



## Adaptive sports star of motocross event in Irving



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It's not all that often that wheelchair sports take top billing over their more traditional counterparts.

But wheelchair motocross will be the main attraction Friday and Saturday in Irving at an event that will also feature skateboarding and bicycle motocross.

Top athletes in all three sports will ride in the Baylor Institute for Rehabilitation WCMX No Excuses Throwdown.

"Adaptive sports are usually second fiddle at events," said Paul Gray of Irving. "This is to show we're first and can do just as much."

Gray is the founder of RISE Adaptive Sports, a nonprofit that helps individuals with physical challenges and is one of the Throwdown's main presenters.

"The goal is to show we are all equal," said Gray, who has hosted smaller skate events in the past but wanted to expand the event this year.

The two-day competition will feature Aaron "Wheelz" Fotheringham, a passionate WCMX rider whom many consider the world's best. Fotheringham, who gained fame for performing a wheelchair back flip, travels the world mentoring children and competing.

Christiaan "Otter" Bailey, another pioneer in the sport, will also attend. He recently returned from tours and clinics in Australia and New Zealand.

Along with the high-flying action, there will be an adaptive skate wheelchair clinic. Children and adults can learn from pros during the three-hour clinic Saturday. The clinic is free, but space is limited.

Two-year-old Abel "Fearless" Rose of Waxahachie was born with spina bifida and has been wheeling himself in his wheelchair since he was 9 months old. Last year, he came to RISE's skate event and took his first ramps at 18 months old. Abel, who travels for motocross competitions, will be at the No Excuses Throwdown.

"RISE is like family," said Abel's mom, Heather Rose. "There is just nothing like them."

Chris Goad RISE's executive director, said many beginners will be at the Throwdown clinic.

"You will be astonished by the wonderful spirit, determination, sheer guts and zest for life of these young participants ranging from 2 years old and up," he said.

Victor Nelson, manager of Alliance Skate Park of Grand Prairie, said the Throwdown will offer a unique competition experience.

"The idea of this event is very exciting," he said. "Texas has never seen a live event combining Skate, BMX and WCMX in one arena."

All three groups will compete for cash prizes. About 20 video screens will capture the action, and a professional ramp course has been installed.

Skateboarders Collin Graham and Clive Dixon are scheduled to participate. BMX riders include Joseph Frans, Matty Aquizap, Cory Foust, Tom Smith and Devin Fredlund.

**IF YOU GO**

**What:** WCMX No Excuses Throwdown

**When:** 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday; skate clinic is 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** Irving Convention Center, 500 W. Las Colinas Blvd.

**Cost:** \$10

**Website:** [riseadaptivesports.org/wcmx](http://riseadaptivesports.org/wcmx)

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