

Don't you dare call me a soccer mom



Natalie Campisi

Hundreds of adolescent boys and their guardians descended upon the St. Pete Times Forum recently for the much hyped answer to the X-Games off-season: Tony Hawk's Boom Boom Huck Jam.

As I trekked to the forum from the cheaper-than-\$20-parking Channelside garage, accompanied by my 9-year old, I was hit by a dizzying remark: "You're a soccer mom."

Miles uttered these words so flippantly — not once removing his eyes from the Gameboy he gripped — that he might as well have said: Watch out for that broken bearing.

No matter how cool I think I am — exposing him to Bowie, the Beatles, the Misfits and other required listening when he was just a wee lad or letting him skip school so we could ride the subways of D.C. and draw people — to Miles I'm a pretty uncool mom. Soccer mom, that is. My brained reeled.

First, I grew up around skateboarders, as well as the advent of "alternative" everything. And, most importantly, I'm younger than the Huck Jam's namesake.

And if anyone would've told my friends a decade ago that people would be paying between \$25 and \$85 to watch skateboarders and BMX riders, they would've laughed and then probably made fun of your hair.

I grew up in the '90s when skateboarding was just making a comeback. Tony Hawk was certainly a hero back then, but there was nothing like X Games or video games, for that matter, glorifying a sport that mainly took place on the steps of libraries, abandoned pools and anywhere else that provided enough of a challenge to ensure some kind of

impressive scarring.

I can't count how many Saturdays I spent piled into a car with a bunch of sweaty 16-year-olds, headed to an empty garage in South Tampa (Stress House, anyone?) or the downtown bowl to hold someone's mom's camcorder while people from all over town skated.

Half of my friends have spent a few hours in jail for committing the crime of skateboarding and a few of them even moved to California in pursuit of the all-golden sponsorship. But there was never anything like a Huck Jam.

So sitting in that mega-auditorium with lights dancing and a pretty impressive layout spread before me, I couldn't help but shake my head and think about the huge gap between my experiences and Miles' soon-to-be experiences. I wondered if his generation would find a way to make their own culture without it being co-opted by MTV or Fuel TV or Nintendo.

And just when I felt pretty sure that skateboarding as I knew it was dead, Tony Hawk and his crew skated down a 40-foot ramp, jumped over a 75-foot gap and came up on a 20-foot quarter pipe. What else can you say, but *Whoa!* I felt the smile on my face.

This was clearly a new generation of skating. It was totally sweet, however, to see an old geezer leading the pack. So Miles did get it wrong, I realized after the show was over and we tramped back to the car amid kids who were stoked to see their hero in person.

I'm no soccer mom. But a skater mom? Most definitely. — Natalie Campisi