

## A New Skateboard Discipline Gains a Foothold

By MATT HIGGINS

CARSON, Calif. — At the X Games, where events and sports are added and dropped every year, the newest skateboard discipline, SuperPark, seemed doomed before it began.

In the days leading up to the first skateboard SuperPark finals at the Home Depot Center, several prominent skaters were harshly critical of the course and withdrew from the competition.

But some of those who chose to compete in the final Sunday, the last day at the X Games, seemed to soften their complaints.

“I still feel it could have been a lot better,” said Rune Glifberg, who won the SuperPark event for his first gold medal at the X Games. “It was way too tight.”

SuperPark was designed to approximate the concrete skate parks and pools that have proliferated in recent years.

“We feel that there’s a major section of skateboarders and BMX riders that we’ve been ignoring, and that’s the concrete park and bowl riders,” said Chris Stiepok, the general manager and vice president for the X Games.

But the course at the X Games was built of wood, rather than concrete, and many riders said they considered it too small.

Glifberg, 33, a native of Copenhagen, has competed all 14 years at the X Games. He had already won six bronze and two silver medals in skateboard vert disciplines, but he pulled out of the vert finals Saturday night because of a shoulder injury. He also wanted to concentrate on SuperPark, a discipline that favors his fluid style of skating.

Earlier in the week, he blasted the SuperPark course as being suited for BMX freestyle and not skateboarding. After winning the event, he said two weeks of prac-

tice had allowed him to master his tricks.

Glifberg had the high score in the qualifying round and again in the final, with an aggregate total of 108.0 on his three best runs. He drew cheers from the crowd for his smooth flow and soaring aeri- als as he transferred from one section of the course to the next.

“It’s the first year,” Glifberg said of the event. “I’m glad the X Games is doing an event like this, and it’s only going to get better from here. We’ll improve on it and fine-tune everything.”

SuperPark was originally added to the X Games to reinvigorate the vert discipline.

Television ratings for vert, which is contested on a massive halfpipe ramp, had declined for three straight years, Stiepok said. He said skaters were asked to design a new ramp but could not reach a consensus.

“With skateboarding, if I sit 10 guys down, I’m going to get nine different answers,” Stiepok said.

As a result, ESPN came up with its own design for a SuperPark course and in April announced on its Web site, EXPN.com, that vert would be replaced. Some skaters responded by threatening to boycott the X Games.

Vert was quickly reinstated, but several skaters remained skeptical of the SuperPark layout, and Sunday’s final lacked star power after Shaun White, Ryan Sheckler, Bob Burnquist and Bucky Lasek elected not to participate.

Lasek, who won silver in the vert skating final Saturday night, said about the SuperPark course, “Honestly, I think it’s too small.”

Still, it suited Glifberg and the silver-medal winner, Andy Macdonald, another vert skater. Macdonald, who also has competed

every year at the Games, won his 17th medal in skateboarding. He passed the retired Tony Hawk for the most medals in the sport.

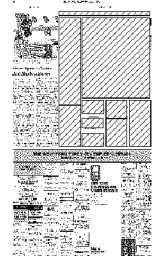
Tony Trujillo won the bronze with a score of 93.0, his first medal at the X Games. With the exception of Trujillo, who is 25, the five-man final heat featured skaters who were all older than 30.

“Some of us are old,” Glifberg said. “But there’s definitely a new generation of park and pool skaters and that’s great to see.”

### NOTES

**TRAVIS PASTRANA** won a gold medal in rally car racing, the final event at the Games. Pastrana, 24, has won rally car racing in two of the three years the event has been held. He has nine gold medals over all, including those he won in freestyle motocross. ... ESPN announced plans for an annual X Games competition in Dubai that would offer medals and the largest prize purse in action sports. ESPN will team with Dubai Event Management Corporation on a five-year deal for a competition that will include sports like skateboarding, BMX and motocross, beginning this December. The total purse will be \$2.5 million. At the X Games in Los Angeles and Carson this week, \$1.625 million in prize money was awarded. The X Games has held demonstration events in Dubai since 2005. In addition to the Summer and Winter X Games, ESPN has held X Games competitions in Asia, Europe and South America.

**Some X Games riders complain about a wood course that they feel is too small.**





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Rune Glifberg won the SuperPark event for his first gold medal in 14 years at the X Games.