

Ying/Yang: We Test Two Kinds of NoSkoolZ

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Several months ago, we received an interesting proposition: would we review two very different versions of a unique little wheel? Marylou Chaput wasn't kidding: these wheels are little, and very different from one another!

Our crews rode the 98a, 60mm Abec 11 NoSkoolZ on a series of different setups, then swapped them for their soft-poured, 78a, 60mm brothers to hit the same hills, paths and streets. When we were done with that, we put'em into the sliding and garage-racing scene, with a little pool & park action to follow. Actually, there's a funny story about that "pool & park action"...

Just take a look at 'em! Without much to compare the littlest NoSkoolZ to, it's almost hard to realize these wheels are so small. But, put them on a board you've just pulled Gumballs or Fu Manchus off of, and they look practically like kickflipper wheels! In fact, you can't buy a smaller or harder Abec 11 wheel than what you see here.

60mm NoSkoolZ MSRP: \$33.99
Contact: Abec11
Diameter: 60mm
Width: 48mm
Contact Patch: 34mm
Hub Diameter: 25mm
Urethane Depth: 17.5mm
Bearing Spacing: .400 1/2
Hub Spacing: Centerset
Durometers Tested: 78a, 98a
Other Durometers Available: 75,81,88,92,94,96a

Micro Cruisers. The soft NoSkoolz suprised every rider that got a chance to ride them. Let's be straight here: a wheel this small isn't going to roll over cracks, rough pavement or ledges as well as a big wheel does. The little 78a NoSkoolz does an amazing job of all these things for a 60mm wheel, though! We ripped them across campus and through the beach communities, over sidewalks, streets, rough transitions and down hills. They kick up to speed quickly, roll so smoothly that the "plush word" was used by some surprised skaters and they absorb rough texture with control beyond what we'd expected for a wheel with this amount of urethane depth. They actually grab so well that we tossed them on a "slalom" board when nothing else was available for running cones in a parking garage, and did okay (there are limits here: we drifted all over with the same rig at Pump Station)!

We attribute the grip and the ride to the deep lips and centerset design of the NoSkoolZ wheel. The soft set of these wheels were flexible enough that the wheels conform to pavement much like a Grippin...just with rounded edges. We found the strength of these wheels to be in mid-range traction (before our big boards and speeds overpowered them) and tight maneuverability. We don't think they're big enough for campus-cruising or commuting, and the garage-bombing races require more wheel diameter than this NoSkoolZ has to offer those seeking speed. However, we think we may have found a perfect "kids' wheel"! These scaled-down wheels are perfect for mini's and downscaled longboards that need high performance in a small package.

Park, Pool & Slide. Like the softer NoSkoolZ, the 98a's kicked up to speed very quickly. However, even though they pretty much look exactly the same, the similarities between the 98a's and the soft wheels ends right there! These little rocks are downright fast on smooth concrete, and will vibrate the fillings out of your teeth on rough pavement!

We found the 98a's to be very competent sliders, particularly for lighter riders. They've got a pretty wide contact patch compared to dedicated "slide wheels" and this, combined with the short profile, didn't give us the extension of slide that we get with the larger 98a's in the 65mm size although we had great control. As campus cruisers and commuters, these wheels were punishing and hard to ride through rough pavement. "Kickflipper skillz", or the very "old school" instinct to pop over every crack become necessary with these wheels over street terrain.

In the parking garage races, the 98a's hooked up surprisingly well, at first, but just aren't designed to corner and don't have the flexible-lip characteristics of their softer brothers. None of the Consortium riders really found them to be a "wheel of choice" in garages, even on a mini. We swapped them off, pretty quickly. In the skatepark, however, things changed, real fast!

These little wheels rip in concrete pools and park terrain.! They're quick, grippy and perfect for fast transitions and control in aggressive moves. How good are they? Well, the Longboard Consortium is all about getting opinions from skaters that excell in their discipline, so we made sure we got them under experienced vert & pool skaters at one local skatepark. One such skater spent an afternoon session ripping the Ocean Beach pool and decided she liked 'em. With a bat of her long eyelashes and a perky grin, she dazzled our man on the job and absconded with the wheels. Weeks later, she feigned ignorance, but was overheard in the shop asking where to get more NoSkoolz...

So, we never saw those 98a's again, but we had enough riders on them to tell you we don't consider these "longboard wheels"... Like the soft wheels, they might be killer "downscaled" wheels for the princes and princesses of slide in our lives, and they are great for park skating of any kind.

Thoughts on this "Little" experiment. If you're building up a mini, would benefit from centerset wheels to narrow the track, and are looking for a surprisingly grippy, plush ride with predicable sliding characteristics, we think you should check out the 78a versions of the mini NoSkoolZ. The 98a's belong on smooth concrete, in our view, however. Put 'em on your park board and keep them away from manhole covers adn cracks in the sidewalk! Hey, there's a 75a version out there, too! Whether it's a mini for a big kid, or a board for a mini-kid, the "soft" 60mm NoSkoolZ might be just the ticket.

Note on the first image: we made that with a computer...don't obsess over the whacked-out core we created!