

## Skateboarding



Skateboarding, which will be held as an official event at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, has become very popular in recent years. Due to its higher level of risk than most competitive sports, skateboarding is considered an “action” or “extreme” sport. Other examples of action sports are snowboarding, surfing, and skydiving. It will be skateboarding’s first Olympic appearance, alongside surfing.

Skateboarding’s origins are based in surfing. Surfers were looking for an alternative activity when there were no waves or they were unable to surf. They ended up putting wheels on the bottom of a wood plank, and “sidewalk surfing” was born. It was considered secondary to surfing at the time, but quickly became a popular activity on its own.

Early skateboards were just a rectangular plank, but over time the shape changed, and the skateboard we know today began to take shape. Today’s skateboard “deck” is concave in the middle, with a rounded tail and nose which curve upwards. This shape allows maximum control over the skateboard, as well as making it easier to kick the board and make it rotate and flip. The wheels are made of hard urethane, and have bearings in the middle to allow them to spin faster and longer. The wheels are held on by an axle, referred to as a “truck.”



As skateboarding evolved, people began to do tricks on curbs, slide on banks, and do jumps off of ramps. From here, competitive skateboarding began to gain popularity.

Today, there is a huge variety of skateboarding techniques. Spinning and flipping the board, using the deck or trucks to slide along rails, jumping high into the air off of ramps and spinning your body, are all examples of modern day skateboarding tricks.

Skateboarding at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics will be split into two events, park and street. Park will be held in a skatepark featuring ramps and pool-style installations. Athletes will use the ramps to build speed and launch into the air, as well as sliding along the top edge of the

ramps. The high speed and big jumps make for an incredibly exciting event!

Street skateboarding, on the other hand, is held on obstacles inspired by what you may find walking around a city. Athletes use staircases, handrails, banks, benches, etc. to do a variety of technical tricks. There are always new tricks being invented, resulting in an unpredictable, intense event.

Qualification for the Olympic skateboarding event will be based on the world rankings. Rankings are based on results in major skateboarding events, including the Dew Tour, Street League Skateboarding, and World Skate events. The current number one in Men's street skateboarding is American Nyjah Huston, but he is followed closely by Japanese skateboarder Yuto Horigome in 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Sora Shirai in 4<sup>th</sup> place. In women's street skateboarding, Aori Nishimura currently sits in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Women's park skateboarding is dominated by 13 year old Misugu Okamoto in 1<sup>st</sup>, and Sakura Yosozumi in 2<sup>nd</sup>. Japan looks extremely strong heading into Tokyo, so let's show them our support and watch the skateboarding events at next year's Olympics!