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Skating prodigy, 5, turning heads

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by [Matt Thompson](#)
Journal Reporter

Mitchie Brusco seems like your average 5-year-old boy.

He loves Power Rangers and his favorite movie is ``Spider-Man." He spends hours on swing sets, and he still thinks school will be fun once he attends.

But when Mitchie hops onto a skateboard, he is anything but average.

He is becoming one of biggest -- and smallest -- sensations in Northwest skateboarding.

Mitchie, who lives in Kirkland, is a skateboarding prodigy -- already sponsored by six different companies.

He has won his past three competitions, including the first-place trophy at the 8-and-under Northwest League Competition held in Portland in June.

The win earned Mitchie an all-expenses-paid trip to the Gravity Games in Cleveland, one of the biggest skateboarding events in North America.

``Everybody has a talent," said his mother, Jennifer Brusco. ``I think he just found his sooner than most."

Mitchie's skating career began two years ago on a September afternoon while he and his mother were shopping at Target. Mitchie, 3 years old at the time, pleaded with Jennifer to buy him a Tasmanian Devil toy skateboard.

``And from that point he never got off it," Jennifer said.

He practiced jumps and tricks off couches, tables and counters. He put a hole in the kitchen floor's linoleum. A few months after he got his first board, Jennifer took him to a local skate park.

``He went up to the biggest kid there and asked if he could try his board," Jennifer said. ``Then he just took off."

Soon Mitchie was grabbing the attention of skaters all over the Puget Sound area. At competitions agents and promoters offered him free clothing and equipment. He made appearances on KOMO 4 News and FoxSportsNet's ``You Gotta See This."

He has placed in 12 competitions in the past two years. Brusco didn't win many of them early on, but he has started landing new tricks over the past several weeks.

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He won the Trickwood Skate Shop Half-Pipe Competition in Kirkland and another competition in Granite Falls, where he went up against teen-age boarders.

“I can beat 18-year-olds,” Mitchie giggled.

Mitchie usually turns heads when he skates. Last week at the Redmond Skate Park, he pulled off a “pop shove it,” an advanced trick he had never landed before. A young boy whispered, “Cool” while a group of older kids watched in amazement.

“He’s so good, it’s kind of intimidating,” said 26-year-old Dan Ullom, who frequents the Redmond Skate Park. “A lot of people are pretty amazed with how much he can do.”

Including his parents, who knew nothing about skateboarding until Mitchie got involved. None of Mitchie’s four siblings skateboard, but he does come from an athletic family.

Jessica, 12, plays volleyball and softball. Mike, 11, wrestles and plays football. Alexandra, 8, snowboards. Three-year-old Nicole has great balance and could equal her brother on a skateboard “as soon as she’s big enough,” Jennifer said.

Mitchie’s father, Mick Brusco, played baseball at Lewis and Clark State College and played fastpitch softball for Pay ‘N Pak during the 1980s. Jennifer used to play basketball and tennis.

Mick guesses that his son learned about skateboarding from watching television.

“It never looked like he didn’t know what he was doing,” Mick said.

Mitchie watches skateboarding on television and his favorite video is “Tony Hawk’s Trick Tips.” He skates three to six hours every day. Jennifer carts him to various skate parks around the Eastside. When it rains, she takes him to Rain City skate park, an indoor facility in Seattle.

Jennifer keeps a close eye on him while he skates, but she doesn’t worry much about his safety even though Mitchie stands 43 inches tall and weighs just 40 pounds. He wears elbow and knee pads as well as a helmet, which is decorated with various stickers and a cut-out picture of all his sisters and brother.

“He’s very cautious,” Jennifer said. “He’s no daredevil. He’ll stop what he’s doing if someone gets in his way. He knows where everyone is.”

Everyone in the Northwest skateboarding world is finding out about Brusco. He has been featured on various Web sites recently. Companies such as Jones Soda and Termite Skateboards sponsor and promote him. He and his family receive free shoes from DC Shoes.

But Mitchie isn’t getting a big head yet.

“His family brings him back down to earth,” Jennifer said. “When he gets home he’s just little Mitchie. His brothers and sisters make sure of that.”

Mitchie does say he wants to skate professionally some day.

Can a 5-year-old who hasn’t even completed kindergarten make such a big commitment?

“A year ago I wasn’t so sure,” Mick said. “But now you can pretty much tell he isn’t going to give this up.”

Photos By: Maxwell Balmain/Eastside Journal. FRONT PAGE: Mitchie Brusco, 5, practices jumping over a knapsack at the Redmond skate park. JUMP PAGE, ABOVE: Mitchie Brusco, 5, skates with the big boys at the Redmond Skate Park. Mitche skates three to six hours every day at various skate parks on the Eastside. On rainy days, he practices indoors at Rain City skate park in Seattle. JUMP PAGE, BELOW, LEFT: Jennifer Brusco, Mitchie's mom, gives him some support after a fall. She bought Mitchie his first skateboard two years ago. 'And from that point, he never got off it," she said. JUMP PAGE, BELOW, RIGHT: Mitchie is already a skateboard phenomenon in the state, winning several area competitions and amazing older skateboarders with advanced tricks.

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