

Tony Hawk Professional Skateboarder

By Tony Hawk with Sean Mortimer

150 odd pages with lots of black and white photos

I confess that I have been interested in skateboarding lately. I feel that the whole sport will make for a good writing study and that I will be able to transpose what I learn into some sort of futuristic extreme sport story or novel. Perhaps not why you would read a book on skateboarding, but it is why I did.

Overall the book was a enjoyable, easy to digest, quick read. I'm guessing that it had about 20,000 words in it total, and if you only read half the words and only give half your attention to the remainder, then if you are anything like me you'll be able to cruise through this book in an hour or so.

In that hour, what might you learn:

1) Skateboarders break bones, hurt themselves, and are continually injured. The number of references to cuts, bruises, scraped knees, broken ribs, and iced ankles is astounding. One need not wonder why I'm not a skateboarder. That first painful skinned knee in fifth grade brought my skateboarding career to a grinding halt. Tony Hawk, however, managed to break his front teeth in half, and as the book relates, not satisfied with the result, he clipped them the rest of the way off a week later. Way to go! Now that's the type of stick-to-itiveness you need if you want to be a skateboarding pro.

2) Skateboards use a lot of duct tape. OK. Maybe this really shouldn't be number two, but as I made quick notes on the cover of the book to summarize it's contents, the first phrase that came to mind was, duct tape and broken bones. We've covered broken bones, so duct tape is the logical next step. For instance, Tony Hawk used duct tape to hold his shoes together as a kid. This would be before he got a sponsor, or started to make \$1,000+ a month in his junior year of high school. Note to parents: if your child is the best at anything, the money will most assuredly follow.

3) Tony Hawk, or the Birdman, as he is called (only found this out towards the end) really likes to skate. This is the reason why he got so good. Practice wasn't a hardship, it was what he lived for. I am sure Tony is the kind of guy who would be happy to sleep wherever and eat Top Ramen if he could just keep on skating... or at least would have been. His life took a slightly more luxurious turn, but you get the idea. Skate to live, live to skate, or something like that. One could perhaps theorize that Tony Hawk became the best skateboarder around, because he loved the sport more than anyone else. In fact, he loved it so much that it is what he lived his life for. I mean, if I had the money, I might buy a house in the Hollywood Hills (or wherever he bought his), but the last thing I would do is fill my yard up with custom half pipes and bowls. A swimming pool? Yes. A vert ramp? Not a chance.

The bottom line is that the book is a good read--short, fast, easy to page through, and with enough pictures to keep it interesting. If I was going to offer any advice, I would say: A) Kill the funky background graphics on the text pages (looks cool, but makes them hard to read), and B) add more of those sequential photographic sequences you see in the magazines, showing how to land an Ollie. There are only like one or two of those in the entire book.

Oh, and not to sound like a total dweeb, but what the heck is an Ollie? I still don't know, and as interesting as it is to know that Tony's favorite movie is *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (the man has taste), I would have rather seen glossary of terms as part of the appendix, than a compilation of the Birdman's favorite restaurants, movies, and songs.

I mean, so he was the first to land a 900--varial or otherwise. What does that mean exactly? And how would I be able to differentiate it from a Kickflip McTwist, Stalefish 540, or a Ho-ho? As apposed to say a Ho-Hum, because that I can recognize and this book is not one of those... maybe it's a Kickflip Frontside Invert, but without a glossary, you can bet I'm only be guessing.

*{A positive review. Well, hot damn! I can write one of those.
Guess I just needed the inspiration, first.}*

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