

Ryan Farmer

A College of the Redwoods Success Story



(Photo by Tyler Topping)

A Two-Time World Champion Looks to College of the Redwoods to Achieve Lifetime Success

Even with two street luge world championships under his belt, Ryan Farmer says he can't wait to get back to College of the Redwoods. "College of the Redwoods, with its flexibility and support, will allow me to balance the quality of my current life with the quality of my future," Farmer observed. "I can figure out what want to do right now while working on my broader goals." Goals, Farmer said, that includes earning his teaching credential, becoming a youth mentor, and bringing the sport he loves to his community.

Start...

Farmer grew up in Southern California, where he would often use skateboarding as mode of transportation and "bomb hills" just for fun. The speed and skill needed to ride the downhill offered the same joy of surfing, he explained, without having to be immersed in cold water and paddle back out after every wave.

Over time mentors helped him improve his technique and eventually introduced him to street luge, where downhill riders lie on the board instead of stand and can reach speeds of up to 100 MPH. Farmer had rare skills and started competing, first in the California Outlaw Series and then in the national circuit. Before long he was traveling to compete in sanctioned events around the world and in 2017, he won the International Downhill Federation Championship. That year he also left a secure and flexible job working as a machinist in the aerospace industry to start a new life in Northern California.

Humboldt County

"Neither of my parents graduated from high school, but their experiences showed me the importance of education. I saw how much harder it is to keep a family stable and healthy without it." Farmer said. "So there came a time when I

knew I needed to move out of Southern California and go back to school." Farmer had been visiting Humboldt County since he was a child and loved it. The region's mountainous terrain also offered the steep downhill slopes he needed to keep pursuing street luge.

After moving north, Farmer enrolled at College of the Redwoods. There he found approachable instructors that brought first-hand experience to the classroom and helped students learn real-world applications for their education as they learned more about job and career options.

Farmer was interested in both manufacturing technology and forestry/natural resources and decided to pursue both subjects. "I was drawn to manufactured technologies because I've always loved making things," he explained. "I spent years after high school working in machine shops, learning how to make everything from skateboard parts to aerospace (rocket) components." College of the Redwoods also provides top-tier equipment, Farmer added, and talented faculty

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that provided the information he needs to eventually open his own shop. "I want to make metal products on the side," he explained. "But my main career goal is to teach."

And that is where Farmer's natural resources degree will fit in. "I grew up without a lot of security and there was not a lot of emphasis and discussion about my future," Farmer recalled. Instead, he said it was teachers and family members who worked as educators who inspired him. "Teaching is such an important role in our community. I think good teachers can improve their student's lives and they definitely encouraged me. I know I need to further my education to be happy and achieve financial stability so that everyone in my family has an opportunity to succeed."

College of the Redwoods

Though Farmer will focus on education to achieve long term success, the skilled athlete has not abandoned his love of street luge. In November of 2022 he went to the World Skate Games in Argentina as a member of the U.S. Downhill Skate Team and brought home his second Street Luge World Championship. Though the demands of competition, the pandemic and financial considerations prompted Farmer to take a brief break from school, he can't wait to reenroll at College of the Redwoods. Fortunately, he said, when he is ready CR will be there with the low cost and flexibility he needs to keep working towards his long-term goals. "Going back is important to me. I want to get into a classroom to start teaching as soon as I can."