

Wakeboard wizard

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 27 July 2012 13:48 -



Bowe Oliver takes childhood sport to new heights

Whirlybirds.

Scarecrows.

Tantrums.

And finally a Moby Dick.

Bowe Oliver pumps his fist in the air after landing his first Moby Dick, a difficult wakeboarding feat where he launches into a back flip over both wakes and spins 360 degrees before a perfect touchdown.

It's a sultry Wednesday evening at Jeffrey Lake and Bowe and his wakeboard are on fire as he lands trick after trick.

Already this summer, Bowe has won the expert wakeboarding division at two competitions—one in Garnett, KS, and the other in Ulman, MO.

That's a feat in itself considering that many wakeboarders train year-round in states like Florida and California.

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These days, Bowe's honing his flips, twists and spins for the "Picnic," on Saturday in Fremont.

"It's one of the biggest I've been to," he said.



Bowe hopes to score enough points to qualify for nationals in West Chester, OH, and plans to compete at a central state tourney in Garnett and central regionals in Amity, AK.

During competitions, wakeboarders are pulled by the same boat for the same distance up and down the lake where they perform 10 tricks.

Four judges watch from the boat and score on technique, height and style.

Only two falls, during a run, are allowed but points are deducted.

Before taking off on his wakeboard, Bowe guzzles an energy drink, tries to quiet his nerves and rehearses his tricks over and over again in his mind.

He entered his first wake-boarding competition during the summer of 2007. In the last couple of years, he's worked harder on more technical tricks and is looking for people and businesses to sponsor him as he considers entering the professional arena.

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The 2008 Gothenburg High graduate, strapped on his first wakeboard at age 9 at Jeffrey Lake. Jeffrey was where he landed his first flip at age 15.

Bowe credits his dad, Darin, for getting the whole family hooked on wakeboarding—his mother, Kathy, and two sisters.

Darin speculates that the Olivers were the first to try the sport at Jeffrey Lake where they now live.

A self-taught wakeboarding trickster, Bowe practices new moves on a trampoline and watches wakeboarding videos.

“Then I practice over and over again,” he said.

His favorite trick so far is the whirlybird, a back flip with a 360-degree spin.

“It’s fun to spin around.”

Spending that much time in the air can have its drawbacks.

Once Bowe knocked himself out while doing a trick. He hit his head on a knee.

Another time, he was high above the wake and landed on his stomach. Hard.

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“I lost my breath for awhile.”



Finally last summer, Bowe hyper extended a knee and didn't compete at all.

The junior in business administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln works for his dad during the summer as a network system administrator for Oliver Consulting Services, Inc.—a home-based business Darin started in Denver before moving back to his hometown in 2007.

During off-work and school hours, usually May through September, Bowe is in the air behind the Oliver boat, working on his moves.

“It's fun,” he said with a grin. “It's fun to show off and I love landing new tricks.”

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