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State's first and only skateboard park offers thrilling adventure

By M.B. DILLON

If you'd like to experience a thrilling ride and prove your prowess at the same time, head down to Michigan's first skateboard park on Beech Daly between Six and Seven Mile in Redford Township.

The only difference you'll discover

between skateboarding and a roller coaster ride is that on a skateboard you are free to create your own destiny.

For \$2 per hour, you can careen down any of four 128-foot runs which are all engineered for the ultimate in challenge. Each run is composed of

bows, banks and curves of creamy smooth concrete.

Six-foot inclines can propel daring skateboarders to speeds up to 15 miles per hour over 23,000 square feet of runs.

Since its grand opening last month, the skateboard park has received as

many as 300 visitors per day. While the majority of them are township residents, skateboard maniacs have arrived from Detroit, Flat Rock, Monroe, Lansing and Flint.

A jeep-load of Ann Arborites arrived recently and was having a great time until one of them suffered a cut chin. The injured skateboarder recruited a friend to take him to the hospital. There he received two stitches and quickly rejoined his buddies at the park. Big Bill Kandilian, the man in charge of the park, gave the athlete a free ride as well as a free T-shirt.

"I FIGURED the guy was already a veteran," said Big Bill.

Parents worried their kids will come home looking like skinned tomatoes will be happy to learn the park is supervised by three rangers at peak periods. They control the traffic pattern and flow.

"It's a safety oriented park," says Paul Sinelli, who designed and built the facility along with Big Bill, Thomas Sinelli and James Gravedoni.

"We require that the kids wear helmets, elbow and kneepads. We provide the skateboards, but if a kids wants to use his own, we must first approve its quality," says Sinelli.

Injuries on the runs have been few. "The major injury on a skateboard park is a sprained right wrist. That's really the only way a kid can get hurt," explains Sinelli.

Sinelli and Big Bill feel that skateboarding will develop into a competitive sport and is not just a fanciful fad.

Beginning July 1, tournaments will be conducted on a regular basis at the park. They are open to the public free of charge with trophies awarded to the winners.

Although the owners are not sure exactly how much they have invested up to this point, Sinelli estimates that costs could approach \$100,000.

A couple of reckless runs have also cost Sinelli and Big Bill in the pride department.

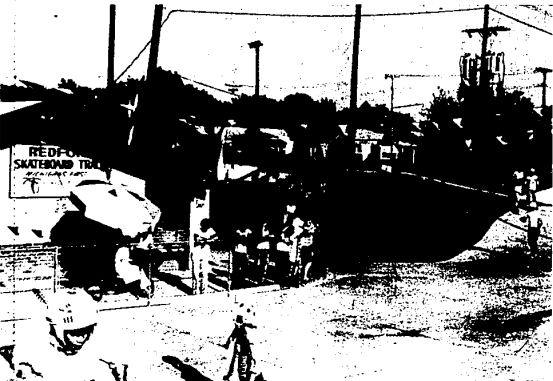
"I wiped out yesterday and my back feels it today," Big Bill admitted.

"It looks worse than it is. For the first five feet I was shaky, but at the end I was impressed with the ride. The younger you are, the better you are at this. You should see some of these kids. They're terrific."

So don't be alarmed the next time you cruise down Beech Daly and see a pair of feet swooshing along. It's probably just skateboarder whizzing by while doing a handstand.



It's double the fun (above) when you double-up two-on-two and challenge one of the high banked curves at the Redford Skateboard Park. Elmer Clark (below) proves that it's easy to be an acrobat on a skateboard. Dick Lovett (far left) laughs off a spill and says he'll do it again—but maybe next time without bouncing off the concrete so hard.



Located on Beech Daly, between Six and Seven Mile at Claude Allison Park in Redford Township, the skateboarding runs offer fun for all ages (above). 'Ooh' is all this young skateboarder (below) had to say after taking an unwelcome fall.



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