

Zak Maytum Interview

Contributed by MalakaiKingston
 Tuesday, 18 December 2007
 Last Updated Monday, 20 October 2008

The Slalom forum on Silverfish has long been a lawless land, a veritable oubliette, swallowing novices in the torrential weight of knowledge, smack talk and gear savvy accusations of superiority of the color of one bushing versus another. Long has the ruling class needed a strong, stoked and talented slalom rider to take the reigns and bring them from this dark tunnel and into the light. Many have tried, all have failed and we had no hope. That is until we got word of Zak "TVAR" Maytum: he's stoked to madness, knowledgeable yet humble and very much a strong member of the 'fish. We were luck enough to get an interview to him between races and here is what the slalom savant and new Slalom Forum Mod had to say...

The Zak Maytum Interview

[Silverfish] Introduce yourself why don't ya?

[ZAK] Well, I'm Zak Maytum. I live in Boulder Colorado and I ride slalom 6 days a week. I'm 16 and I just love skateboarding more than anything.

[SF] What got you started in skateboarding?

[ZM] When I was in 5th grade I saw some guys doing it at the skatepark and I thought it looked like the coolest thing in the world. I knew I had to do it. Later that week I bought an Airwalk Skateboard from my neighbor for \$1. It was awesome.

[SF] When did you start really dedicating yourself to slalom?

[ZM] Around January of this year. When I met George Pappas he really pushed me to train harder and more often. I really have him to thank for a lot of my achievements.

[SF] What would you say the point was that you decided you really wanted to compete in slalom?

[ZM] I would say since the day Martin Reaves and I set up a dual Tight Slalom on a 10-foot-wide bike path (Early February). Sketchy? Anyway, getting in the course with someone next to me made me go so much faster and I really liked that push.

[SF] What support do you receive that helps you with your training and attending events?

[ZM] Above all, George and Chris Pappas. Chris drives us around to all the hills so we get the training we need on the right terrain. George takes care of the real coaching. He really understands exactly how to pump a skateboard in exactly the right way and he can give great advice. As for attending events, nothing like having cool parents and a job. Makes it a lot easier.

[SF] When did you join silverfish?

About this time last year.

[SF] What do you like about the 'fish?

[ZM] My buddy Martin Reaves (marv) showed it to me when I started riding soft wheels and I thought it was really cool. Later, he set up an account for me and I've loved it ever since.

Why are you interested in helping the 'fish providing quality information on slaloming? Well, I feel like I've got a lot of experience with a lot of gear and technique. I also think there is a lot of bad info out there and I'd like to make everyone else's slalom career a little easier. Slalom is hard enough.

[SF] What are your most recent competitions you have attended and how did you do?

[ZM] In the past 6 months, I've attended 4 big races. The Buckey 3.0 in Columbus Ohio was awesome. It was my first big race and I was able to pull out 3 podiums and the AM overall title. Next, the U.S. Nationals in my backyard. Once again, I got a 3rd in the GS, 2nd in the Hybrid, and I won the Tight. 2nd Overall. Super fun. Then, the World Championships in NC. Fun race, big hill. 40mph in the cones. I got 2nd in the GS, 5th in the HS, and 2nd in the TS landing me 2nd Overall. Most Recently, Last weekend I made my Pro Debut at the COSS Open in Westminster CO on the now legendary Overlook hill. I got 5th overall and got my ass handed to me a couple times by some riders who are much better than me.

[SF] With all of the success you have had do you want to talk about your sponsors and how you came to be sponsored?

[ZM] Sure. I am currently riding for Pavel Boards and G.O.G. trucks. I love it. Donald is the greatest and the whole Pavel team is just a great bunch of characters in addition to most being awesome racers as well. As far as getting sponsored goes, Well, I got back from the Buckey, my first big race, and Donald had sent me a PM through the fish. A few hours later I was on Pavel. It was weird how quick it happened. I think Myself as well as my buddy Martin Reaves both got pick up so fast because we both came out of nowhere and won our first ever big races.

[SF] What are you currently running for your setup?

[ZM] TS: Custom Pavel Rocka’, G.O.G.s HS: Pavel “Iron COSS” prototype, G.O.G.s GS: Pavel 34” GS. G.O.G.s DH: Pavel Downhill/Ditch, Indy 215s. [SF] What is you favorite slalom course to run TS, GS or Hybrid?

[ZM] I’d say my favorite thing has always been super, super tight. I like nothing better than a course that I can’t make. It pushes me harder as a rider and I feel like I’ve really accomplished something when I finally get a clean run. Even if it takes hours to do it.

