

THE TATTOO

BRISTOL PRESS

MAKING A PERMANENT IMPRESSION SINCE 1994

VOLUME 7 No. 9

Watch out for 'crazy English biker'

By MIKE NGUYEN
The Tattoo

You don't get much bigger than having your own signature BMX bike.

And Jamie Bestwick, the 28-year-old BMX champion straight out of England, recently got one: his own signature bike frame, courtesy of his sponsor, GT bikes.

"It's pretty neat to walk into a store and seeing a bike with your name on it there. It takes some time to get used to it," he said.

So has all this fame and attention gone to his head?

Not really. "In the town I live in, people who know me just see me as the crazy English biker guy down the street," Bestwick said.

Bestwick was first inspired to get into biking when he received his own BMX bike.

"My dad bought me a bike when I was ten, and I've been riding since," he said.

And that he has.

He nabbed the first place prize at the X Trials in Grand Prairie, Texas in BMX vert.

Bestwick took second place in vert at the ESPN-hosted B3 event (short for boards, blades, and bikes) this year — he won it last year — and placed second overall in the Bicycle Stunt series.

As if that's not enough, Bestwick even has an aeronautics degree.

"I guess I'm the only biker here approved by the FAA to fly," he joked.

He said he worked for six years to gain the degree.

Bestwick won gold last year at the X Games, and in the best way imaginable.

He pulled off the first-ever turnaround flair on a BMX in the last second of his last run, snagging the gold and leaving stunt bike superstars Dave Mirra and Matt Hoffman the silver and bronze.

Bestwick has been competing professionally for a decade and has biked since 1982.

With all these years in the sport, he's been noted as one of the best and most well-known bikers to come out of Europe.

Now, however, Bestwick resides with his wife in a small town in

Bristol, Connecticut.

But he'll have the chance to do so Father's Day weekend, when he comes to try to nab another first place finish on the bike vert at the Bristol X



Photo courtesy of ESPN
Jamie Bestwick

"I guess I'm the only biker here approved by the FAA to fly." - Jamie Bestwick

Pennsylvania, close to the famous Woodward Skate Park.

The nearby park "is really neat. I get to ride the best skate park ever built," Bestwick said.

He said he moved across the ocean to live near one of the best skate parks in the world and because "there's more on the side of TV and sponsorships in the States."

However, Bestwick said, "England is my home country. I get to ride with my friends and see my family."

Although he's visited Bristol, England, he said he has yet to be in

Trials.

He urged fans who come out for the event at Lake Compounce to "just try to have fun" and "be responsible and shout as loud as you can when the BMX vert finals are on."

"I hope to get the year-end title [by winning at the Trials]," Bestwick said.

That shouldn't be a problem if he continues what has been a great season.

His goal, he said, is "to be a leader in the sport."



Photo courtesy of ESPN
Jamie Bestwick at the X Trials in Grand Prairie, Texas last month.

Getting airtime

So what do the pros think about when they're hanging up there in the air?

"Either I'm thinking 'this is going to be better than I thought' or else I'm thinking 'this isn't looking too good' and that I better brace myself for a fall," said biker Jamie

Bestwick.

"Watch out for the landing," said Bruce Crisman, another biking star.

"You need to make sure you're coming back on the ramp properly," said Matt Lindenmuth, an inline skating whiz. "It all [just] happens."

- Mike Nguyen

Will he flip for Bristol?

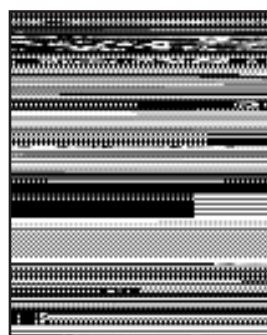
By MIKE NGUYEN
The Tattoo

Matt Lindenmuth has been around for a long time — and he's only 20.

The one-time champion, who has been Rollerblading professionally since 1994, said the feeling he gets from the sport is indescribable.

"It's just one of those things," he said. "You can't describe the rush. Get some skates and get some air on a half-pipe is all I can say."

"You can't describe the rush. Get some skates and get some air on a half-pipe is all I can say." - Matt Lindenmuth



Tattoo photo

Matt Lindenmuth

competition in Grand Prairie, Texas last month. He came in first overall in the Aggressive Skating Association in 1998.

He said he didn't expect such success when he got started at the age of 14.

"I never had any intentions to go far," Lindenmuth said.

But he's ready to go farther. "I'm 20 right now, my body is holding up," he said. "I don't see myself leaving the industry."

If and when his body gives out, he said, he hopes to start an inline-oriented company to keep himself in the business.

With his successful career, Lindenmuth said, "I've been spoiled, I guess."

He said he's thankful for all of it. "I've made some of my best friends in skating," he added.

For now, he's touring the nation with the skaters' association, promoting his sport and giving demonstrations to keep himself busy.

When he has time for a break, he goes back to his home near Woodward Skate Park in Pennsylvania.

"Woodward's a heaven. It has the greatest atmosphere. There's every ramp and pipe you can ever imagine," Lindenmuth said. "It's kind of like one of those utopias."

Lindenmuth, who's already qualified for the X Games in Philadelphia, said he hopes to see the same "good crowds" at the Lake Compounce X Trials that he saw in Texas.

"This year is going to be a big year for skating," Lindenmuth said.

Rising young biker aims at weekend win

By MIKE NGUYEN
The Tattoo

When he's competing on his BMX bike, Bruce Crisman flies up ramps, spinning full circles on his back wheel while hanging on with one hand.

