

X Games

Sheckler doesn't disappoint

Teen icon wins skateboard final

By Victoria Sun
Special for USA TODAY

CARSON, Calif. — Fourteen years after the X Games began, skateboarding remains one of its biggest attractions.

That was evident Friday when fans flooded downtown Los Angeles on Day 2 of X Games 14. Most were there to see 18-year-old skating sensation-turned-pop culture icon Ryan Sheckler.

And "Shecks" didn't disappoint the crowd that numbered about 3,500 more than Day 2 did last year. Sheckler won the gold medal in the Skateboard Men's Street Final, five years after becoming the youngest X Games gold medalist when he won the Park Final.

"It's just a big weight off my shoulders to win, to be done and not have to be here until next year," said Sheckler, who called it the "best thing I've ever won. . . . It's always been in the back of my head to win (the Street championship at the) X Games. Last year, even when I was done, I was dreading coming back here, because I wanted to win so bad that I think sometimes it psyched me out. It's a huge contest; everyone watches it."

The four-day action sports extravaganza at The Home Depot Center wrapped up Sunday as Travis Pastrana won his second gold medal in the Rally Car Racing Super Special Final.

Jeremy Lusk won the always-popular Moto X Freestyle competition Saturday.

► The introduction of BMX Freestyle SuperPark was a hit with fans, who watched rising star Daniel Dhers cruise to the

gold medal Saturday after winning in BMX Park last year.

► Rune Glifberg won the inaugural Skateboard SuperPark event, his first X Games gold medal in 14 tries. But the SuperPark course design received mixed reviews from skateboarders including Glifberg, who hoped the skateboarders would be consulted next year.

"I still feel that it could have been a lot better, and it was way too tight," Glifberg said.

"It's the first year (of the event), and it's only going to get better. Getting skateboarders involved in the design helps a lot."

X Games general manager Chris Stiepok said the athletes' opinions would be heard. "When this all over, we'll sit down with them and we'll say, 'OK, guys, let us have it. What do you want, what do you like?'" Stiepok

said. "With skateboarding, if I sit 10 guys down, I'm going to get nine different opinions."

► Women's skateboarding pioneer Elissa Steamer, 33, showed no signs of easing up, winning her fourth X Games gold in the women's street final.

Sheckler's rise to superstardom has been well documented through his MTV reality show, *Life of Ryan*, that is now in production for the third season.

The three-time Dew Tour Park titleholder (2005-07) lists 14 sponsors on his official website and has his own clothing line.

"When I was 13 and won X Games here, that's when I realized I'm going for it," Sheckler said. "I've never worked in my life; I don't know what else I'd do."

"This is what I'm supposed to be doing."



By Christian Petersen, Getty Images

Top draw: Shaun White took the bronze Saturday in the Skateboard Vert. The sport is one of the main attractions in the X Games.

