



**SKATES &  
LADDERS**





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# SKATER OWNED AND RUN, WE'VE BEEN TEACHING AND SHARING OUR PASSION FOR OVER TEN YEARS

I am Joshua Ward-Brickett, the founder of Skates & Ladders. I qualified as a snowboarding instructor at the age of 16 and, as a passionate skateboarder, I knew I wanted to give back to skateboarding and share my passion with others when I left school.

From humble beginnings in Hemel Hempstead, my inspiration for Skates & Ladders came from skateboarding at a local skatepark on a Sunday afternoon. I saw a child repeatedly try to skate down a ramp with much determination but no success and decided to help him as it looked like he might hurt himself.

After a short time, with a bit of advice and encouragement, he was successfully skateboarding down every ramp in the skatepark with no falls.

The best part was how happy he was now that he could use his new skateboard safely. The boy's father, seeing this, asked if there was the possibility of making skateboard lessons a regular fixture and Skates & Ladders was born.

Through word of mouth and a pack of business cards, I started teaching skateboard lessons at local schools and indoor skateparks across the Home Counties and ran holiday camps involving both snowboard lessons and skateboard lessons. I also started our first council run skateboard club with Watford Borough Council.

Skateboarding took me beyond Hertfordshire and into London where my good friends and fellow skateboarders joined me to form our team of talented professionals.

Realising Skates & Ladders could help people learn to skateboard and, at the same time, give fellow skateboarders the opportunity to make a living doing what they loved, I never looked back.

We pride ourselves on providing quality tuition with skilled and experienced professionals for all ages and all levels. We work with schools and 6th Form Colleges across London, disability sports coaches, the Royal Parks of London, Airbnb and Virgin Experience Days.

We have taught everyone from Vicars, military personnel, top business professionals and stockbrokers to stay at home parents and celebrities and their children.

We have promoted skateboarding through media events with companies such as Mountain Dew, Selfridge's and Burberry; television adverts for Virgin Money, Argos, Microsoft, McDonald's and Organa Energy.

## OUR TEAM

# OUR INSTRUCTORS ARE ALL FRIENDLY, PROFESSIONAL AND TALENTED SKATEBOARDERS WITH A PASSION FOR TEACHING

Every Skates & Ladders instructor is First Aid qualified, Child Protection in Education and DBS certified, and taught through our rigorous Skate & Ladders training program. Years of expert knowledge and a passion for skateboarding makes our instructors the most ideal teachers.

As there is no nationally recognised skateboard instructor qualification we created the Skate & Ladders Instructor Training Program with help from the British Association of Snowsport Instructors (BASI) and years of snowboard coaching experience and coaching qualifications from Skateboard-IA (American Skateboard Instructors Association) and Skateboard England.

Our two week instructor training program includes first aid training as well as teacher training and shadowing lessons, ensuring instructors are not only talented skateboarders, but have the ability to better read people and situations, making sure everyone is safe, confident and having fun.

We are a young, diverse team, with many instructors being university students, all living with the ever rising London living costs. This is why, since its inception, Skates & Ladders has always maintained instructors are paid fairly for their expert knowledge, time, dedication and training by committing to paying twice the national minimum wage.

All of our team are dedicated skateboarders who take pride in delivering our lessons. Here's what they have to say...

*I have connected with so many lovely people and their families. I work with a very encouraging and supportive team and provide so much passion and enjoyment; all through the love of skateboarding.*

— **Oliver: Operations Manager**

*One lesson, a little boy called Zach fell with one foot on the board, and one on the floor and fully did the splits. Needless to say there were a few tears but he got up, took his glasses off, wiped his eyes and got straight back on the board and tried again*

*If that was not enough I said to him, "Every time I fall I learn something new", and he gave me the best answer I could have hoped for, "Yeah, I learnt I can do the splits!"*

— **Rory: Skateboard Instructor**

*Skateboarding is like therapy for me. It's a place I can go when everything else is tough. It helps me stay grounded and it's fun!*

