

Parkour takes giant leap to become officially recognised sport

The UK has become the first country in the world to officially recognise Parkour/Freerunning as a sport, after the Home Country Sports Councils approved Parkour UK's application for recognition of the sport and the National Governing Body.

Parkour, also known as Freerunning or Art du Deplacement, is the non-competitive physical discipline of training to move freely over and through any terrain using only the abilities of the body, principally through running, jumping, climbing and quadrupedal movement. In practice it focuses on developing the fundamental attributes required for such movement, which include functional strength and fitness, balance, spatial awareness, agility, coordination, precision, control and creative vision.

Parkour/Freerunning motivates people to get active. Participants can take part in the sport whenever and wherever they want, without needing to meticulously manage their busy diaries, buy special equipment, join a club, or book a pitch or court. All you need is a pair of trainers and your imagination to [#GiveParkourAGo!](#)

The recognition of Parkour/Freerunning as a sport & [Parkour UK](#) as the National Governing Body (NGB) by the Home Country Sports Councils - Sport England, Sport Northern Ireland, sportscotland, Sport Wales and UK Sport follows completion of the [UK recognition process](#) by Parkour UK.

Parkour UK, was established in 2009 by the nation's Parkour/Freerunning community and the City of Westminster. It began the formal recognition process in March 2013, with the pre application for recognition approved in March 2014. The full application for recognition was submitted in August 2015 and was recommended for approval by the UK Recognition Panel in Dec 2015. During 2016 the Boards of the Home Country Sports Councils approved the full application for recognition, with the final confirmation of recognition being confirmed in October 2016.

Recognition will enable Parkour/Freerunning groups and organisations affiliated to Parkour UK to apply to the home country sports councils for lottery or exchequer funding to support the development of the sport locally in each home nation.

Today (Tuesday, January 10, 2017), the Sports Minister, Tracey Crouch, alongside the President of Parkour UK and a founder of Parkour/Freerunning, [Sebastien Foucan](#) announced the formal recognition of Parkour/Freerunning as a sport and Parkour UK as the recognised NGB for the sport in the UK. The announcement was made at [LEAP Parkour Park](#), England's largest outdoor Parkour

facility at Westminster Academy in London. The park was launched by Westminster City Council in partnership with Parkour UK in Jan 2012.

Minister for Sport, Tracey Crouch, said: "I want people to get out there and find the sport and physical activity that appeals to them and Parkour is certainly a fun, creative and innovative option. I am pleased that it has been recognised as a sport, giving it the platform for further growth in this country, with Parkour UK as its governing body. The sport promotes movement and using the great outdoors as a space to get active in and I encourage people to don their trainers and give it a go."

President of Parkour UK, Sebastien Foucan, said:

"This is brilliant [recognition for a discipline that started off as child's play](#) with my friends almost 30 years ago. The beauty of Parkour/Freerunning is that everyone, of all ages, can do it respectfully in almost any environment. We celebrate activity and playfulness whilst constantly challenging our mental and physical limits. It is more than just jumping, it is a health driven way of life"

As the National Governing Body for Parkour/Freerunning, Parkour UK provides governance and regulation of Parkour/Freerunning throughout the UK, act as custodians of the sport/art, protect the rights & freedoms and promote the interests of Traceurs/Freerunners (practitioners), their member organisations & the UK community.

Parkour UK works closely with partners to encourage and develop the safe and appropriate practice of Parkour/Freerunning. The organisation also works with local groups, organisations, national organisations/bodies, local authorities and constabularies.

Since its creation, Parkour UK has successfully developed and promoted an open and inclusive organisation, encouraging people of all ages, backgrounds or abilities to [#GiveParkourAGo](#) with their [member organisations](#) across the UK.

Parkour UK has also forged a close relationship with the education sector, developing programmes around videography and photography and cross curricular links around the history and culture of the sport. It has developed literacy projects that use Parkour/Freerunning to teach the French language – *Parlez Vous Parkour?*

Chief Executive at Parkour UK, Eugene Minogue, said:

"Parkour/Freerunning has come a long way since first arriving in the UK in 2003 with the seminal documentary, [Jump London](#) and [Jump Britain](#) in 2005, both starring Sebastien Foucan. This was

followed up by [Jump Westminster](#) in 2007, which led to the creation of Parkour UK.

Parkour/Freerunning is now in the vast majority of primary & secondary schools, colleges and universities all over the UK. The discipline has now been formally recognised as a sport with Parkour UK recognised as the National Governing Body. We have built a qualified workforce of over 600 people, we have led the development of a British, and now a European standard for Parkour Equipment. As a result, there are now more than 50 Parkour Parks across the UK. All this in just over 7 years, an amazing achievement and testament to the unique and diverse Parkour/Freerunning community in the UK, which is world leading!"

The Parkour UK community, which is how Parkour UK describes its membership of affiliated organisations & practitioners, covering all four home nations of the UK - is incredibly rich in its diversity.

