



'I can't wait to come back'

Bruised but unbowed Brown appears at X Games

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LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Skateboarder Jake Brown made an appearance at the X Games Saturday night, two days after a towering drop that made TV and Web video watchers gasp and left him with a bruised lung and liver and a pair of broken bones.

Fresh from the hospital and walking with a cane, Brown appeared briefly between motorcycle races at the Home Depot Center.

"I'm doing great, I'm still walking, that's more than I can ask for," Brown told the crowd. "I can't wait to come back."

Brown and ESPN's Sal Masekela laughed as the video of Brown's fall played on the stadium's big screen, drawing fresh cringes from the crowd.

Brown had pulled off an improbable 720 over the mega ramp's 70-foot gap on Thursday night, but plunged about 40 feet to the ramp's base during his second trick. The impact knocked off his shoes.

He was released from the hospital earlier Saturday after being treated for a broken wrist and a fractured vertebra, his manager said.

Bob Burnquist, who won gold in the event and has one of the behemoth Big Air ramps in his back yard, said Brown may not have been as out-of-control as he looked when he headed face-first toward the floor then flipped over as though he was lying down.

"It was a mix of skill, of knowing how to fall, of knowing just to relax instead of trying to stiffen up, and luck," Burnquist said. "He knows he shouldn't try to stand it up, because he's going to break himself, so what he did was the best he could've done and I probably would have done the same thing, just to try to lay down."

On the smaller vert ramp, skaters try to get a foot down or go to their kneepads when they fall, but that can mean snapped limbs on the Big Air ramp.

So they take a technique from skydivers and attempt instead to go to their side and roll when they hit the ground.

"In parachuting you've got the P.L.F., the parachute landing fall," Burnquist said. "You kind of want to do that a little bit."

Skateboarders have long referred to falling after a broken-down trick as "bailing," suggesting an act of will rather than an accident.

Burnquist said that however lucky Brown was to have avoided paralysis or life-threatening injury, he might be second-guessing his technique.

"Now in retrospect, he's probably thinking he could have fallen even better," Burnquist said.

G.O.A.T. Gold

It seems Ricky Carmichael and the X Games are a good fit.

The motocross giant, nicknamed G.O.A.T. for the "greatest of all time," dominated the new Moto X Racing on Saturday night.

He took the lead on the first turn and wasn't challenged in the slightest as he rode to gold in his first X Games appearance.

"The first one is always the sweetest," said Carmichael, who has won 10 AMA motocross championships.

He even threw in some freestyle flair in the final lap, doing tricks over jumps and drawing delighted yells from the crowd.

He insisted afterward that he had worked hard during the race.

"It might have looked easy to you guys but it wasn't," he said. "My starts have been atrocious all year ... I had to make good laps."

Carmichael helped organizers design the smaller, leaner motocross event for the X Games, which have been known among motor enthusiasts as a place for flash and flips rather than racing.

Grant Langston was a distant second for the silver and Kevin Windham won Bronze.

Travis Pastrana, last year's triple gold medalist known as a freestyle rider and famous for his X Games double back flip, did not qualify for the final. He'll have one more shot at gold in Sunday's Rally Car Racing.

Bestwick's Best

Jamie Bestwick of Cornwall, England, won his fourth gold medal as expected in BMX Vert, using every bit of the halfpipe and stringing together tricks in an astounding first run that judges scored a 93.66. Bestwick had clinched gold by the time of his second run, and got to treat it as a victory lap.

Widely considered the best BMX vert rider of all time, Bestwick also won gold in 2003, 2004 and 2005. He took silver last year.

Simon Tabron was second and Kevin Robinson, who won the BMX Big Air competition Friday night, earned the bronze.

Last year's winner Chad Kagy was injured on the Big Air ramp earlier in the week and sat out the competition.

Dhers Flips And Whips

Venezuelan Daniel Dhers won the BMX Freestyle Park on Saturday. The 22-year-old Dhers, who came to the United States to train in 2003, used a 360 flip with a tail whip to wow judges and earn a score of 91.66 for his first X Games gold.

"I started watching the X Games in '98," said Dhers, who made his second appearance at the games after winning bronze last year. "It was always a dream just to come here."

He beat defending champion Scotty Cranmer and Dave Mirra, the winningest athlete in X Games history.

"Today was Danny's day," Mirra said. "Danny filled more tricks in his 60 seconds than any of us out here. He totally deserved to win."

Burkhart's Revenge

Mark Burkhart passed 46-year-old defending champion Jeff Ward -- who had led for more than 30 of 35 laps -- to win the Moto X Super Moto in a reversal of last year's finish.

In 2006, Ward passed Burkhart after 18 laps to win the gold in the first X Games appearance for Ward, a member of the Motorcycle Hall of Fame.

The event combines dirt, jumps and pavement.

"I've been racing patient, trying not to throw away the race at the beginning," said Burkhart, a 27-year-old rider from Pataskala, Ohio, who sat second for most of the race. "Those last 15 minutes are always a killer."