*There are no rules to Skateboarding so explore the possibilities it gives you. If you get hurt, get back up and keep trying. Just like life in general.*

— **Johnny: Skateboard Instructor**

*My favourite part of teaching skateboarding is watching peoples faces light up after they have done something they were scared to do before. I know that feeling and it's great to see it in the faces of others.*

— **Nataniel: Skateboard Instructor**

## OUR TEAM

*I taught two children around the age of 10, who had never stepped on a skateboard before. Initially they were both very scared about even stepping on the board and very nervous about trying anything out of their comfort zone.*

*However, after just a short while of explanations and teaching, they both became more positive and confident with skateboarding.*

*By the end of the lesson they were not just pushing around on the board but could also land a set of tricks with great confidence. The main reason this lesson stands out for me is how inspired the children seemed to be as we came to the end of the lesson. They both developed a great enthusiasm for skateboarding, never wanting the lesson to end*

— **Bill: Skateboard Instructor**

*My favourite teaching story was when I taught this friend of mine to kickflip. It was weird because he just came to see me skating and he only used to cruise in parks before I met him. But he was someone to never do tricks. On that specific day he wished to learn a kickflip.*

*I never thought it would be possible to teach someone to kickflip in a day but it happened. I was very surprised when I saw him land a sketchy kickflip but the happiness in his face made my day.*

— **Yan: Skateboard Instructor**

*I had a lesson where all the children wanted to do was talk about Minecraft and learn to skate down hills safely, so that's exactly what we did, for two hours. Happy parents, happy children, I was happy they learnt to skateboard safely, it was a good day for everyone.*

— **Jordan: Skateboard Instructor**

*I have been skateboarding for 17 years and have not been able to stop. Stopping has not even crossed my mind. It gets me outside, it's very good exercise, keeps my mind healthy and it's my favourite form of transport.*

*Skateboarding with my friends is my favourite thing about it. Discussing tricks, encouraging and inspiring each other. Working hard to get a trick and then finally landing it is one of the greatest feelings in the world, which is doubled when your friends see you and congratulate you. Skateboarding is socialising, sport, art and culture.*

— **Ryd: Skateboard Instructor**

## OUR SKATEBOARDING PROGRAM

# WE WANT TO BRING SKATEBOARD LESSONS, BOARDS AND EQUIPMENT TO THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN ACROSS LONDON

We work with a number of schools and would like to bring skateboarding to your borough through our Skateboard London Project, an all-inclusive teaching program, where all children, no matter their background, are given the opportunity to learn to skate.

### **The Skateboard London Program**

Our per term, after school skateboarding program teaches 1 hour classes of any size.

We provide boards and all safety equipment with lessons taking place on the school playground or in the school hall, all being taught by our First Aid qualified, Child Protection in Education and DBS certified instructors.

The Skateboarding Program runs like any other after school club. Schools handle all sign ups and provide the skateboard instructor with a register at the start of each term.

We also have customisable information leaflets for schools to easily spread the word to parents.

### **Skateboarding Assembly**

We provide each school with a full school interactive assembly, designed to teach the children about skateboarding as an Olympic sport and the skateboarding equipment. The assembly also includes skateboard videos from our instructors and a professional American skateboarder and for some, the opportunity to participate in a 5 minute taster lesson to learn the basics of skateboarding.

We have conducted many school assemblies and have had a great response from both the children and teachers we are currently working with.

### **The Skates & Ladders Level Card**

Each child will receive a Skates & Ladders Level Card which tracks and shows a clear learning pathway for the course of the lessons and allows the child and parent to see their progress from lesson to lesson. Our Level Card was developed with help from the British Association of Snowsport Instructors (BASI) and our 10 years of expert knowledge and experience delivering skateboard lessons.

### **Tokyo Olympics 2020**

We believe this is the perfect time to come together with skateboarding. We want to raise awareness and encourage future skateboarding Olympians by helping a generation of aspiring skateboarders.

