

Give the Kid a Medal

Skating Gets Its Start

In the 1950s, a group of surfers in California started doing something called “sidewalk surfing”—riding on boards attached to roller skates. This new sport presented the danger and thrills of surfing but could be done anytime, anywhere. No waiting for waves!

Since then, “sidewalk surfing,” or skateboarding, has grown to include eight million skateboarders—called skaters for short—in the United States. Skaters perform tricks on sidewalks, in empty pools, and on **obstacles**, like stairs, railings, and ledges. There are competitions for **amateur** and professional skaters all over the world.

Similar Sports Go Olympic

In 1998, snowboarding made its **debut** at the Nagano Olympic Games. It quickly became a popular event, especially with younger viewers. Ten years later, BMX biking became an official Olympic event at the Beijing Olympic Games. Both snowboarding and BMX biking have interested a younger audience in the Olympics. Since skateboarding also appeals to young people, some think skateboarding will be the next sport to become an Olympic event.

Will a Skater Ever Carry the Torch?

The International Olympic Committee considered giving skateboarding a place in the London Olympics in 2012 but decided against it. Some skaters look forward to the



attention that the Olympics would bring to the sport while others hope that skateboarding never becomes an Olympic sport. They worry that the rules in the Olympic competition would change the sport’s **rebellious**, creative nature.

The Olympics have changed a great deal since the ancient games of Greece. But can they change enough to include skaters? And can skaters change enough for their sport to join the ranks of official events like running and wrestling? Only time will tell if the journey of skateboarding will include a walk to the Olympic medal **podium**.

Glossary

amateur — beginner

debut — the first appearance

obstacle — an object that is in the way

podium — a stand or platform

rebellious — not behaving according to rules or expectations