

Skaters get a kick out of event in Salem

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Danielle Peterson | Statesman Journal
Joey Hart of Sacramento competes in the tight slalom race Saturday during the State Games of Oregon skateboard competition on the Soap Box Derby hill at Bush's Pasture Park.

For Father's Day, most people give their dad a greeting card or help him around the house.

The Hart family, from Sacramento, Calif., drove more than eight hours Friday to Salem for the skateboarding events at the State Games of Oregon Saturday and today at Bush's Pasture Park.

Joey Hart, 11, won the beginners slalom Saturday, with dad and professional skateboarder Jamie Hart watching. Joey won all four of his races in the event.

"My dad is a pro skateboarder, and I want to be like him," Joey Hart said. "I got my first board when I was 3 and started riding it when I was 4."

Jamie Hart, who also competed Saturday in the tight slalom, said he appreciates spending Father's Day skateboarding with his son.

"I'm not a fan of greeting cards," he said. "It's really a neat thing for a father who is a skateboarder to be a role model for his son."

The Harts weren't the only skateboarders who traveled far distances to compete in the Games. Some came from Tacoma and Spokane, Wash., others from the Bay Area and San Diego.

"I always love coming to Oregon," said Richy Carrasco, who won the overall and masters tight slalom with a time of 22.77. He also won gold in the slalomcross masters division.

"My (professional skateboarding) friends love coming to this race and this venue. One of the hardest things to do is finding a good venue for slalom racing."

Many of the racers said the soap box derby track at Bush's Pasture Park is an ideal venue for slalom racing.

Salem resident and skateboarder Peter Ingraham said that's why so many professional skateboarders come to Salem from all over the West Coast.

"It's the best hill," Ingraham said. "It's the only soap box derby hill on the West Coast. This race is also one of the few races in this part of the country, because of the economy."

Carrasco, who is from Los Angeles, echoed Ingraham on the uniqueness of Bush's Pasture Park.

"We don't have to block a street off and pay the city to redirect traffic," he said. "That is a problem for a small and growing sport like this."

Kevin Delaney won the tight slalom (23.65) and the slalomcross in the open division, and Josh Harvey won the tight slalom (27.31) and slalomcross in the junior division.

The slalom competition continues today with the giant slalom and hybrid events at 9 a.m.

Participants can sign up beforehand for \$10 per event. Admission is free for spectators.

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