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PHOTO: MALAKAI KINGSTON

ASPECTS OF SLIDING

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an idyllic afternoon cruising for hills and the occasional bomb score or carve session, rolling toward home he spotted a hill, it was a moderate grade right hand with a steep full run and a reliable rollout. Dropping the deck down to foot, a push and a crouch and the speed builds his tuck is comfortable and the speed whips up with the grade. Pulling through the inside of the turn and drifting with speed into the centerline. There appeared before him his run's undoing a brown sedan pulling up the street. The driver halts, spooked by the man on wood contraption racing towards him.

Pulling into center line and blocking most of the road the man just sits, eyes intently locked on the rider as he untucks and motions with his hands hoping to prompt the driver to either pull aside or continue up the hill freeing the line. The driver does neither, stoic in his resignation he blocks the road for reasons unknown. The rider stands straight up with the Christ pose air block. In action he hopes his hard carve astride the vehicle will be a success.

The lack of foresight the fact that the car blocked the good portion of the tarmac neither mattered when he saw that his line between the car and the shoulder was broken asphalt. Cobbled from rain and erosion this was the end of the line. The 11-ply deck wobbles as its traction breaks up and then heaves hard as the wheels fight to leave the road, the rider at speed bails. Feet flailing cartoonish in attempt to pump up to speed before feet touch down. A solid slap of flesh, then crouched to a stand and finally walking off the road.

Moving through the physical mantra, toes, knees, hips, shoulders, pumping fingers rolling wrists, touching face and clicking teeth. The pain of flesh seared from palms and pants ripped through to boxers brought to thought images of being able to control his momentum even at speed the possibility that had been overlooked to cause his two fold failures to come to this.

There has to be another way. Fragments had been seen on the silverfish.cc forum and some clips from the Gravity videos website. For the most part it was for this rider a quick trip to the local hardware store for shoe goo and industrial Velcro. The rest of the supplies were available to him at home an old cutting board and some leather work gloves. The walk

through for making the gloves was available at a number of web resource sites. So armed with slide gloves, deck and a desire to control speed this soliloquy ends and sliding begins.

With all the aspects of skateboarding that sliding can be associated with none can be more influential than the issue of increasing safety in the sport itself. One of the greatest proponents of sliding if not the most Cliff Coleman his name sake the Coleman slide is adamant in his dedication to increasing sliding awareness to increase safety. He has been teaching slide clinics in increasing numbers as well as teaching any one willing to learn for over 25 years.

His point that the equipment and gear required being as inexpensive as it is, the merits of sliding seem obvious. You think of gear in other sports and then the price tag of a set of slide gloves seem amusingly nominal for the impact they can have on your riding. When asked about the merits of sliding Cliff responded with "Unquestionably the strongest merit of sliding is the incredible safety advancements sliding provides for those who skate. There wouldn't be any serious skaters near my age without the use of slider gloves and the techniques they allow."

This brings to mind the fact of skateboarding attrition, the more injured the rider becomes and the less in control he feels the less likely he will be to maintain involvement with the sport past the learning curve. Sliding gloves and the ability to slide give the rider control over speed and stopping distance. On the hands of a reasonably well trained rider scrubbing speed and performing shutdown or emergency slides are a matter of timing and choice.

Timeship Racing [timeshipracing.com] is another body involved in the promotion of slid-

ing as safety. Joe Lehm; founder and Captain of TimeShip Racing contends that "Falling and crashing are not the same" following with "The more you practice falling onto your "plastic" the less often that a fall feels like a "crash". Anyone who has taken a shot to the dome while wearing a helmet or gotten tossed front side while wearing gloves can firmly attest to this. With a decent amount of training with sliding gloves and methods of taking slides onto palms and knees instead of uncontrolled tumbles a slider can avoid injury. The more adept slider can evade or fully dissolve dangerous situations such as being cut off or serious road hazards.

Slidings' relation to downhill racing is one of control as opposed to practical use. A well-seasoned downhill racer will be able to race within himself and control his lines. Keeping the inside on turns and not sliding out. Taking a turn and dropping a glove outrigger style getting away from the deck and lessening friction by having a glove down yet continuing to maintain the line without sliding out.

