

## Collegiate Skate Tour - Astoria, Queens 2017 Recap

October 27, 2017 | By Daniel Fedkenheuer

PHOTOS: AMY TORRES

In my previous ventures out to cover some of the events that the Collegiate Skate Tour puts on, I have been lucky to cover them from ground level to get up close and personal to the shredding. This time however, sidelined by injury, I was fortunate enough to have watched this contest go down from a completely different vantage point: behind the judge's table. Alongside a couple Astoria locals, we got to experience this stop of the tour from a unparalleled point of view that overlooked the sprawling water-side park. From this spot, we got the experience of watching guys like Helaman "Hela" Campos go from signing up, to throwing crook nollie flips and absolutely ripping the course to retuning back to the podium to collect their hook ups.



In my first experience judging a skateboarding contest, I might argue to say I had the toughest job out there in trying to make sure my papers would not fly away with the intense wind that descended on the course that day. Just kidding. All credit on this day goes to the student and non-student crops of skaters that came out and threw down regardless of the blustery conditions.



This year's stop of the Collegiate Skate Tour saw a bunch of new faces, along with a handful of familiar rippers who braved the rainy conditions last year. Bryant HS student, Brian Pascuaal seemed to use the wind to his advantage, flying around the course in his iconic durag. Meanwhile, internet-famous Humzea Deas showed up pulling clean front tailslide 270s to the tune of his name being called for the start of Heat 3. DC rider Derek Holmes also returned this year, making easy work of throwing back tailslides off the park's shootout ledge.

Lastly, coming back for more after his first place run last year, Andrew Valencia showed how familiar he was with the Astoria park by linking effortless lines together left and right. Perhaps most notably, Valencia even managed to hop to another board that got in his way, mid-grind. As if that weren't enough, Valencia finished by shutting down the the best trick contest with a massive ghetto bird on the centerpiece gap.



In the end, however, Heat 5's Nico Ramos stepped up and put down an amazing set of runs to not only advance from his heat but to make it through to the semifinal and final heats. From what we saw behind the judge's table, we had to give the win in the non-student division to him. From his blunt backside flips to his kickflip 50-50 body varials to his back 360 grabs off the platform gap, Ramos' tech showing had it all.

Unfortunately, the only hiccup on an otherwise easygoing contest was Joel Jones' unfortunate injury in the middle of Heat 4. After an absent-minded bicyclist wandered onto the course, Jones hit the concrete and was rushed to the hospital to receive a handful of staples in his head.



Though the contest resumed to close out an incredible afternoon of skateboarding, we would be remiss not to have kept Joel, who has come out to each and every stop of the tour since Fall 2013, in our thoughts. Since the event, a GoFundMe has been started to help cover some of the unexpected ambulance and hospital costs for Joel and his young family.



We welcome and encourage any donations to be made [here](#).



After Saturday's event wrapped up, Keegan Guizard led another installment of a College Readiness Workshop with the folks at the Harold Hunter Foundation which was actually the first to take place during the same week as the contest.



Speaking on the experience, Guizard said, "The Harold Hunter Foundation is always helpful in making that happen and really brings the skateboarding community together for good. This workshop was a great opportunity to connect with young New York City skateboarders off the board after a great event in Queens."

Check out the action that went down here:



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