Parkour/Freerunning celebrates female participation and has also demonstrated huge success engaging with children, teenagers and families. There are also examples of people over the age of 60 practicing Parkour and reaping all the benefits associated with regular participation in this incredible form of physical activity.

Parkour UK and it's community are pioneering innovative programmes, including: [Parkour for Mental Health](#), [Parkour for Older People](#), [Family Parkour](#) as well as [Parkour/Freerunning academies](#). Parkour/Freerunning offers something new, innovative and engaging to those who want to get active but may find mainstream sports or activities unappealing.

Director of Sport at Sport England, Phil Smith (for and on behalf of the Home Country Sports Councils) said:

"As the number of people involved in regular sport and physical activity continues to grow, choice becomes increasingly important. Parkour has already been offering something different for a few years now, but what recognition means is that Parkour UK is taking responsibility for its organisation. The safety and enjoyment of those taking part is paramount, so congratulations to Parkour UK on achieving the standards and showing their ambition to grow even further."

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For more information and photography relating the announcement and/or to arrange an interview with Parkour UK, please contact Katie Lewis - 07912215302 or katie.lewis@brandchatter.co.uk

For more information on Parkour UK, visit parkour.uk

Notes to editors:What is Parkour:

Parkour / Freerunning / Art du Deplacement is the non-competitive physical discipline of training to move freely over and through any terrain using only the abilities of the body, principally through running, jumping, climbing and quadrupedal movement. In practice it focuses on developing the fundamental attributes required for such movement, which include functional strength and fitness, balance, spatial awareness, agility, coordination, precision, control and creative vision.

Parkour / Freerunning / Art du Deplacement is a sport that encourages self-improvement on all levels, revealing one's physical and mental limits while simultaneously offering ways to overcome them. It is a method of training one's body and mind in order to be as completely functional, effective and liberated as possible in any environment.

The sport aims to build confidence, determination, self-discipline and self-reliance, and responsibility for one's actions. It encourages humility, respect for others and for one's environment, self-expression, community spirit, and the importance of play, discovery and safety at all times.

Notes: Parkour UK has chosen to utilise the term Parkour to represent the sport. Please refer to Parkour UK's [full definition of Parkour as a sport](#). While Parkour/Freerunning is a sport, it's not just a sport.

How the sport originated:

In one sense Parkour has existed for as long as we have walked on two legs and ever since we have moved either out of necessity, for enjoyment or for practice. It exists at the base of all human movement, and lives and breathes in part within all physical endeavours, from the play of children to the methodology of modern sports. It will continue to exist as long as we find reward and pleasure in the exploration of our own physical talents.

The sport originally termed Art du Deplacement, now also often referred to as Parkour or Freerunning, was founded in France in the 1980s by a group of nine young men. The founders are David Belle, Yann Hnautra, Chau Belle, Laurent Piemontesi, Sebastien Foucan, Guylain N'Guba Boyeke, Charles Perriere, Malik Diouf and Williams Belle.

The term 'Parkour' was first introduced by David Belle in 1998. Parkour derives from the French word Parcours meaning 'route' or 'course'

The term 'Freerunning' was the creation of Guillaume Pelletier, a representative of a group of French practitioners involved in the production of a Channel 4 documentary, Jump London, in 2003. This term was used in order to communicate this amazing new sport to an English-speaking audience.

Parkour has been practised in the UK since 2001, following a French film by Julien Seri; *Yamakasi – Les Samourais des temps modernes*. (Yamakasi is a Lingala word loosely meaning 'Strong Man, Strong Spirit', and summed up the original and still core aim of Parkour - to be a strong individual: physically, mentally and ethically). Yamakasi featured many of the founders of Parkour, as outlined above. Parkour came to significant prominence in the UK following the Jump London (2003) & Jump Britain (2005) documentaries by Mike Christie which were shown on Channel 4. These were then followed up by Jump Westminster (2007) by Dr Julie Angel, which pushed Parkour into the

mainstream consciousness and also lead to the establishment of Parkour UK in 2008 as the NGB for Parkour/Freerunning in the UK.

For a full and detailed history on Parkour please refer to [Ciné Parkour: a cinematic and theoretical contribution to the understanding of the practice of parkour](#), by Dr Julie Angel.

LEAP Parkour Park:

LEAP (London Experience of Art du Deplacement & Parkour) Parkour Park opened in January 2012. It is jointly funded by Westminster City Council and London Marathon Trust and designed by Parkour UK members, Parkour Generations - the largest professional parkour organisation in the UK. It enables people to practice their moves in a safe environment and mimics an urban landscape with walls, rails and stairs for people to vault obstacles and scale walls.

Academy Sport:

Academy Sport offers a mix of school, community and club-based programmes. It is managed by Westminster Academy in partnership with Westminster City Council, who funds the community-use of the centre. In addition to the LEAP Parkour Park, Academy Sport is home to a beach volleyball court made from sand used in the London 2012 Games. It is available for training and competitions. Contact Academy Sport on 020 7121 0642 or visit westminsteracademy.biz for bookings.