

The Skating Life

SMB Bearing Offers Unique Solutions for NorthwoodsFB

There's skateboarding and then there's SKATEBOARDING. The difference simply comes down to passion and desire. Some skaters attempt the occasional trick on a park bench, half-pipe or empty swimming pool. SKATERS eat, drink and sleep skateboarding. When they're not skating, they're working out in their heads what they need to do to expand and promote their sport. How else could you explain the phenomenon known as fingerboarding?

"Fingerboards are small skateboards one can ride using their index and middle finger as legs and feet. Every trick that can be done on a skateboard can also be performed on a fingerboard," said Jared Hadden, owner and operator of NorthwoodsFB. "Fingerboarding is perfect for rainy days, challenging yourself, sharpening your focus, developing muscle memory and improving hand-eye coordination. What is often misunderstood as a toy is really a tool for precision art-of-movement and by all definitions—a sport." Hadden first became involved in fingerboarding around 1986, when he and his brother started making small skateboards out of index cards.



"Taping a graphic torn from a *Thrasher* ad (*Ed.'s Note: for those of a certain age, a popular skateboarding magazine*), wheels and a thin metal axle from Hot Wheels brought countless hours of joy. Shortly after this time the clear plastic skateboard key chain was introduced followed by the household name TechDeck (www.techdeck.com) a few years after that." 20 years and 200+ TechDeck's later, Hadden had the desire to solve all the problems he had ever encountered in the design of fingerboards. His basic intention was to design fingerboarding equipment that met his own lofty expectations for the sport. Thus, NorthwoodsFB was born (www.northwoodsfb.com).

"This serious approach is what I felt was lacking in the products out at that time. I wanted to take it further by considering the needs of the fingers, not the feet and solve the long running problems I had with the gear that was available," Hadden said.

Gear that included reworking the trucks, wheels and bearings to make them more like their full-size skateboard counterparts. "I demanded a strong, smooth rolling wheel and bearing that can take repeated impacts," Hadden said. During his research to design a better fingerboard, he contacted SMB Bearings (www.smbbearings.com), a U.K. bearing specialist known for unique miniature applications.

"We like to support our customers where we can, sponsoring them with bearings and publicity for their hobbies, passions and pastimes," says Emma Hoskisson, sales and marketing administrator at SMB. "These bearings are often used in bespoke, high-end applications, limited only by the customers' imagination."

It was no surprise that Hadden's imagination—and a knack for using *Solidworks*—helped create a new concept for fingerboards. "I designed a dual-bearing wheel that prevents wheel damage from trucks and disperses the side impact from the center to a much larger area of the wheel."

The results of Hadden's design, coupled with SMB's micro bearings, have produced a wheel that will take tremendous abuse and still perform perfectly every time. With the right deck and equipment in hand, Hadden can now concentrate on promoting his sport through learning workshops, dedicated events or just teaching kids how to ride.

"My main mission is to grow the sport of fingerboarding by giving it the respect and consideration it deserves. I personally owe my best efforts to fingerboarding for all the pure and private joy it has brought me throughout my life." **PTE**



Jared Hadden performs an ollie nose-grind, nollie-flip out using his fingerboard (courtesy of NorthwoodsFB).