



Kevin Harris

Derailed by skateboarding in 1976, Kevin Harris was never the same. As a gangly teenager nicknamed stickman, he pulled his shorts north of the belly button, walked school hallways holding his cherished skateboard instead of girlfriends' hands and rode every day, rain or shine. He graduated high school as a national champion and member of the Ripping Squad demonstration team with zero social life outside of skateboarding. Pictures torn out of SkateBoarder covered his bedroom wall instead of the expected Farah Fawcett bathing suit poster.

Unfortunately for the teenager, his daydreams of becoming a world-famous professional skateboarder were crippled by location, location, location. California was the skateboarding epicenter and Kevin may as well have been winning contests on the dark side of the moon for all the attention Canada received. No legitimate pro had ever emerged from The Great White North. In 1978, when Kevin crushed the unofficial world record of 400 two-board 360s with an official 1,032 rotations, SkateBoarder magazine awarded him a teeny black and white photo.

By 1981 there were barely any pros anywhere. The skating bubble burst and stragglers were looked upon with pity, unaware they were obsessed over a deflated loser fad. Kevin's collection of trophies failed to keep him company as he skated alone every night.

Paying his own way to California contests, Kevin entered the emasculated international competitive pool as a way to motivate his skating and hang with other enthusiasts. There were so few competitors at a 1982 Del Mar Skate Ranch contest that they mashed the professionals and amateurs together. Kevin surprised himself and everybody else by placing third in the world at a time when he wasn't even sponsored. Kevin's personal hero Stacy Peralta stopped him in the parking lot and recruited him for The Bones Brigade, Powell Peralta's skate team.

The backing from Powell Peralta, one of the most popular brands in skateboarding, blasted Kevin into skateboarding stardom bubble. He had



flowed to a contest a Canadian nobody and returned a member of the most dominant team in skateboarding's history, teammates with Tony Hawk, Rodney Mullen and Lance Mountain. Quitting his job as a deliveryman, he began travelling the world for demonstrations and contests and earned a second place world ranking.

Unwilling to bail the Great White North, Kevin remained rooted to his Canadian soil and dedicated himself to growing the ignored skate scene. By 1985 skateboarding experienced a popularity burst and he opened Ultimate Skateboards, the first major Canadian skateboard distribution center, hosted pro demos and opened The Richmond Skate Ranch, which became an international destination. He published Concrete, the largest Canadian-based skateboard magazine and structured it so it could be distributed for free. He infused his first professional model with Canadian pride creating the iconic skeleton Mountie and beaver graphic.

Skateboarding dipped drastically again in the early-1990s and plummeting sales ended Kevin's professional career along with almost all of his peers. He continued to skate, pouring \$40,000 worth of skateable concrete into his backyard and advocating for skate parks until the popularity rose again. Skateboarding broke the peaks-and-valley cycle in 2000 and is consistently ranked one most popular "sports" in America.

In 2012, Kevin was featured in the critically acclaimed documentary *Bones Brigade: An Autobiography*. Ultimate and Concrete continue to thrive and Powell Peralta reissued Kevin's iconic board. Stickman remains the sweaty skate rat, travelling to Sweden, Japan, Brazil and across Canada for contests and demos. The pictures that adorn his office walls remain skate-related, except now they're in frames.