

## Solid Slide Rides: Two from EarthWing Skateboards.

Contributed by The Longboard Consortium  
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EarthWing Skateboards has brought a huge load of skateboard stoke to the New York City scene, and well beyond. With a line of decks utilizing advanced design measures and materials, Brian Petrie has proven he's not just about stoke and street cred, but also a keen skateboard engineer with an eye for both the practical and the artistic. Recently the Longboard Consortium took possession of the latest offerings from Earthwing, the 35.5" sliding board and the Superballs slide wheels. We pushed them, ravaged them, passed them around like a forty of malt and grew to appreciate them. This is our report.

### Stats

Length: 35.5"

Width: 9"

Tail: 7.25"

Nose: 7.75"

Wheelbase: 15.75"

Deck Material: 5 Thin Ply Maple with a woven monofilament thermoplastic composite on top/bottom

Trucks: Tracker Dart Khiro Red Top Yellow Bottom

Bearings: Tested with Reds and Abec11 Biltin 7s

Wheels: Tested with Sergio Sliders 99a, EarthWing Superballs, Abec11 Inverts Proto/Retail

Website: EarthWing Skateboards

Retail: \$68.00 US

The 35.5 Slider. This deck has a very light feel to it. Sans trucks and wheels, it's remarkably light in the hand, something we attribute to the construction with micro lams and monofilament to provide stiffness for the top and bottom of the deck without much mass. The EW35.5 has double kicks, with gentle pockets past the trucks, and some aggressive concave with smooth, rounded rails. The concave kick and rail give the deck the appearance of having mild wheel wells--not routed, just smooth where the wheels would recess.

The combination of the treatment to the monofilament and the paint job gives the EW 35.5 the look of a carbon-fiber deck. Combined with the crest of the winged EarthWing logo, center set on the bottom of the deck, the board's underside looks clean and classic. The top of the board sports the block EarthWing logo just in front of the rear truck. While all the graphics are simple 3-tone (red, silver, white), the overall combination of the graphic and texture of the deck, while still function over form, works great. The paint job did a good job standing up to general wear, such as spitting gravel, beach sand, being piled along with 6 other boards in the back of a car, etc&hellip;

How it's Built: The board is a result of a woven monofilament, impregnated thermoplastic layer that's applied to the top and bottom to sandwich 5 micro plies of maple. The construction of the deck utilizing these materials results in the Trinity of attributes: strong, stiff and light. We learned something pretty cool about the monofilament sheathing: unlike most other forms of fiber, it will not shred, splinter or unravel as the deck material itself is worn away. This is covered more, below, but is worth making note of in the understanding of the construction of the deck.

The Ride (the slide). As soon as we received this board, it was set up and taken out to the hills. One of the first testers thought the deck would be too small for him to ride commenting, "I'm used to everything between 38" to 44". This isn't going to give me enough legroom." His initial run on the board proved otherwise. With a startling run, the rider made his initial commentary, "Holy crap, these pockets just hold you!" The aggressive concave, matched with the placement of the kick and tail, results in pockets that do just that.

With riders selecting slide decks by way of their ability to find comfortable foot placement on the deck, a good deal of effort goes into selecting a good slide deck. This is often based mostly on the riders' height. With one rider at 5'10", he commented, "I tried to find a comfortable stance on this deck initially and was immediately drawn into the pockets". The repeated testing of the deck enabled our skaters to find the nuances of the EW 35.5. By modifying our foot placement on the EarthWing, we changed the way the deck responds with some great results. Modifications in stance enabled our reviewers to attempt new forms of weighting on the deck for use in slides.

While the majority of the riding crew's comments were in regard to the foot pockets on the EW 35.5, another factor helps to support the adhesion of deck to rider: weight. One tester who was kicking it around the top of Loretta in Oceanside commented simply, "It's soooooo light!" Anyone that watched him riding it could attest to how effortlessly he seemed to connect his kicks and flips.

One rider, after a long set of chained, flat spins, was so taken by the deck he offered only, "I wish I had footage from before I started testing this board, so I could see how it's changed my sliding; Rotations are faster and transitions--where my deck used to whip-away, this one stays under me."

