



Six78th
Raimi Merritt:
Wakeboarding Wonder
The March/April 2007 issue of *Six78th* magazine featured a splashy double-page story on Girls4Sport wakeboarding team rider Raimi Merritt.

Raimi Merritt
Wakeboarding Wonder

by Jon Slaughter
Photography by Zenon L. Bilas

Wakeboarding for only three years, thirteen-year-old Raimi Merritt has become a force to be reckoned with. Beginning with a first place win in her very first competition, the 2004 Tommy's South Florida Wakeboard Tour, to winning every single competition she entered in 2006, she has made an outstanding name for herself. As if that weren't enough, she currently holds the title for the girls division World Champion and is a three time consecutive winner in the girls division of the USA Wakeboard Nationals.

Some might say that Raimi was born to be on water, being the daughter of Steve Merritt, former World and National Barefoot Champion. She started waterskiing at the age of three under her father's guidance, and he continues to be her biggest inspiration, traveling with her to competitions and giving her a lot of support. It was originally his idea for her to try wakeboarding, and she has been loving it ever since. It has truly turned into a family sport. Her older sister, Chloe, who is sixteen, has also competed in wakeboarding.

Being home-schooled has allowed Raimi the flexibility required for a full-time commitment to the sport. She trains three to four times a week, for an hour or longer each session and travels to competitions constantly, taking her as far away as Russia and Spain.

She states that she enjoys the traveling and, above all else, has fun with the sport. Being sponsored by Liquid Force, MonVie, Girls4Sport, and Fly High has also been a huge help in her career.

Even though she admits to being recognized when she goes out in public, she still remains a down-to-earth, well-rounded girl. In her spare time, you can find her playing racquetball, doing other water sports such as tubing, wake skating and wake surfing, shopping, going to movies with friends, and hanging out with her sisters.

When asked if she has any advice for girls wanting to get into the sport, she replies, "Go out there, and have fun. Don't get frustrated with trying to learn new tricks, because you'll get them."

The excitement of the sport, and the feeling of pride and accomplishment when winning a new title, is what keeps Raimi in love with the sport. With so many titles under her belt, she is well on her way to her goal of turning pro and being a professional woman wakeboarder.

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