

Yet even more surprising than Tay's following, is his background. Unlike most of his fellow hotties, Tay didn't get into verticals as a spinoff from surfing, skiing or even skating banks. Rather, up until almost a year ago, he was a committed motocross bicyclist; sometimes, in fact, dueling with his skateboarding buddies at the locally famous and now destroyed "L-Pool."

Tay's transformation came when his bike was ripped off, and skating presented itself as a logical and cheap alternative. With early influences like Mike Wierbinski and Muckus (yes, he really exists), and equipment changes from a slalom board to a kicktail and soft to hard wheels, Tay progressed quickly and his style began to gel. The result is a smooth and fast approach to pipe and pool riding, and probably some of the most unusual slides ever perfected.

If friends and admirers tend to box Tay into a somewhat limited category as a pipe and bowl slide specialist, it is through his own doing. By Tay's own admission, his present goal is "to do more radical slides than anyone else," ... and that he does. His "Ces-slide," for instance, is a sort of sliding roll-back, except Tay often makes it even more difficult by beginning it with a two-wheeler off the lip of a vertical bowl. In a pipe, on the other hand, Tay will pull off "drifters" (more or less straight-drop slides) from above the halfway mark, floating several feet before straightening out. Not surprisingly, Tay occasionally manages a tail tap or an aerial, but it's generally his slides that are most frequent and most amazing.

As expected from his style of riding, Tay still shows a strong preference for hard wheels. "I ride Tunnel Rocks most," he remarks. His trucks alternate between Midtracks, Halftracks and Bennett Pros, depending on the terrain. And Tay's decks, which are handcrafted by Pool Tool Skateboards, a small outfit owned



Toward the max on every incline. Photo: Jim Cassimus.

by his father, are made of either ash or plywood.

Somehow, besides skating 4-10 hours a day, Tay regularly puts in time at his father's company, as well as at a local shop, Tube Skateboards. He plans to continue that employment for an indefinite period, while finishing high school (he is a sophomore) and devel-

oping himself for eventual professional bowl and pipe-riding competition.

But no matter what transpires in the near future, says Tay, he's intent on staying close to the sport for a long time to come. And for the Badlands, that can only be a good thing.

BRIAN GILLOGLY