[SF] What has been your favorite session or competition so far?

[ZM] I can’t choose. I’ve competed in so many top-notch events as well as awesome COSS sessions this year. [SF] What advice do you have for aspiring slalom racers?

[ZM] Practice Tight. If you can ride tight courses, and go clean it will take you a long way. It’s easier to learn to go clean and then learn to go fast than the other way around. But most importantly, ride your favorite courses as much as you can. Stay stoked, then mix it up when you want to try something else.

[SF] What advice do you have for all the old men trying to keep up with you?

Keep having fun. I love skating with all you guys and I hope you’re still doing it in another 10 years/

[SF] If you were stuck on a desert island with just one setup what would it be?

[ZM] Definitely my new Pavel Iron COSS board. It’s short enough for TS, long enough for DH, and it’s got a kicktail for park. Perfect.

[SF] What is you favorite type of pie?

[ZM] Oreo. Like the kind they have at Denny’s.

[SF] Who do you see as your greatest inspiration in racing, also who do you see as your biggest competition?

[ZM] My biggest inspirations are for sure my COSS brethren. George Pappas, Dave Pirnack, Gary Fluitt, Jason “X” Mitchell, Philthy Plunket, Joe Mac, Cbark, Martin Reaves… It’s a long list. Interestingly enough, the names listed above are also my toughest competitors.

[SF] As far as manufacturers and retailers go who do you think is doing the most to help support slalom racing?

[ZM] First, I’d like to say, If I don’t mention your company, it’s not because I don’t like you. It’s probably because I forgot. Now, First, I’d say Sk8kings is really pulling their weight with the Axe Completes and the race DVDs. The inexpensive completes have been a great resource for those looking to get into slalom without breaking the bank. Also, the Race DVDs can teach you quite a bit about technique when your starting out.

Another Company that I think is doing its part is fullbag. They burst on the scene this year with some of the best products and vibes of any company I’ve ever seen. They’ve made really high quality boards accessible to the financially challenged as well as having one of the coolest crews around. Next, all the Wheel companies. Both Seismic and Abec 11 have been super cool about coming out with new slalom wheels that blow minds. Special consideration goes out to seismic though. Because they are the only ones who make the essential ingredient for slalom: Cones! Finally, PPS and Pavel have shown us what the slalom board of tomorrow looks like. With great, innovative board building technology they’ve paved the way for the best decks the world has ever seen. I can’t wait to see what the future holds for their creations.

[SF] What do you think of Slalom in the Olympics? [ZM] I think it absolutely needs to happen. Slalom is so cool to watch that I think it would be an overnight hit in the Olympics. If it happened, we’d see 10,000 kids start doing it right away. I honestly don’t think anything better could happen then to have slalom in the Olympics. [SF] There are rumors you are doing work with urethane, want to tell us a bit about that?

[ZM] Yes, I have been making a lot of bushings from wheels. However, that is not the main work I am doing. The world is not quite ready for what I’m cooking up at the moment. Look for it in the coming weeks…

[SF] Where do you stand on the six wheeler drama? [ZM] Where do I stand? As far away as I can. People can run what they want. I do have a prejudice towards sixers, based on the fact that they suck and I hate them, but I respect people who decide to roll em’. I honestly have just as much respect for someone who can Kill it on a six as someone who can kill it on a 4. [SF] Do you think SSG is hot?

[ZM] I’m kind of undecided on this one. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. This week, yes.

[SF] With the obsession with gear that slalom riders are known for, what gear do you think actually has improved your riding?

[ZM] The most important thing to invest in is trucks. Get a good front before a good rear. You can go faster on a flat plank with G.O.G.s than you can on a Foamie with Trackers. Other than that, It’s all about having your setups dialed and knowing how they react in every situation.

[SF] What do you see for yourself in the future?

[ZM] Hopefully winning a few Pro events next season as well as pursuing speedboarding a little. And, of course, continuing to nerd-out on slalom gear.

[SF] Where do you see slalom going in the future?

[ZM] Up. Straight up. New people start doing it every month. More and more races are being put together and more people are getting excited about it. [SF] What can you bring to silverfish as a mod?

[ZM] Hopefully, Quality Info about slalom and some good positive energy.

[SF] Anything you want to add?

[ZM] Um, Well… If you just read my whole interview, Thanks. However, if it’s not raining or something and you could have been riding while you read this whole thing, that’s weak. If you’re Gypm, I understand.