With the shape of the board as it is, it provides a solid connection in hands-down manuals. Another factor of the deck comes into play, and this is the kick and tail of the deck. Our testers found them well placed. Both tail and nose were just as equally suited for weighting. Manual slides on the heights of Del Mar Ave in Ocean Beach, both single and double hands down, were made easy by the secure feeling of locked-in feet placed gently on the nose and tail pockets. Tail dragging and whipping above the tarmac were both comfortable and stable.

With the lack of unraveling and loose fibers from the top and bottom weave, the EW 35.5 itself fared quite well both in the manual and board slide arena. The fibers did not come loose or irritate the exposed skin of shins and forearms the deck chose to attack. (One nipple was seriously injured in the testing of this deck but has made a full recovery.) Since there are no ways to prove the durability of the deck itself, we won't come out and give a time estimate. However, we do feel safe in surmising that the micro lam construction may be inherently dense and able handle "razor nose" and tail without serious loss of deck integrity.

Conclusion: There's not much we can really say that will sum it up more than the comments of new member of the Consortium's slide crew. No local to the San Diego hills, he was riding Loretta one morning, steam still rising from the surrounding cliffs. When asked how he liked the deck he simply smiled, hefted the deck in his hands and said the same thing everyone else said during testing: "It's light and it's got great pockets." If we had only one line, that would be it.

We recommend that, when you select slide deck, one should consider how comfortable your stance is on the board, and how comfortable you are at speed while riding it. Both of these factors are necessary for a good slide deck to be matched to a rider. A good match will help the rider advance and allow the board to earn its keep beneath you. That said, if this deck matches what you need as far as length, you have a killer option of a slide deck in the 35.5. Without a doubt, the EarthWing 35.5 served our testers well.

## Earthwing Superballs

### Stats

62mm "Slide A" Formula  
10mm Bearing Spacing  
Center Set

74d Durometer Core  
39mm Width  
29mm Contact Patch  
Tested on EW 35.5 , G JP38  
Tested with Abec11 Biltin Bearings  
EarthWing Skateboards  
\$34.95

Simple Colors, Basic Design. The Superballs are white with red, white and black logo on the outer radius. They have a solid core hub that is 74d durometer and is bonded to the outer urethane. The hub is center set, with a .400" bearing seat/spacing. The outside of the contact patch is dual radius. This wheel, at a quick look, provides all the basic needs of a slide wheel. Center set, double radius in a nice hard duro: exactly what a slide wheel should be.

Sliding the Superballs: the EarthWing wheels ride softer than the duro "should", giving very little chatter and a predictable sense of drift when turning at speed. The wheel doesn't provide the typical "thousand

finger massage” most wheels occupying this durometer value do. Overall, before the wheel is pushed out into a slide it seems more like it rolls at around 92a. This would most likely be the result of the contact patch and bonded hub.

The wheels hold the myth of the softer slide wheel just about to the point where you decide to slide. The wheels slide extremely well. The amount of entrance and exit resistance puts it up there with the other excellent slide wheels. Without coming out and making verbal relations or comparisons, it was overheard during the initial testing on Loretta in Oceanside “I would have to say they are a great slide wheel falling somewhere in between \*\*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\*\*” and, in truth, that’s just what they do. They fulfill the spot between a wheel which is the pinnacle of no traction and a wheel that hold lines but still slides like ice.

The wheels lasted quite well without any undo flat spotting or aberrant wear evidenced by urethane flaking or otherwise. The testing set was actually ridden to the point where you could see the red of the core glowing just under a very thin layer of ice-white urethane. As with all good things, the nature of sliding is to kill wheels and it can be said that these wheels were tested “til the point that their tale was written in slide sign lines.

Conclusion: the EarthWing Superball is a great, higher duro slide wheel. If you want a great slide wheel with slightly more traction than you can find with more prevalent wheels, check out the Superballs. They hold a soft line and slide fast. Everyone has a favorite. You never know, maybe these will be yours.