"I'm so thankful that I get to do this for a living." - Bruce Crisman

And then he really gets going.

"I do it for the love of the sport, definitely," he said.

Crisman may be one of the top professional BMX street riders in the field, but he's still a regular guy.

When he turned 21 recently, he said, he just went camping.

Camping seems pretty tame for a biking star who's just gotten off the Dave Mirra BMX tour, grabbed a second place finish at the Texas X Trials and turned fully professional just a year ago.

Crisman may be fairly new in the lineup of pros, but he's already beating out tough competition and gaining recognition.

He said he was inspired to get into BMX after viewing multiple BMX videos and reading BMX magazines. The Oregon native's been participating and competing in top competitions since 1994.

Crisman placed third overall last year in the Hoffman Sports Association Bicycle Stunt Series in the park category — which is like a street course but has more of a skate park feel. That's a good showing for a competitor's first full year as a professional.

Crisman loves the sport enough to give lessons and demonstrations regularly at Woodward Skate Park in Pennsylvania.

But, he said, his favorite park to skate in is the just-as-notable Portland Burnside Skate Park in Oregon, near his home.

Competing in Dave Mirra's nationwide BMX "supertour" this past year, he said, "was very good, very exciting."

With all his newfound popularity, he's still grateful for what biking has given him.

"I'm so thankful that I get to do this for a living," Crisman said.

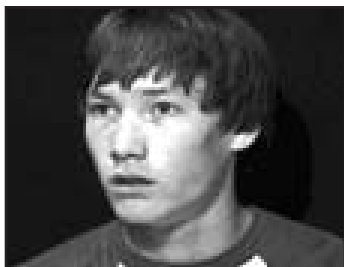


Photo courtesy of ESPN
Bruce Crisman



Photo courtesy of ESPN
Bruce Crisman at the X Trials in Grand Prairie, Texas last month.

While at the X Trials...

The professionals have some advice for spectators this weekend.

"Go to all the stores and grab as much free stuff as you can," said bike star Jamie Bestwick.

Matt Lindenmuth, an inline skater, said people should "go out there and watch" the athletes show off their best.

"You'll be surprised at all you see," he said.

One of the best moments could come from Lindenmuth himself.

"I want to land my double backflip" this

weekend, he said. "It's been plaguing me for awhile now and since I'm already qualified for the Games, I'm going to try it again in Bristol."

Bruce Crisman, a BMX biker, said everyone should just "have a good time."

"Smile a lot," added Bestwick.

They want to hear a lot of support from the crowds, too.

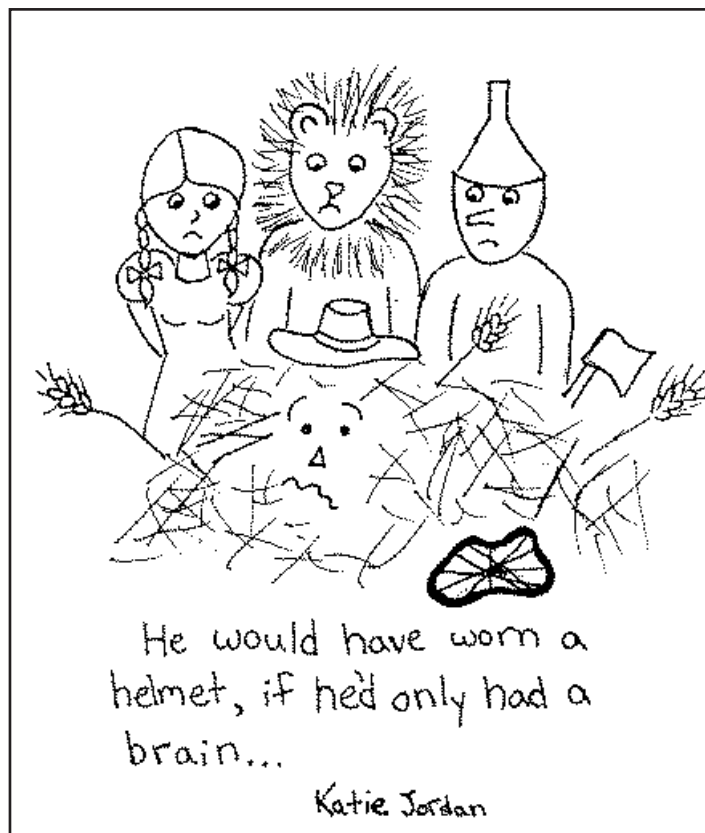
"I do not like doing silent shows," said flatland biker Matt Wilhelm.

"Cheer your butts off," said Lindenmuth.

- Mike Nguyen



Photo courtesy of ESPN
Matt Lindenmuth at the X Trials in Grand Prairie, Texas, last month.



Katie Jordan / The Tattoo

More X Trials info online: ReadTheTattoo

After devoting three and a half issues to the X Trials, you'd think *The Tattoo* would have the sense to call it quits.

But no. Our student journalists will be out in force this weekend at Lake Compounce to bring the story of the event to loyal readers.

We'll be out there talking to athletes, judges, spectators and anyone else we can find to give the full flavor of the greatest professional sports event to hit Bristol in years.

To keep up to date, check out *The Tattoo's* ever-changing web site — www.ReadTheTattoo.com — all weekend. We'll update it as often as we can to deliver stories and the results.

The web site will also have all the information needed to know what's going on and how to see it.

Admission is free and the show should be terrific so c'mon out and have some fun!