

...make a movie

WARREN SMITH FROM RIDE FREESPORTS LETS US IN ON THE SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL MOVIE-MAKING



Above left: Warren checks the angles; Main picture: Taking to the skies in NZ

Ever since the introduction of the DV format video cameras in the late 90's loads of people have got into making their own movies. You can do it these days on a pretty low budget. I got my first Sony VX1000 DV camera in 1996. Since then we've made 9 movies and 17 Ride Freesport TV programmes. All of these have been done on DV cameras and the budget has been affordable. If you're heading out to the Alps this season with the idea of making your own production on skiing or snowboarding these six tips might come in handy.

Equipment

If you're going to invest in kit you need to look out for a DV camera. If you have the budget get a HDV or any of the high definition cameras. You could spend anything here from £500 to £5000. Once you've got your camera get plenty of DV Tapes. I get mine from www.picstop.co.uk. Works out about £2 a tape. You need some headphones to check your sound and if you have the budget a plug in directional mike. Make sure you pick up a tripod. If you have the budget get a Manfrotto 503. That is enough to get you started for the shoot.

Location

Location for your shoot is important. Ideally you want to find a resort is in the sun for a large amount of the day i.e. a south, south-east or south-west facing resort. If you end up in a north facing resort you might not get sun in many of your shots. Try to find a resort with a good snowpark and lots of freeriding terrain. If these areas are included it will be great for time lapses and also great for action.

Riders

Probably the most important aspect of your film will be the rider you choose or beg to star in it. Try and find a resort where lots of the key riders hang out. Once you get there, hook up with riders and explain the plan for your film. You need to be able to show an athlete that they can get some good exposure from riding in your film, if you can't show that you will normally need to pay a rider. Either that or get a drinks budget!

Filming

For filming try to make sure you check over the following points:

1. Batteries are charged fully the night before.
2. You have a lens cloth or tissue to wipe the camera dry if it gets sprayed.
3. You set your white balance on a sheet of white paper.
4. You know how to hold your camera the best way to avoid a shaky image.
5. You know how to manually adjust exposure (F stop) on the camera in case you are shooting into sun.
6. Try to keep the subject in the frame the whole time you are tracking their trick or line, it's nice to allow your athletes to ride out of shot towards the end of their run or after they have landed their trick.
7. Run time lapses in real time for about 30 minutes and speed them up in your editing program, this way for video is much smoother. You can shoot a couple of frames a minute but it's never smooth.
8. Check sound levels are not peaking on a regular basis, especially on interviews. Try and use headphones on all interviews.

Editing

If you have a PC get a copy of Adobe Premiere CS3, if you're on a Mac its Final Cut Pro 6. Both of these programs are great and easy to learn. As long as you have a manual it's easy.

For editing your movie, take time to go through all your tapes and log the footage you want. Name each clip so it's easy to remember. Always try to store all your footage on an external hard drive, not the one on the computer. It runs faster if it's on an external drive. Try to give your movie a story, start, middle and end. Also, don't let it run on too long. Anything over 40 minutes on a ski or board flick can get repetitive. If you have the luxury of time, when you finish your movie, leave it for two weeks then go back and watch it again. It's amazing how you want to tweak things and change a few points. Every time I've ever done that I always want to make the movie shorter.

Launching

When you launch your movie try to make a good promotion for it – whether it's in your local resort bar or in Leicester Square. It's nice to get a big crowd at a premiere to enjoy it!

GET YOUR MOVIE ON THE BIG SCREEN

In October 2008, Ride Freesport will once again be running the Freeski Film Festival in Leicester Square, London. If you make a movie this winter it could be judged by a panel of six experts from the BBC, IMAX films, Channel 4 as well as pro riders themselves. May 2008 is a good time to contact Ride Freesport to submit your film. You can do this by emailing filmfestival@ridefreesport.com with Festival 2008 in the subject heading.

If you want to be a part of it check out the 2007 event at the following link: tinylink.com/?dJGWDZAKco.

