

# “One day with...the Nike SB Zoom FP”

## Sizing

Due to its construction, the Nike SB FP fits slightly smaller than other Nike SB models. People with wide feet are recommended to go at least half a size up from usual.

## Durability

One of the strengths of the Nike SB FP is its durability. The shoe in the pictures has been skated intensively for 5 hours and the wear is almost not noticeable. The rubber mesh material of its ancestors, the Tre and Tre A.D., has been replaced by a synthetic leather upper, reinforced with a layer of TPU (red in the pictures). To provide additional durability in the sensitive kickflip area, another layer of the upper material has been fused around the peak of the toebox.

The whole concept of simplifying the technical model of the Nike SB range also helps to improve the durability. The one-piece upper reduces the amount of stitching and what threads there are on show are recessed, which eliminates the problem of them being ripped through, causing layers to separate. The upper basically doesn't offer any points of attack except for the edge of the kickflip-area, but this is a necessary design function for the flick.

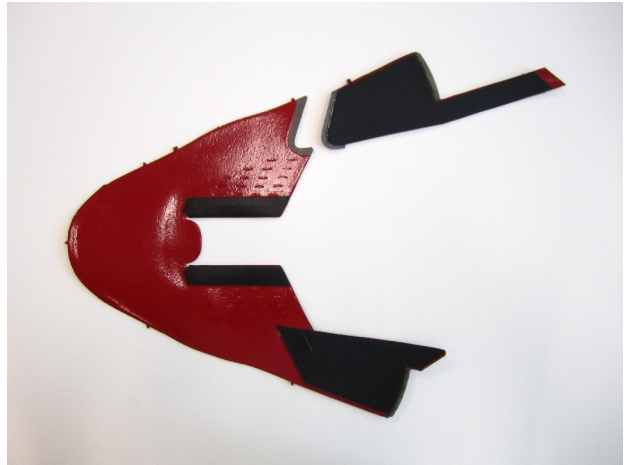
The only weak spot is the mesh around the collar, where the bootie bends over the strap around the heel, which causes it to fray out a lot, as you can see in the pictures. Over the life of the shoe the sensitive mesh will be worn away, revealing the cushioning material as the area comes apart.

Unlike its ancestors, the FP doesn't feature any lace protection. However, during the five-hour test, the laces remained intact. The asymmetrical placement of the lace holes, which cause the laces to face more towards the inwards side of the shoe, protects them from the griptape in most cases, which greatly extends their lifespan.

The transparent rubber piece of the sole is made from the same soft, and thereby grippy, rubber as the rest of the sole, according to Shawn Carboy, Designer of the FP. After the five-hour test the edge between transparent rubber and upper material was hardly worn down, which is a sign of a long-lasting midsole, even with the great grip of the rubber used.



The depth of the sole pattern is average compared to other models. It probably won't outlast the upper material and will eventually become flat and worn out in certain areas. Although this will reduce the grip, it will be negligible because of the overall durability. Another nice little improvement, when compared with the Tre A.D., is that the stitched swoosh doesn't get as frayed. The placement under the strap assures that it doesn't come into contact with the griptape, even when doing heelflips, but that's just a very small detail.



Red TPU Layer under the upper, copyright by Nike SB

## Cushion

The FP features a 5mm Zoom Air pad cushioning system, which is built into a thin cupsole construction. It is part of the heel, not glued to the bottom of the removable insole, which is an advantage for people who'd like to replace the original insole with orthopedic ones due to former injuries or other medical reasons.

The cushioning of the FP is adequate even for higher-impact skating and it also keeps the loss of boardfeel that can be caused by too many cushioning layers to a minimum. It has a great balance between comfort and boardfeel.

## Breathability

The only disappointment of the Nike SB FP is its really bad breathability. Except for the tongue area, the waterproof synthetic material and the extra TPU layer mean that the upper offers no breathable elements.

Theoretically, the slits in the sidewall could improve the breathability but, unfortunately, they do not continue through the red layer of TPU underneath\*. This means warm air and moisture can't escape the shoe, which already causes warm feet even before being skated in. The missing slits in the red layer are a result of the production method: The upper and the booty are heat pressed together, which causes the TPU to melt and the slits to close.

(\*I encountered this problem with the pair I've was given during the weartest in Amsterdam. The final release may feature slits that go completely through the upper).

## Shape

The toebox of the FP is slightly asymmetrical. It is similar of the Tre A.D., but is a lot more arrow-shaped and tapered towards the peak. The shoe is very slim and it feels close to the foot when worn because of the minimal padding. It is as thin as most of the vulcanised silhouettes that are so popular at the moment.



## Boardfeel

The boardfeel of the Nike SB FP is very good for a cup sole. The sole feels thin but still supportive. The deep grooves that are inspired by Nike's Free technology, normally used for running models, makes the sole very flexible and thereby adaptive to the concave of the deck, but it is also stable and not flimsy, like some vulc soles.

The S-shaped groove from the front to the heel is very important since it separates the rubber bottom sole into two separate parts which makes it extra flexible in that direction, a unique feature for a skate shoe.

## Grip

The sole pattern consists of finer and thicker stripes arranged in a classic herringbone pattern, which results in a grippy outsole. As mentioned above, the depth is average, so it won't outlast the upper but will still provide grip for an adequate time.

The flick of the FP is great. The toebox material feels a lot like common plastic and doesn't really make a good first impression. When skated, though, it turns out to be almost as grippy as regular suede, most probably due to the additional edge in the front area, which adds a point of attack, and the material, which is very flexible. Both these features improve the flick of the shoe. Compared with the rigid material of the Tre and Tre A.D., which was already quite grippy, this is a further improvement.



## Comfort

The unique construction, consisting of a bootie with the upper material heat pressed onto it, makes the Nike FP one of the most comfortable skate shoes available. It fits snug and literally like a sock without any overlapping material on the inside that could cause "hot spots".

The heel construction is very curved, which is increased by the strap. If you look from the side, you'll notice that the top of the heel is almost two cm out of alignment compared to the midsole, this creates a heel lock that basically no other model with such a low cut around the ankle and heel can provide.

Another unique feature is that the tongue is incorporated into the bootie, which obviously does away with the need for centering straps. Unfortunately, there is also no tongue to keep the pants from sliding over the lacing, which can be a bit annoying. A small improvement would have been to add a small flap to the tongue logo to keep the pants from sliding forwards.

Another outstanding feature of the Nike FP is that it is one of the lightest shoes on the market. Not even the most minimalist vulcanised models can compete because of the weight of their soles. The reason for the drastically reduced weight of the FP is that just the front area of the sole, where the abrasion takes place, is made out of rubber, the rest consists of a much lighter foam.

One minor weakness regarding the comfort is that the insole tends to slip out when pulling the foot out of the shoe. Therefore you have to adjust the insole every time you put your feet back in.

The edges of the collar are very comfortable, almost to the point that they are unnoticeable. The collars of other models tend to put pressure on the Achilles tendon or the ankle bones, this didn't happen with the FP.

## Stability and Support

The Nike SB FP features a strong heel reinforcement, which you can feel by squeezing the sides of the collar together. It keeps the foot in place and prevents horizontal movement within the shoe.

The synthetic upper did not stretch out at all during the test. This means the sidewalls won't get too flexible and lose their shape. This means the stability will last over the whole lifespan of the shoe, which isn't the case with most suede or leather models.

Although the shoe is very lightweight and allows a lot of freedom for ankle movement, due to the booty collar, it feels very supportive and stable.



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## Summary

Except for a lack of breathability, the Nike SB Zoom FP features great durability, flick and comfort, and is one of the lightest skate shoes on the market.