



Extreme pogo athlete Biff Hutchison flips over brick pyramids at a famous BMX and skate park in Queens, New York. He competes and performs around the world.

Photo composite by Nick McClintock

# Head Over Heels for Extreme Pogo

*Biff Hutchison sets records as he bounces and performs around the world*

**By Dianna Troyer**

A tattoo over his heart reminds Biff Hutchison of his late father supporting him as an extreme pogo stick competitor and entertainer.

“He worried about me and would look the other way whenever I did flips and other tricks,” says Biff, who began competing in the sport of extreme pogo in 2009 when he was a sophomore at Burley High School. “He told me if I wanted to travel and do my

tricks, I had to make some money at it. I took that as a challenge. He motivated me in his own way. He’s one of the reasons I’m where I am today.”

At 23 years old, Biff makes his living traveling the United States and the world performing with the Xpogo Stunt Team or individually at halftime shows for the NBA and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. He also teaches classes in Burley, where he lives, and performs solo shows at schools and

other venues.

Biff holds more than a dozen records for tricks on his stick. His most recent record—set March 3, 2017—was a front flip over a 10-foot bar.

“Doing what I love with pogoing has taken me all over the world to amazing places,” says Biff, who earns part of his income from corporate sponsor Vurtego, the leading manufacturer of extreme pogo sticks. “It’s been a blessing. I’m sure my dad would be proud.”

Biff’s father, Jeremy, worked

as an equipment operator for the Raft River Highway District in Malta for more than 10 years and shod horses. He was diagnosed with brain cancer when Biff was in high school.

“He died when I was 18,” Biff says. “While I was sorting through his paperwork, I found a sketch he had drawn of a horse with a horseshoe, so I had it made into a tattoo over my heart.”

His father chose to be buried at Valley Vu Cemetery in



Malta, above the valley where he grew up and worked.

As a tribute to extended family members who still live throughout the Malta area, Biff performed his pogo stunts at the Raft River School last spring.

He owes his nickname to his uncle Gary.

“He called me that as a kid instead of Breckon, and it stuck,” Biff says.

While bouncing, “there’s a moment at the height of a bounce when you feel weightless,” says Biff, who discovered the sport in 2006. “It’s really addicting.”

He is self-taught.

“I’d practice flips and other tricks on our trampoline, then do them with my pogo stick,” he explains.

For several years, Biff won categories at Pogopalooza—a world championship competition—and eventually gained support from Vurtego. After graduating from high school, Biff began traveling about nine months a year, performing and competing.

“The camaraderie of the sport when it first started is still strong,” he says. “We all encourage each other.”

In 2014, Biff curtailed his travel schedule after marrying his best friend from high school, Braelyn.

“Now I’m gone a week or two a month, and when she can, she travels with me,” he says. “She’s supportive and suggests some new tricks.”

Biff says one of the most memorable places he has



**Left, Biff has performed around the world, including Paris, Korea and atop the Great Wall of China. Above, he performed during the halftime show January 21 at the University of Oregon Ducks’ basketball game.**

Left photo by Nick McClintock, above photo by Flynn Nyman

bounced is atop the Great Wall of China.

“I really liked Paris, too, and Korea—every place I’ve gone,” he says.

To stay at the top of his game, Biff practices regularly, varying his workouts based on his performance schedule.

“Usually, I try to do an hour or so of trampoline a day and practice two or three times a week,” he says. “If I’m not on many gigs, I might just pogo once or twice a week. If I’m doing a lot of shows, I don’t usually practice outside of shows to avoid injury and to recuperate between performances.”

Throughout his career, Biff has recuperated from 27 bone fractures to his wrist, leg, fingers, toes and right ankle.

“In November, I was in California filming a tutorial for Vurtego when I slipped on the peg and broke my ankle,” he says.

To help aspiring pogo riders avoid injury, he teaches hour-long classes at Upside Down Tumbling in Burley.

“I teach kids a progression of tricks, how to develop muscle memory and to fall safely,” Biff says. “As a coach, I’m proud to see them do well. If one of them breaks one of my records one day, that’s great.”

One record still eludes him.

“I’ve been obsessing over it for about nine years,” Biff says. “No one has ever done a double backflip. I’ve done it and dismounted without the stick, but I want to do it while staying on the stick. This summer, I’ll be training for it and plan to practice two to three hours a day, every day.”

One of his most notable records was the world’s highest jump of 11 feet and one-half inch, only to have a friend break it by half an inch in November.

“It just gives me incentive to take it higher,” Biff says, smiling.

He plans to pogo as long as he can.

“Jumping as high as I can brings me joy,” he says. “That’s what keeps me in the sport.” ■