. Denis Šopović (Sweden)
5. Hans "Puttis" Jacobsson (Sweden)
6. Robert Thiele (Germany)

Results (Women)
1.Sussi Eriksson (Sweden)
2.Cecilia Wolkert (Sweden)



Joachim Yo Yo Schulz (Yo Yo Plant) Photo: Martin Willners



Felix Johnsson (360 Fingerflip) Photo: Martin Willners



Marius Constantin (Side Winder) Photo: Martin Willners



Mathias Dewoon (Ollie Airwalk) Photo: Martin Willners



Eric Schäder (360 Kickflip) Photo: Samuel Schäder



Robert Wagner (Frontside Railflip) Photo: Martin Willners



Lillis (540 Shovit) Photo: Martin Willners



Sayed Karimi (Finger Flip) Photo: Samuel Schäder



Andre Hansson (Impossible) Photo: Martin Willners

Vladislav Kanin (Crossfoot Pogo) Photo: Dmitry Safonov





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