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Do you own a longboard? If so, that means one of two things. You have never heard of the longboard club, or you are already in it. There does not seem to be much middle ground in between. This is both a good thing and a bad thing. It is good because everybody who has been exposed to the club has become a part of it. It is bad, though, because not enough people have heard about it.

The longboarding club, otherwise known as Radford United Longboarding (RUD), has been an easy club for people to fail to notice. Rightfully, though. Longboarding for most people is used strictly as a mode of transportation. Usually this is just to get from class to class, or to Dalton and back. But, who has not gone on a nighttime cruise or taken the long way back to their room? Everyone with a board finds enjoyment in it whether they notice it or not. This is where the longboarding club comes in.

The longboarding club is a group of guys that just love to skate and take advantage of it. Most people don't know what else there is to do with a longboard other than cruise around. That is what RUD is there for. They consist of skaters of all skill levels that are great teachers and enjoy passing on their knowledge. Participation in the club will expose you to styles of riding that you have never heard of. Everything from cruising, to dancing, freestyle, freeriding, downhill, and more. There is something for everyone.

If you do not think that you have the right set up or the right kind of wheels, deck, trucks, etc., then you are wrong! You can skate with anything. There is no need for hesitation. Whether you have a loaded board, or sector9, orangatang wheels or abec11, paris trucks or independent, it will work just fine. There is even a place for all you penny boarders out there. Everything can be used for something. The club favorite regarding riding style is "downhill freeride" and usually ends up clicking with the new riders very well. Downhill freeriding at its core consists of high speeds and "power slides". Power slides are where you throw your board sideways while moving and slide along the pavement rather than roll. It

really is an addicting style. There is nothing better than hitting 30 mph and turning your wheels from a roll to a slide. It results in a smooth glide across the ground which functions as a trick and a breaking mechanism. You know you did it well when your wheels leave a thick “thane”, short for urethane, the material used to make wheels line on the pavement. Yes, those mysterious chalky lines that you pass on the road every once in a while are from a longboard. The possibilities are endless when it comes to freeriding. All sorts of twists, flips, and grabs can be used to make your own moves. It takes a lot of practice, but is extremely rewarding.

The guys running the club are great at working new riders up to a higher level of skating. There is no pressure to go beyond what your current skill level is, though. Enjoying it is their primary concern. You do what is comfortable to you and learn each technique at your own pace. That is, if you even want to learn. There is nothing wrong with just wanting to go out with some guys and tear the street up for a little while. It is inevitable, though, that everyone will pick up new skills from each other. That is the great thing about RUD. Everyone can bring something to the table and everyone has something to learn.

While longboarding is fun, it can get a little dangerous when you start hitting higher speeds. If safety is a concern for you, worry no more. Everyone wears plenty of protective gear. Helmets are more important than you think. That is the bare minimum for protection. Falling off of a board going upwards of 35 and 40 mph is much different than hitting the ground at 10 mph while ollieing a set of stairs. Both are risky, but at those speeds, you want a helmet. Another common safety item also doubles as an assist for tricks. Slide gloves, while protecting your hands from impact and cuts, can also be used to lean on the pavement while you slide down a hill. It is a very good investment if you want to progress in the sport. Finally, elbow and knee pads and even hip pads can save you a lot of skin when longboarding. It may look lame, but you will be thanking your gear when you get the infamous “speed wobbles” in the middle of a hill and hit the pavement.

So, whether you are looking to develop your skills, supplement what you already know or just have a good group to skate with, Radford United Longboarding is the club for you.