Speaking with JC Walker the seasoned Minister of Logistics for Timeship Racing he described the results of losing your line and causing a slide pile up as such. "Pros like the Rogers Bros, Chris Chaput, Darryl Freeman, Mark Golter will have words and physical gyrations to share with you when it's over." He expressed their take on sliding as "if you can't make the turn, you shouldn't be on the course". With the highly competitive nature of downhill racing as it is, the ability to maintain and skate within oneself is essential if not for the sake of saving your own leather from a hay bail ending, but the skins of your fellow riders as well. More often than not in a multi man downhill heat you are more likely to see foot and air braking used as a speed reduction.



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PHOTO: RAY HILLMAN

Obviously in lone riding and high speed bombing lateral or pendulum sliding can help to safely navigate corners and avoid road hazards but in close contact racing it's controlling the slide that is essential.

With the strongest roots of skateboarding steeped in the liquidity of surfing it would reason proper for many sliding techniques and styles to reflect this origin. Cutbacks and berts off of sloped banks a hand down on the crete and the sound of waves almost echo within the vibration of thane on land. A layback slide across a schoolyard bank a smooth rotation followed through. The calm interaction between tarmac and rider become a constant synergy of movement. The visceral touch of feeling the pavement as you flow on. Often without the harshness of gloves on ground just a simple plant and the wheels find their own line.

With the increasing popularity in the roots of the style no one has done more for the online awareness of the style and grace of stand up surf style sliding than Keith Johnson [surfemotion.com] in contrast to downhill and freestyle sliding he asserts that "my style is a sub-style of sliding. I do more standup slides and my style is more related to longboard surfing classic style." He explains in very straightforward ways using terminology borrowed from skiing, dancing and figure skating the various methods of rotation, weighting, unweighting and numerous applications of surf style sliding.

He goes to great lengths on his "Slide Architecture" site to formulate a style of standup sliding to be incorporated in the vast fabric of surf style long boarding including kick turns, board walking, drop knees and other advanced footwork. The surf style standard set forth is a precedent that it is our charge to innovate the past in our present.

as the impetus for the resurgence of sliding, the speed with which this scene is advancing is astonishing.

Adept sliders such as the Faltown crew [faltownskateboards.com] Chris Humphries and Alex Brinnen are joining and evolving known slides into linked sequences. Throwing in one footed, extended versions of slides tossing around multi rotation surrender slides, slide style manuals and pushing the limits of the Falmouth hills. They are pulling into the mix new concepts in sliding formula and style.

Of course no mention of freestyle sliding is complete without mention of the Brazilian mad man and master of the down hill slide style Sergio Yuppie [sergioyuppie.com.br]. One of the front-runners of the Gravity camp, Sergio has shown his stuff with a flair and a dedication hard to believe. With a steady hand and foot even at full speed, pucks raised he slams down slides that require a replay to be realized. Leaving astonished onlookers wondering what else is going on in the Brazilian downhill scene to create such a kinetic savant.

The surge in the freestyle sliding scene seems to be building momentum. What newest slides and combinations being pulled off are discussions continuing at the bottoms of hills and between sessions leaving it anyone's guess what the next innovation will be.

With the advancement of freestyle slide skating, the UK's Lush Longboards has recently added the Slide to their 2005 production quiver the Park 38 double kick that provides a shoulder width platform with a size still easy to whip around for powerslides. Said to be just the right thing to get longboarders who were used to a longer deck into sliding. It is wide where you need it; around the nose and on the tail, a radial concave all the way through and was shaped with a mixture of the



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PHOTO: ADAN SPAHN

old school and Lush style. The Lush Slide video premiered at the Showroom Cinema in Sheffield. It's an extensive collection of sliding styles matched by a brilliant soundtrack, the use of scenes and light made this video as artistic as it was kinetic.

Timeship Racing [timeshipracing.com] a serious proponent of the downhill racing scene as well as safety innovator, has a myriad of safety gear available on their website and sliding gloves in 2 flavors. The massive Bear Paws touted as training gloves are big enough to fit over wrist braces and the glove is durable split hide leather. With dual palm and finger pucks it's great a learning glove that can more than perform and last. As well as The Tracers, a race day full glove streamlined with dual palm and finger tip puck.

