

Donnie Kim

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Cody Cochlin Memorial Scholarship

Unlike the many famous sponsored or professional skateboarders such as Konosuke Yamashita or “PRod,” I started riding in my four wheels starting the rise of covid-19. People ask me what my activities were during that time of quarantine and social distancing, and all I can remember was the concrete ground and how much it has built me into the person I am today.

Before the busy schedule of applying for schools and finding a part-time job, covid gave me the opportunity to put my full focus on skateboarding, utilizing around a year and a half to improve my tricks and steez for the camera and my own self improvement. I remember the first few months of grueling joint pain and frustration over a simple ollie. I additionally filled my time with riding comfortably on all sorts of ground, whether it be the park’s designated ledge for skaters, the broken floor filled with potholes and cracks, or the steepest hills pushing my wheels to its limit. As time passed, my eyes were opened to skateboarding media, where I gained inspiration from Luis Mora and his style of certain tricks, while also challenging those around me through a game of SKATE, creating friends and community throughout Los Angeles’ vast parks. I gained and I gained, though not heavily stylish, but I gained. It was then that I noticed I needed more than just flat ground.

I would pitch the idea of going around the neighborhood or even farther out just to find new spots and learn them. I conquered the 2 stairs near our park, the three at a shut-down school, and

the list goes on. I created this video in order to show how much dedication I put into that time, and how I would love to go back and face my fears once again.

Failure was not an option in this scale of improvement, but I've learned that this applies in every aspect of ambition and aspiration. I learned to fall correctly to sustain injuries, and I noticed that the more you fall, the more you improve on getting back up. Skateboarding has provided me with a community of all ages, genders, races, and status, but it has also been my master in discipline and hard work in my life.