

Island entrepreneur puts Generation X on ice

Baldwin man banks on self-made sport, 'Xtreme Ice Skating'

By IRA BRESKIN

Combine the finesse of figure skating with the brute strength of speed skating, add a dash of entrepreneurial gusto, and you get something like Xtreme Ice Skating.

Dan Perceval hopes the new sport — which he created, and even paid to trademark the name — will be the next hot thing. After more than a year of sweat equity and some \$20,000 in cold cash, the 24-year-old Baldwin resident is ready to take his idea to the people, beginning with an eight-week "Xtreme Ice Skating Clinic" at Iceland Skating Rink in New Hyde Park. For \$240, skaters ages 10 to 18 can partake in 45-minute sessions to learn the ropes of a sport that is to skating what ESPN's "X Games" are to skateboarding.

Xtreme skaters attempt aerobic moves designed to make other teens stop and take notice. It's a form of creative self-expression for Generation X, according to Perceval, based not-too-loosely on ESPN's annual rad-o-lympics.

"It's about (individuals) being creative," Perceval said, noting his brainchild combines speed, aggression and control —

and, despite its focus on individual rather than team efforts, an undeniable social aspect. "It's about learning how to move feet and release fears."

Fear plays a definite factor in the burgeoning sport, where moves range from beginner to master. A crowd favorite, according to Perceval, is the "machine gun stop," which requires the skater to complete a prior move and remain motionless before launching into a series of exaggerated, quick stop/starts. To do the "air walk," the skater — already several feet off the ground — mimics a track star clearing a hurdle.

Perceval hopes to start cashing in soon on his efforts and outfit. The first test of his marketing and development effort comes July 7, when he launches the Iceland clinic. He worked diligently to arrange the test, approaching several skeptical rink operators who, he said, declined to lease him valuable ice time.

But Rich Roulston, Iceland's longtime general manager and hockey director, agreed to give Xtreme a spin after Perceval secured supplemental liability insurance through the Heartland Agency Inc. Now, several large, framed posters featuring Perceval demonstrating his patented moves adorn the walls of

Iceland's snack bar and changing area.

"I would like to give the kid a start," Roulston said. "He has a good business sense to him."

Perceval is also marketing Xtreme Ice Skating on a Web site, where he sells t-shirts for \$20 each and seeks recruits for an Xtreme Ice Skating demonstration team.

While Xtreme is "all I think about," the young entrepreneur is also a realist. He's prepared to take a full-time job in information technology and will work during his off hours, if he must, to develop Xtreme.

The experience has been a lot like earning another degree, said Perceval, who graduated in 2005 from Hofstra University, where he majored in business and computer information systems.

"I feel like I have a master's degree already," said Perceval, who has developed prototypes of an artificial ice ramp he hopes to patent. He is also designing a skate with a "grind plate" — a recessed portion of the blade the skater can use to generate friction against an abrasive surface.

But for now, the Baldwin entrepreneur spends most of his time focusing on a more immediate task: recruiting students for his July class.

Ira Breskin is a freelance writer.



ICE, ICE BABY: Baldwin's Dan Perceval is banking on his new sport.