Gravity [gravityboard.com] has recently imported a shipment of Sergio styled sliding gloves from Brazil fingerless with a midsized curve tail center set palm puck with velcro for attachment at a modest price tag, Slightly more expensive than making your own gloves. The gloves have a breathable backhand with a highly durable leather palm, Soon to be available a thicker slide puck and split full fingered gloves.

For decks, Sergio rides the Team 36 and Pool 33 while Michael Bream rides the 39. Gravity has quite a selection of slide capable decks to choose from. As Michael put it, "choose a board you feel comfortable at speed on." Gravity carries the 94a, 73mm G sliders a larger wheel with a higher duro to slide, maintain speed and find the line again with no problem. Gravity also offer the Sergio Yuppie endorsed wheels. They are a high duro 99a, 60mm and wide contact patch wheel giving slides an eternal drift and effortless deck control. As far as sliding videos goes Gravity's "Flow" is a payload of sliding excellence with



the likes of Sergio Yuppie and Brad Edwards. It's a visual manual of style, function and form. If your tastes were whetted with "Flow", Gravity has another DVD in the works no name or date on it as of yet but keep aware.

Faltown, [faltownskateboards.com] with their slide prowess, knowing the requirements for a solid slide deck is innate. Making decks has been a constant with the crew making their own sliding decks since college and then hooking up with Dom Lilly and selling their decks out of Random Rides Skate Shop. The full line of new decks will soon be available from their website.

With the majority of the team riding the 3.2 deck created for the slide inclined it has enough room to work with and spoon rails have the effect of a tighter concave in the middle giving the rider an idea of foot positioning at all times. In the works from Faltown a DVD and if their web-based videos are any indication it should be awesome.

With the possibility of sliding to be massive the growth seems to be almost immediate. As sliding is said to be the number two board sport discipline in Brazil and producing adepts such as Sergio Yuppie make worldwide growth seem quite possible. With the addition to the sport the safety conscious and the snowboarding and surfing cross training contingency. Both Cliff Coleman and Alex from Faltown have commented on the quality of cross training sliding provides the board inclined. Sliding helps to tune edge awareness and also increases the comfort ability a rider feels going fakie. Not to mention keeping physically active during the snow less and wave less seasons.

You also have the addition of the competitive nature of the sport with the increase in retailer response to the sliding market you can be sure that more competitions are not far

behind. With groups like the Slalom World Cup in France hosting sliding competitions we should see this become more commonplace in other international settings.

Faltown themselves are looking to set up the UK DH Slide Association and help to hold a UK Slide championship this fall. Lush had a sliding comp at the Lush Spring Session and are also helping with the UK Sliding Championships later this year. When asked about sliding competitions Ross from Lush also added "the Morrow Bay event of a few years ago was great with the "freestyle" event, mixing sliding with board walking skills for style points - I'd love to see more of that." It also sounds like Cliff and the Faltown crew got something in the works for television hinting at something but not releasing any details he only added "what we do is highly visual and very exciting. This makes it great for TV, which is highly important for the expansion and growth of the sport."

In truth the future of sliding lies with each pair of homemade gloves, pucks on palms laid down to slide, The helix of urethane on a winding road and the chatter of wheels letting go. Whether it's a quickly twisted standup slide, a smooth drifting Coleman or the first time you lay out a shutdown slide at speed sliding is an essential part of many skating disciplines and in coming times we can expect massive attention to this dynamic style.

Much respect for my resources, contributors and inspirations, Ross from Lush, Cliff Coleman, Michael Bream and Sergio Yuppie from Gravity, Keith Johnson Surface Motion, Alex and Chris Faltown Skateboards, Joe Lehm and JC Walker Timeship Racing, If you want to set up a Cliff Coleman slide clinic e-mail Cliff at , , If you are in San Diego and want to slide or ride hit up or contact the Ikarus Longboarding Club at UCSD. **CW**