### **The Costs**

Please feel free to contact us so we can cater a bespoke lesson program to fit your needs.

# SKATEBOARD PROGRAM CURRICULUM

### Skateboard London Program Curriculum

The skateboarding program includes:

- Introduction to skateboarding and safety.
- Introduction and lessons on the equipment.
- Lessons on staying safe when learning and practising.
- Showing children how to find their stance.
- Introduction to pushing and learning to control direction and speed.
- Using techniques such as carving and kick turning to control direction, to turn on the move and navigate around obstacles.
- Lessons on safely stopping at speed.
- Introduction and teaching basic balance tricks and techniques.
- Coaching with individual feedback to improve riding abilities and confidence developing more advanced riding techniques. To improve speed control, direction control and balance techniques for turning at speed.
- Introduction to basic tricks including balance tricks on the move, learning how to switch your stance and how to make a 180 degree turn.
- Introduction to more advanced skateboard tricks and riding techniques, such as the ollie (how to make the skateboard jump into the air).
- Learning advanced techniques for stopping at speed, using slides to control speed and avoid obstacles at close range.
- Balance and basic trick games to improve confidence and maintain a lively and vibrant group atmosphere.

*Skates & Ladders have been a real breath of fresh air to our after school enrichment programme. The club has been extremely popular and the instructors are always positive role models for our pupils.*

*I highly recommend this club for other schools and can't praise them enough for their organisation and reliability.*

— **Henry Maynard Primary School**

*We have been working with Skates & Ladders for our skateboard after school clubs on the school premises for many terms now and can warmly recommend their services.*

*The administrative team is responsive, lessons and logistics are smoothly organised. All the coaches are enthusiastic and make sure the lessons are a lot of fun. We offer two slots a week and they are always our most popular ones with long waiting lists and children of all abilities can participate.*

*Instructors are engaging and everybody progresses rapidly, from quickly being comfortable on the board for the first time, to learning lots of new difficult tricks.*

— **Ecole Marie D'Orliac**

*The presentation was really interesting and perfectly pitched!*

— **Oliver House School**

*The children absolutely loved the visit. They especially loved watching the video clips of skateboarders and then being able to have a go.*

— **Fulham Primary**

# PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF SKATEBOARDING

Skateboarding is an excellent way of exercising and a quick green alternative to the usual commute. It is a method of transportation that is linked with the urban environment and is a great way to explore it.

Whether used as a means of transportation, a recreational activity or as part of an athlete's dedicated ambition to learn new tricks, Skateboarding is an all-around calorie-burning and muscle-building activity. It's also a lifelong activity, as many skateboarders continue to enjoy the sport into their 50s and 60s.

Skateboarding uses up far more calories than most other physical activities. Depending on the intensity of the skate, the average person will burn between 300-500 calories per hour. If you skate every day, in a week's time you could burn 2,100 to 3,500 calories, respectively. Because 1 pound of fat consists of 3,500 calories in stored energy, you could lose between 1/2 and 1 pound per week, depending on your activity level and metabolism. Harvard Medical School notes that people who weigh 125, 155 and 185 pounds will burn 150, 186 and 222 calories, respectively, in just a 30-minute skateboarding session.

Skateboarding involves your feet and legs, helped by your core muscles and arms to balance. All these things must happen simultaneously, giving your body a variety of movements and an effective full body work out, involving the core muscles on your torso, your quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteus and your lower legs.

The body needs a regular workout for healthy metabolism, and skateboarding is probably the best workout it can get.

Increased physical endurance and coordination is also a benefit of learning to skateboard.

Skateboarding involves a lot of constant movement and coordination between your eyes, legs, feet and arms; requiring stamina and precision.

Precision and coordination are used throughout your life, and when you improve these traits, you better your ability to do all sorts of activities.

Prevention of future injuries is one of the most beneficial things that skateboarding has to offer in terms of health.

When you skate, you dramatically improve your balance and learn how to avoid falling,

This is an excellent tool to have in your life. You will naturally be better able to recover from slips, trips, and stumbles and avoid falls helping you to prevent future injuries.

