



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Status of Skateboarding in South Africa -Fact Sheet

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1. INTRODUCTION

This paper summarises a pro-active research paper findings which followed an explorative research methodological approach focusing on skateboarding as one of the recognised sporting codes in South Africa. The study aimed to gain a broader understanding on the status of skateboarding in South Africa. This paper is fuelled by the fact that skateboarding is an Olympic sport and therefore it could serve as a vehicle towards employment (reduce poverty) and to encourage individuals to participate in physical activity.

2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

To test validity of the objective, an overall guiding question for this study is: What is the status of skateboarding in South Africa as a professional sport?

To justify the depth of data to be collected, literature was explored to identify gaps in terms of the understanding available to demystify the status of skateboarding in South Africa. The understanding gained is that skateboarding is an Olympic sport, but it is not clear if and how many skateboarders are being supported to become professional skateboarders in terms of representing South Africa during the Olympics

Considering this gap, data was collected through questionnaires from the Executive Committee of the RSSA and a renowned skatepark designer who is also a skatepark owner in Cape Town. This was to explore attitudes, personal experiences, opinions, or preferences and emotional drivers. Through these interactions, the following findings emerged:

- Skateboarding in South Africa has been impacted by the inclusion as a sporting code in the Olympics. The main impact involves male and female representatives who qualified to represent South Africa during the 2024 Olympics.
- In the skating community, the inclusion of skateboarding as an Olympic sport is not always perceived positive. This seems to be due to the financial demands placed on an individual to complete all the qualifying requirements. This created the perception that an Olympian in terms of skateboarding in South Africa, is not the most skilled skateboarder, but the skateboarder who is able to fund themselves to meet the requirements attached to qualifying for the Olympics.
- Skateboarding as a sporting code is governed by by Roller Sports South Africa (RSSA), consisting of individuals who volunteer their time and skills with no monetary rewards. There seem to be governance related challenges in the skating community in terms of best practices:
 - One argument is that skateboarding is an individual sport, not a team sport, and it needs a federation specific to skateboarding only operated by skateboarders.
 - The reality is skateboarding is classified as a roller sport and therefore falls under the RSSA.
- A key challenge emerging is that skateboarding has been added as a sport falling under the RSSA, but additional funding has not followed suit. Overall, skateboarding

is an Olympic sport, but this did not necessarily mean that skateboarding receives additional funding.

- Although events and skateparks are present in the skateboarding scene, such events and skateparks are not necessarily at Olympic or World standard.
- It seems that the skateboarding scene in South Africa is more focused on beginners and amateurs, with little space and opportunities to become professional.
 - Implying professional means, one is being paid a living wage to compete and ride a skateboard.
- Overall, it does not seem that South Africa has any professional skateboarders in the previous mentioned context (being paid a living wage to compete and ride a skateboard).
- This does not mean that South Africa does not have individuals who are highly skilled at skateboarding.
 - The challenge could be that great talent is most likely forced to pursue alternative sporting codes or career paths once the demand of life no longer allows an individual to dedicate their time and energy to perfecting their skateboarding skills.
- It is unclear whether an Olympic medal in skateboarding is achievable within the current context of support and funding available to skateboarding in South Africa.

Concerning the status of skateboarding in South Africa, the following individuals emerged either from the data, literature or observations as having an impact on the status of skateboarding in South Africa:

- The Skateboarding Team South Africa at Paris 2024 included the following three (3) individuals:
 - Men: Dallas Oberholzer (park) and Brandon Valjalo (street)
 - Women: Boipelo Awuah (street)
 - Manager/coach: Wendy Gila
- The Executive Committee of RSSA is as follows:
 - President: Wendy Gila
 - Vice President: Tumelo Moteme
 - Secretary: Desiree Nel
 - Financial Sub Committee (Acting): Shaun Van Biljon
 - Members: Clementia Modikwe, Andrea Stallbom, Jock Coimbra, Kanya Meken
 - Skaters Representative: Keamogetswe Masango
- Girls Skate South Africa was founded in 2015 by:
 - Sharne Jacobs
- Girls Skate Durban founder in 2018:
 - Bexx Sneddon
- Founder of the Mamelodi skate club:
 - Poelo Mofolo
- Metritech skateparks & The Shred Skatepark:

- Marc Baker
- Skateboarding event management company 'World Skateboarding Grand Prix'.
 - Tim McFerran
- The Skate School born from a collaboration between the Brussels based company 'THE SKATEROOM' and the German NGO 'Skateistan'.
 - Kay Mahonde-Chaterera, Director of the Center
- South Africa's Highest Achieving International Medalist.
 - Jean-marc Johannes
- Ziyaad's Skate School started in 2019:
 - Ziyaad

3. CLOSING REMARKS

The status of skateboarding in South Africa remains at an amateur sport level in terms of support and funding provided, with almost no opportunities to pursue a career as a professional skateboarder in terms of earning a living wage. Skateboarding in South Africa can be perceived to hold the status of a hobby, 'an activity that someone enjoys and engages in during their leisure time, often as a pastime or a way to relax'¹.

As a closing recommendation, it is urged for Parliament to engage with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) in terms of specific projects and funding made available focusing on developing and growing skateboarding as it is an Olympic sporting code. It is further recommended, to include during the same engagement with the DSAC, a presentation from Roller Sports South Africa (RSSA) focusing on its business plan linked to skateboarding in South Africa.

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