

MADE FOR SKATE

SHOE REVIEW



NEW FRONTIERS THE GRAVIS DYLAN SLIP-ON

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Dylan Rieder polarizes opinion. The Alien Workshop pro is either loved as a stylish, handsome and unique individual or hated as a fashion-focused hipster. To be honest, it doesn't even matter, as soon as Dylan steps on a board one thing is certain: he's currently one of the best skateboarders in the world, which he impressively reminded us all in his recent Gravis video part. What he wears during skating gets pushed to the background. After sponsorship deals with Osiris, Nike SB and Vans, Dylan seems to finally have found his place at Gravis, which allows him creative freedom and is open minded towards his ideas and sense of style, and isn't afraid to believe in his designs.

As polarizing as the man himself, his first pro model, the Dylan Low - as you can see in his recent video part - was basically a skateable leather slipper, which, at a first glance, looked like it would be more at home in an office than on a skateboard. Since late 2010, his signature collection has been expanded with the Dylan Slip On, which is based on the slipper version but features a vulcanized sole. This review should show whether it is more or less a fashion sneaker, that only Mr Rieder himself is able to skate in, or a serious, performance-based skate shoe.

DURABILITY

The most obvious advantage regarding durability of a slip-on model, such as the Dylan, is the lack of laces, which makes bringing along extra laces or knotting together worn-through lace sections a thing of the past. Another benefit of the Dylan Slip On is a large, single-piece toebox that expands along the sides of the shoe towards the heel area. This minimizes the points of attack where a tear-apart process could start. All in all, the minimalist design of the shoe's upper, which features just 4 individual parts, is the main reason for the shoes good durability, especially if you consider how thin and focused on boardfeel the construction is. Another advantage, compared with many other models, is that the double stitching that connects the toebox piece with the heel is placed relatively far from the edge. This causes the overlaying suede to turn upwards slightly - enough to protect the sensitive stitching against griptape wear, therefore extending the lifespan of the whole upper by keeping it from coming apart.

The sidewall of the sole is not as high as on most other vulcanised models available, and this reduces the durability. However, it wouldn't fit with such a low-profile, thin model to feature a thicker, and thereby bulkier, sole. Another positive feature in terms of durability is the depth of the sole pattern, which is deeper than average for a shoe with this type of sole. This ensures that the Dylan Slip on is able to offer great grip during its whole lifespan and flat areas aren't worn down.



SIZING

The Gravis Dylan Slip On runs true to size, but features a narrow cut, so people with wider feet should choose half a size bigger than usual. Due to the slip-on design, it's even more important to be able to try them on before you buy them.

CUSHION

As you can see in the lateral cut, the Dylan Slip On features a very thin sole construction. It is only slightly thicker than the depth of the profile, so offers minimal cushioning. However, the typical Gravis insole, which is thicker than most other insoles on the market, here made out of blue foam, is able to balance out this disadvantage. Despite this, based on its limited cushioning abilities, this model is more suited for low-impact skating, and is hence comparable with shoes such as the Cons CTS or Nike SB Janoski.

BREATHABILITY

Unfortunately, the Dylan Slip On doesn't offer any ventilation holes or mesh panels. Because of the thin construction, though, the shoe isn't as insulating as more cushioned models, so it is easier and faster for heat to transfer to the outside. This makes the Dylan comfortable to wear even during the summer months.

BOARDFEEL

Due to the thinness of the sole construction, especially towards the toe, which is the key area for great boardfeel, the Dylan Slip On features an as-direct-as-possible connection between foot and board. The sole is as thin as it could be without having a major impact on the comfort, stability and protection of the shoe, which makes it the ideal model for skaters who look for shoes with outstanding boardfeel. The flexible sole adapts perfectly to the concave of the deck, allowing the contact area between board and the shoe to be as large as possible, which contributes further to the boardfeel.

GRIP

The Dylan Slip On's sole, as with all vulcanized Gravis models, features a classic herringbone pattern. Due to the slightly thinner and finer structure that is, as already mentioned, also quite deep, the sole offers both great grip and durability. The grip doesn't last for just a few sessions, before deteriorating rapidly, but remains good, as if it was right out of the box, for a relatively long time. Even close to the end of the shoe's lifespan, no completely flat areas had developed.

COMFORT

As typical for most thin, vulcanized skate shoes, it is not necessary to wear the Dylan Slip On in, it is basically ready to skate right out of the box. The model is very comfortable to wear and skate in, with the lack of cushioning material in the heel area not making much of a negative impact. The whole inner lining features clean, solid craftsmanship. Apart for the flat elastic straps that attach the tongue to the sidewalls, effectively replacing the laces, there aren't any overlapping panels inside the shoe, which prevents hot spots and reduces the chance of blisters. In the area of the Achilles' tendon, the heel edge of one of the shoes tested did come apart slightly, though, causing friction and a pressure point. Because of the thinness of the sole construction, protection and support is not great, so the feet get exhausted noticeably faster than with models with thicker soles. However, this only happens after several hours of skating. The ergonomically shaped insole is another positive feature. It has a wedge on the side, facing inwards, which supports the middle-foot area and prevents it from being pressed flat during harsh landings. This enhances the comfort a great deal - comparable models often don't have this feature.

STABILITY AND SUPPORT

One problem that is unique to this model is that, due to the lack of laces, it is not possible to adjust the width and lace it tighter once the suede upper begins to stretch. This makes it even more important to make sure you get exactly the right size. If bought too big, the shoe might not fit tight enough to provide sufficient heel lock.



The shoe's outstanding boardfeel, and the thin sole construction, is, of course, linked to the stability and support it can offer. It is, as with the cushioning features, comparable with the previously mentioned CTS or Janoski. The small support element in the heel is relatively bendable and the sidewalls, due to their limited thickness, aren't able to prevent horizontal movement of the foot inside the shoe after a few long sessions. On the other hand, the limited stability that comes with models such as the Dylan Slip On allows a lot of freedom of movement that many skaters see as a positive quality. But this, combined with a low cut around the ankle, means the Dylan isn't suitable for people who tend to get ankle injuries. However, it does allow for a great flick and a lot of control when doing flip tricks.

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