Skateboarding also provides the ideal crossover sport for learning and practicing other sports such as surfing, snowboarding, scootering and cycling; by developing general fitness, physical endurance, coordination and balance.

**Weight Loss:** Only 60 minutes of skateboarding burns 300 calories in a 125 pound person and 444 calories in a 185 pound person. If you skate every day, in a week's time you'll burn 2,100 and 3,108 calories, respectively. Because 1 pound of fat consists of 3,500 calories in stored energy, you could lose between ½ and 1 pound per week, depending on your activity level and metabolism.

**Lifelong Sport:** Skateboarding, whether used as a means of transportation, a recreational activity or as part of an athlete's dedicated ambition to learn new tricks, is an all-around calorie-burning and muscle-building activity. It's also a lifelong activity, as many skateboarders continue to enjoy the sport into their 50s and 60s.

— [livinghealthy.com](#). Ruth de Jauregui, 2018

**Reflexes:** Prevention of future injuries is one of the most beneficial things that skateboarding has to offer in terms of health. When you skate, you learn how to avoid falling (if possible. This is an excellent tool to have in your life. You'll reduce the chance of freak accidents. You'll naturally be more able to recover from slips, trips, and stumbles and avoid falling on your face.

**Endurance:** Skateboarding teaches endurance. Skateboarding wears us out, beats us up, but we still do it as long as we can. And the more we do it, the more we're able to do it. So why does this happen in skateboarding far more than in other sports? Why do we skate more in one day than people do other sports in a whole week? That one's easy. It's just more fun.

**Variety of Movement:** Picture all the combination of tricks that you might do. There probably isn't any other sport that offers such a variety of movement.

**Precision:** Skateboarding involves a lot of coordination between your eyes, legs, feet and arms. The more you skate, the better you'll get at this. Precision and coordination are used throughout your life, whether you skateboard or not. When you improve these traits, you better your ability to do all sorts of different things from driving to climbing to multitasking.

— [eversakte.com](#), 2018

**Coordination:** Skateboarding involves a lot of coordination between your eyes, legs, feet and arms. The more you skate, the better you'll get at this. Precision and coordination are used throughout your life, whether you skate or not.

**Avoids Illness:** With healthy lifestyle, we can avoid 60-70% of known illnesses.

**Transferable Sport Skills:** Skateboarding skills transfer to other sports including surfing, snowboarding and many more. A person can help keep their skills sharp and fitness levels up by simply riding a skateboard.

— [healthfitnessrevolution.com](#). Samir Becic, 2014

**Increases Metabolism:** The body needs a regular workout for healthy metabolism, and tedious exercises like skateboarding are probably the best workout it can get.

— [thrillspire.com](#), 2018

**Muscular Development:** Doing tricks on a skateboard requires some physical skill, which in turn works several muscles, including the core muscles on your torso, your quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteus maximus and your lower legs. Why join a gym when you can just skateboard?

— [aplus.com](#). Steven Lerner, 2015.

**Burning Off Food:** In just 5 minutes of skateboarding you can burn off 30 calories, the equivalent of a cookie!

— [calorielab.com](#), 2014

**Great Method of Transportation:** Skateboarding is definitely linked with the urban environment and becomes a great way to explore it. As you switch between streets, sidewalks, or parks, there is no other means of transport more suited for the unpredictability you will find while cruising around the city.

— [boardblazers.com](#). Yogin Patel, 2015

# MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF SKATEBOARDING

It is evident that the social determinants of health, specifically social inclusion, have a strong impact on mental health in the younger population.

The pro-social community of skateboarding as a vehicle for mental health was discovered through research performed by Burt in 2011.

Burt published an article which explored the wellbeing benefits of creative hobbies in the older population. The significance of this trial was the emphasis that social inclusion can be fulfilled through creative hobbies (Burt, 2011). Therefore a creative hobby such as skateboarding, could act as a therapeutic method for mental health in the younger population.

