

SKATEBOARD SKINS SHINS!!!!

Vickie Megrath (CUP)

From its modest beginnings in California in the 1960's, the skateboard has rapidly spread all over the world.

The business has grown over the past decade and a half, with sales exceeding \$57 million last Christmas.

Boards are more sophisticated now, costing anywhere from \$10 to \$140. Wheels can be bought seperately starting around \$7.

Boards are being made that measure up to seven feet and powered by sails or motor. West Germany has designed the motorized skateboard that requires a driving license to use.

The sport, despite lack of facilities, exspense and high injury rate, is a booming success. Britain has more than three million school-aged children interested in the sport.

Britain's government-funded Sports Council has persuaded municipalities to convert parking lots, wasteland and unused swimming pools into skateboard areas.

In the United States. skateboards are a multi-million dollar industry, not including hospital bills.

In Ottawa, there is a bylaw prohibiting the use of skateboards on city streets and in public parks. Skateboards are only allowed in schoolyards and on private property.

A recently compleated survey estimated that two out of every five skateboarders are injured in the U.S. Twenty-four deaths occurred last year.

In Australia, the fad declined about two years ago after three children died within a month in skateboard accidents.

The fad has made little impact on people in Southwest Asia, but is booming in Hong Kong.

In Japan, more than 800,000 people skateboard. National Championships are held for both men and women in slalom, giant slalom and free-style events.

In South America, skateboarding has become prosperous and has boomed over the last three years. The

country claims the skateboard speed record.

Eric Clark, a 14 year-old Johannesburg schoolboy, was recorded at 66.5 miles per hour.

In France, the sport has become so popular that it led to bitter contraversy between the French Federations for surfing, skiing and roller skating over who should run it when the Ministry of Sports designated skateboarding as a recognised sport.

Injury is part of the game in skateboarding. Jean-Pierre-Marchand, 42 of Lon-

don, England, had an accident while attempting to break the world speed record.

His skateboard began to wobble after he let go of the car he was using as a launch pad. At 65 miles per hour, Marchand took a flying leap and followed with six cartwheels. He was saved only by his protective equipment.

Companies such as Sears and The Bay sell protective equipment like helmets and elbows and knee pads. Some people just use hocky equipment because it works just as well and can be bought almost anywhere.



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