

BMX

BMX has been a lot of things for me over the years. It's always been a form of transportation but it's meant a lot of different things like adventure, excitement, a challenge, competition, injuries and most of all it's always been fun. I'm not sure if BMX is the sport for everyone, but for me it fit well. Since the second day I learned how to ride a bike I was aiming for things to jump or just aiming for things to run over. Bugs just seemed way cooler after they were squished to my front tire! Oh, I suppose I've got a million stories about riding BMX bikes, hell I started racing in 1984 almost twenty years ago.

I suppose this is supposed to be written inspirationally so I'll try and tell this story from my mother's perspective. Back in 84 she had her hands full, I mean, what was she going to do with her son who believed melting his Hot Wheels was twice as fun as playing with them? And do you know how big of a fire you have to make to melt the pot metal in those things? And to me the job was never done until I had an unrecognizable blob of metal to show off to my friends. Needless to say things got really out of hand with my pyromania, which caused her to get real mad at me, which led to her crying a lot back then. I remember the talk we had like it was yesterday. She had made it her mission to straighten me out and I had promised her I'd be better if she would let me race BMX. She was very apposed to such a dangerous idea, but eventually we were able to reach an agreement.

So that weekend I took my allowance with me over to Mike Steward's house and his parents took us to the Adams County Indoor BMX races. The people at the track helped me sign up, let me borrow a helmet and a pad set, made me a number plate out of a 1-ply paper plate, masking tape and a magic marker. Next thing I know I'm lining up my 40 lb. huffy in the starting gate next to everyone else's real shiny race bikes. I was nervous as hell, I'd never been in a gate before, I didn't know how to balance in the thing, my borrowed helmet kept falling down in my face and my palms we're so sweaty they were slipping off my handlebar grips. But as soon as I got on the track things weren't too bad, a little weird at first and I crashed my very first lap and skinned my knee. But I was determined, this is what I always wanted to do and I finally got out here to do it so if I go crying home now about getting hurt Mom will never let me do this again. So I wiped the dirt from my torn corduroys, put my baseball cap on under the helmet so it would quit slipping down, wiped some dirt in my hands like all the older guys did and sized up the 12 year old novice class. I came home with a little blue 2nd place trophy that night. A testament to my abilities, proof to my Mom that I could accomplish something, and what I knew to be my ticket to the next BMX race.

Mom was so proud she cried... talk about confusing! She hugged me, peroxide my knee and told me she could sew a patch on my pants and they would be as good as new. So she did end up taking me out to the next race two weeks later, I knew she would. But what I didn't know was that I'd win that race... and the next one... and the next one after that... And I also didn't know that Mom was chatting up the other parents in the

bleachers, and soon enough she was wanting to go to the bmx races to hang out with the other parents as much as she wanted to watch me bring home another trophy. By the end of my first year racing I moved up and was racing the intermediate class, I had a really cool new group of friends at the track, and wouldn't you know it Mom was now the one making those paper number plates for the novices.

So here I am with new friends, raced all summer, had a nice collection of trophies started and I hadn't melted any Hot Wheels all summer. By Christmas Mom noticed that my grades at school were improving, and overall I had cleaned my act up. Santa Claus was especially nice that year.

BMX took me from a 12 year old shoplifting pyromaniac on the verge of failing and being sent back a grade to developing a better personality and a solid 3.0 GPA by the time I entered high school. I graduated four years later with a 3.2 accumulative, a professional BMX sponsorship, and even started making money that summer racing the pro-class. That fall I started classes at The University of Colorado and went on to earn a BA degree in 1995. During those years I lost interest in racing and found myself at the dirt trails or at skate parks on my days off.

Like everything else BMX had changed, it was becoming very commercialized so many racers like myself returned to just riding around for the fun of it instead of competing against each other. So I've been Trail/street/skate Park riding ever since. BMX is a great way to meet new people and develop some true lifelong friendships. The South Woods Trails was one of those places for me, and for all of us that rode and developed out there.

The SW was amazing. I've seen days out there with way over a hundred people who had come from all over the U.S. and Canada to ride the SW. There were many nights where it was just a few of us though, riding, building, sweeping, cleaning up trash... sometimes in the sun but mostly while it was raining... and quite a few late evenings trying to finish a new line or repair something so it would be ready for riding the next day. We could count on each other to be there, for support, for help, for a jump-start or whatever. Our bonds were strong, and it was BMX and a little piece of land that brought us all together.

BMX may not be for everyone but I'd like to think that I am another shining example of what this great sport can do and has done for thousands of people like me everywhere. And I would like to be involved with the next Seattle spot so I can help create a place that makes and affect on the youth of today, and quite possibly turn another kid around and onto the right path.

Ride on!

Brian Taylor