

Seventh annual Jamskating Nationals to hit Lewisville, Texas

By Suzy Weinland

In 2003, a couple of enthusiastic roller skaters who loved to jam skate decided to put together a national competition to bring attention to the sport of 'jamming,' and to recognize



2009 Battle of the Belt runner-up Diamond Walker.

skaters with the same penchant for music and dance moves that they had. Now entering its seventh year, the World Skating Association (WSA) National Jamskating Competition will take place July 10, 11 and 12 at InterSkate Roller Rink, 1408 South Business Highway 121 Lewisville, TX.

The WSA promotes jamskating as evolving into something very cool; the top skaters are doing their best to keep the sport moving in the right direction. Mike Lehrke, owner of Vanilla Skate Company and Backspin Wheels explained that jamskating involves a combination of skating styles from the '70s, '80s, '90s and today.

As the sport grows rapidly in popularity and rink owners and manufacturers begin to understand the parameters of the sport, there has been some slight confusion in terminology, particularly surrounding the terms "shuffle" and "jam" skating. Lehrke put the definitions in layman's terms: Jamskating is the "overall" term for a variety of moves and floorwork. Jam moves themselves are typically stationary moves performed in the middle of the skate floor. Shuffle skating involves performing moves and footwork while continually moving around the outer perimeter of the skate floor. Combine shuffle moves, power moves, jam

moves – or "floorwork," and footwork and you have jamskating.

"Jamskaters only make their way to the top by being well-rounded, which includes having footwork, floorwork, shuffle skating and power moves," said Lehrke. "Real jamskating and shuffle skating aren't dangerous and are highly controlled. Kids know their limits - they won't try moves beyond their ability without trying them off-skates in a safe place first. If kids look goofy/out of control when they trying new moves, they are either in the early stages of learning that move, or they are doing the move wrong."

Lehrke goes on to say that "jamskating is for every age, size, color, gender and income level." While the number of high-level, competitive jamskaters in America today is small, the number of skaters who jamskate at their rinks on a weekly basis numbers in the tens or hundreds of thousands."

2009 marks the seventh year for WSA Nationals and the second year for state championships. Skaters previously would just attend nationals, with hopes of winning their event. WSA Founder Chuck Best explained, "There are 25 state championships this year. Then, there will be seven national qualifiers for solo events for ages 18 and under, plus an event at nationals for 26 and older and 35 and older for solo and pairs."

New to this year's competition is a live internet broadcast of all the events over the three-day period. Best expects it to draw at least 800 viewers. The broadcast will include commentary and advertisement breaks.

Another welcome addition will be



Jamskater Dustin Duffy holds the 2008 Team Cup trophy. His team, "Team Uprock," won the 2008 Jamskating National's Team Event.

the "solo" shuffle event. "We already do team event and pairs, but we're adding a solo shuffle event to incorporate more of the skaters who usually don't skate (at Nationals) because they don't do floor work," said Best. The solo shuffle event is open to all ages.

One change is that the former "team event" will be a team performance, "much like on America's Best Dance Crew," said Best. The team events for floorwork and shuffle skating are open categories to all ages.

Back for another year will be the fun activities, such as the much-anticipated Pro Sunday where top skaters who've placed at Nationals over previous years and have made it into the Pro League Team will perform. Best said, "That's the day to watch!"

Friday and Saturday will offer up open bashes and open sessions for skaters to come in, with live music from a variety of D.J.s. All of this will be broadcast live. Best shared that some rinks were putting it on their big-screen TVs last year, giving skaters in rinks across the nation a chance to watch nationals.

Go to www.wsaevents.com for info about State Championship dates, Nationals ticket and travel info or to see Nationals broadcast LIVE all three days. Tickets will also be available at the door. Registration for skaters continues through July 1.

Rinks and jamskating enthusiasts can sign up to receive text messages updating them as the events are unfolding. They can also opt to receive e-mails and newsletters from WSA. A big perk for rinks is that they can advertise their upcoming events via WSA's text messaging and e-mail database.

Georgia rink site of first ever shuffle skating competition

Roller skating center owner Bob Bentley will host the first ever "shuffle skating" competition at his Hot Wheels Skate Center in Woodstock, Ga., May 30-31, and then at his Dreamland Skating Center in Pensacola, Fla., in mid-August. For more information, contact Bob via e-mail at funtimesk8@aol.com or via phone at 850-478-3994.



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