

DISPATCHES

11.15

Photograph by DAVE LAURIDSEN

Prince of the Pop Shove-It

INTRODUCING FOX RIO, THE 42-POUND FUTURE OF SKATEBOARDING

by Brett Smith

IN APRIL 2014, four-year-old Fox Rio was waiting for his dad, Jamie Brunner, to get fitted for a snowboard at a local sporting-goods store when he saw a skateboard and started riding it through the aisles. Though Fox had never been on a skateboard before, he took to it immediately, and Jamie bought one for his son. The next day he and his wife, Meagan, awoke at 5 A.M. to a strange noise in their Issaquah, Washington, driveway—Fox was attempting his first ollie. Since then he has proven himself the most talented six-year-old in the sport: at four he could land a 180 off a 30-inch ledge; at five he was stomping out kick-flips, 360 flips, and boardslides; these days he's working on 540s. (Watch his progress on his

parent-managed Instagram feed: @fox_rio.) In August 2014, Fox began riding competitively. He says that when he arrives at skate contests, where the youngest competition category is often ten and under, older kids are skeptical of his abilities. To prove that he belongs, he makes a statement immediately. "I find the biggest rail in the park and I hit it," he says. Fox's goal is to compete at the X Games when he's eight. In June, he got a taste of the experience when he took part in a precontest demo at X Games Austin, in Texas, that also featured Tony Hawk. When Brunner ran up to Hawk after a run, Jamie thought his son was going to high-five the skating legend. Instead he asked, "Can you tie my shoe?"



Rio ripping in Encinitas, California, in August