



Ryan Stillwell of Kombat Breakers

gymnastics shared the surface simultaneously (before you ask, a section of the rink was boarded for the gymnasts!) Returning to the subject of *Dancing on Ice*, I was particularly impressed, not by the celebrities but by the winners of the *Ice Star* offshoot, the streetdance skaters from Oxford - the Oxford Freestylers. I have often watched really talented skaters on rink disco or hockey skate sessions and thought that it shouldn't be beyond us to channel these skaters into an entirely new discipline, 'Xtreme Skating'. In fact about three or four years ago, I suggested this idea to the association, which at the time was working with a major PR agency to explore new opportunities. I was later told that of all the ideas, it was this idea that really gelled with the agency. Sadly nothing further came of it.

That is until Jayne and Chris spotted the Oxford Freestylers. Undoubtedly they captured the imagination of the moment, with streetdance ever growing in popularity and most recently reinforced by Diversity, winners of the ITV show *Britain's Got Talent*. In fact Oxford Ice Rink is to be congratulated for its foresight in supporting this new and exciting on-ice version of streetdance.

Searching the internet, it seems that Xtreme Skating has already been developed in New York, USA, by skating coach, Dan Perceval, and his website ([www.xtremeiceskating.com](http://www.xtremeiceskating.com)) is a veritable treasure trove of information and videos. Xtreme Skating would undoubtedly appeal to aspiring hockey and recreational skaters who prefer not to "figure" skate. This form of skating is akin to Xtreme boarding /blading /BMX but performed on ice. As such it

should appeal to street kids culture. Xtreme Skating consists of a whole series of "tricks" with names such as "insanity", "The Cobra" and "Drunken Sailor". In broad terms, these tricks are often just based on figure skating moves such as mohawks, choctaws and split jumps, and really shouldn't be beyond the capability of many of our existing coaches. I also recall that a couple of years ago, Yuri Bureiko, through his International School of Skating, promoted an Extreme Skating experience at the Cannock rink with Toke'n, a streetdancer, as special guest, while the Kombat Breakers streetdance group has guested at other skating events. What is needed is for the association, in collaboration with willing rinks and coaches, to grasp this idea, involve good role model disco skaters, and get a trial programme up and running. With a lot of the groundwork already in place, there is certainly no need to re-invent the wheel. Xtreme skating could really open up new and exciting opportunities, attract a whole new generation of skater to our rinks, and encourage rollerbladers, BMX and boarders to switch to ice for added thrills. Rinks could offer learn to xtreme skate courses, special xtreme skating sessions, perhaps as intervals at public disco sessions, and even develop xtreme skating competitions. Another possibility could be the emergence of other skating teams like the Oxford Freestylers, adding perhaps another dimension to dancing on ice!

Who knows, from these new generation skaters, perhaps we could even channel some of them into our other more traditional disciplines, or speed skating and hockey.



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