

Informing the Market, Making a Difference

By Ryan Oakes



The pool and skatepark industries continue to evolve, and with that evolution comes both progress and pressure. In recent years, we have seen the effects of rapid growth, increased demand, and a widening range of experience levels across those designing and building pools.

As an industry, we are no longer in a position where we can rely on tradition or fragmented knowledge — we must continue to define and reinforce what quality construction truly means.

Within the American Shotcrete Association (ASA), the Pool & Skatepark Committee (formerly the Pool and Recreational Shotcrete Committee) has remained focused on that objective. Through continued collaboration, publication, and engagement with our industry partners, we are working to ensure that shotcrete remains not only relevant but properly understood and correctly applied.

Most recently, the committee published Position Paper #8: *Steel Reinforcement for Shotcrete Pools*. This paper represents a significant step forward in clarifying best practices around reinforcement, an area that is often assumed to be understood, yet is frequently misapplied in the field. It stands as an important resource for engineers, contractors, and designers seeking to build durable, long-lasting concrete pools.

In parallel with our publication efforts, our members continue to contribute to *Shotcrete* magazine. In the second quarter of 2025, the magazine featured a pool-focused issue that addressed several key topics within our industry. Of particular note was **the discussion around why pools crack** — a subject that is too often oversimplified. The article helped frame cracking not as a singular failure, but as the result of design decisions, construction practices, material behavior, and restraint conditions. This type of technical clarity is essential if we are to move beyond surface-level explanations and toward meaningful improvement in how pools are designed and built.

Looking ahead, the committee has formed a task group to develop Position Paper #9, to address proper control of rebound and trimmings in shotcreted pools. These are subjects that are encountered daily in the field, yet are inconsistently understood and, at times, debated. In the

case of rebound, there is a broader body of research within the shotcrete industry that clearly defines its characteristics and limitations. The application of that knowledge to pool construction, particularly regarding durability, bond, and long-term performance, is an area where greater clarity is needed. Our intent is to approach this work with a research-driven, science-based perspective, grounded in both existing literature and field experience.

In the case of trimmings, the discussion can be more contentious. As with many long-standing practices, there are differing opinions rooted in habit, experience, and interpretation. These are precisely the types of topics that our committee is positioned to address — not to create unnecessary division, but to provide clear, technically

ASA POOL & SKATEPARK COMMITTEE

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William Drakeley | Drakeley Pool Company LLC

supported guidance that advances the quality of construction across the industry.

In addition to our technical work, we have updated the name of our committee to the Pool & Skatepark Committee. This change is not a shift in direction, but rather a more accurate reflection of what we have long represented. Shotcrete placement has played a critical role in the development of both pools and skateparks, and

it is important that members of the skatepark community recognize that they have a place within ASA and within this committee.

As we continue forward, our focus remains the same: To raise the standard of construction, to support our industry through education and technical guidance, and to ensure that the structures we help create are built to perform for not just years, but generations.
