

ALTERNATIVE SPORTS FEATURE

Area man popularizes street bike freestyle



The sports arena continues to expand by offering variations to already popularized sports.

One expansive genre is racing—a current modern twist to motocross is street bike freestyle.

This unique style focuses on risky stunts performed by a growing number of experienced riders.

Twenty-five-year-old Andy Niles of Columbus, Ohio has possessed a competitive edge since he first got on a bike at the age of 10.

“Street bike stunt riding started out just being something I did as a hobby, and now it has grown to almost like an obsession,” said Niles.

With support of his parents, Niles began racing motocross when he was 12 years old. Niles said, “most kids played baseball, I raced bikes. I loved it, so no complaints here.”

In 2002, at the age of 19, Niles began riding street bikes for over a year and he felt a need to compete, so he practiced in a parking lot with one of his buddy’s four to five days a week.

Gaining mass amounts of experience, Niles told us he is now

considered to be “an O.G. in the growing sport” of street bike freestyle.

Some stunts Niles has achieved include: circle wheelies and combos, figure eight wheelies, stoppies at 450 feet, coasters around 2,000 feet, seat stander coasters, podium coasters, stoppie 180, switch backs, curb hopping, stalls to tank, tank wheelie circles, and numerous more.

Along with this list of accomplishments, Niles performs with a group of five others on bike nights and bike rallies.

Last summer the group had iron pony bike nights on Fridays and Columbus motosports bike nights every Saturday.

In the past they have also been part of monster truck shows and drag races.

Niles hopes street bike freestyle will soon achieve its deserved recognition.

“I’d like to see this sport go mainstream and one day see it in the X Games,” said Niles.

Between all this, Niles works as a carpenter, spends time with

parents and friends, snowboards, goes dirt bike riding occasionally, and he’s always down for partying.

Niles takes his tricks and competes all over the United States.

This year Niles will be traveling to Europe to compete in the world stunt bike championships.

Niles said, “my goal is to stay healthy and one day be a world champion.”

— Written By Neil Shumate

— Photos Courtesy Heidi Beeres