Supporting the notion of social inclusion within skateboarding was identified by Goldenberg, who performed a survey with over 150 skateboarders in 2009. The trial uncovered what skateboarders value the most out of skateboarding. Goldenberg reported that 2 of the top 7 most salient outcomes identified by skateboarders were in terms of social inclusion, camaraderie and social opportunities (Goldenberg, 2009). The trial by Goldenberg showed how the interpersonal social factors satisfied by skateboarding are an important outlet for positive youth development (Suldo, 2008).

To further explain the evidence for social inclusion within skateboarding, in a trial by Wood in 2014, observational data was gathered from a skatepark in Perth, Australia. This data included the frequency of pro-social behaviours such as:

socialising with friends, taking turns, respecting others, and helping each other. These frequent pro-social behaviours within skateboarding are what can form social support networks to potentially benefit mental health in the younger population. Wood's result of social inclusion within skateboarding reflects qualitative data found through the lived experience of skateboarders.

Underlying how skateboarding satisfies social inclusion is the reason that minimal barriers to entry, and therefore a non-existent social class hierarchy within skateboarding, is present (Humbert, 2006).

Since skateboarding does not marginalise individuals, there is a form of social justice whereby the inclusion allows skateboarders to live free from discrimination and not constrained to a social gradient (Burt, 2011). Skateboarding provides an increasingly rare sense of belonging for children.

*The skateboarding community is known as one of the most welcoming communities as regardless of someone's health, gender, race or age everyone shares a passion, skateboarding. This may be the reason why it is such a supportive space as every skateboarder wants to see each other succeed and will support one another to do that.*

— Ellis Watt

To conclude, when the question becomes how do we fulfil social inclusion, skateboarding really is a valid answer.

**Confidence and Stress Relief:** When you've conquered things like hand rails, concrete bowls, and stair sets, a lot of problems you might encounter in life are greatly reduced or disappear altogether. Landing tricks also brings a sense of accomplishment and confidence. Most importantly, skateboarding is fun and brings about happiness.  
— [eversakte.com](http://eversakte.com), 2018

**Social Skills and Awareness:** Skateboarding can be used to develop social skills and awareness. You're always looking at possibilities, meeting people, figuring out what you can skate.  
— [BBC Teach](http://BBC Teach). Ross McGouran, 2017

**Therapeutic Distraction:** I use longboarding as exercise, but I started to feel different. My stress was being reduced and I liked how I was feeling. It was a different sense of joy, which I found helped my patients too.  
— [wlrn.com](http://wlrn.com). Isaac Farin, Family and Child Therapist, 2013

**Cure Depression:** In 2012, a 21-year-old Canadian woman reported that skateboarding cured her depression. While there have been no formal studies on the issue, skateboarding does keep your mind busy, and riding out in the sun with the breeze through your hair can't hurt either.  
— [aplus.com](http://aplus.com). Steven Lerner, 2015

**Life & Inclusion:** Skateboarding taught my children about life & inclusion.

**Social Inclusion:** Goldenberg reported that 2 of the top 7 most salient outcomes identified by skateboarders were in terms of social inclusion, camaraderie and social opportunities (Goldenberg, 2009). The trial by Goldenberg showed how the interpersonal social factors satisfied by skateboarding are an important outlet for positive youth development (Suldo, 2008).  
— [Goldberg Survey](http://Goldberg Survey), 2009

**Social Inclusion:** It is evident that the social determinants of health, specifically social inclusion, have a strong impact on mental health in the younger population. When the question becomes how to fulfil social inclusion, skateboarding is a valid answer.  
— [skateboardingpositive.com](http://skateboardingpositive.com), 2018

**Inclusion:** It's happened to most of us. We judge people based on their looks, their fashion, how tattooed they are. Yet, according to Glettner, no matter how you look, you are welcomed. What's more, there's always someone to help you get back on your skateboard. So now my boys have become part of the camaraderie that skaters have with one another.  
— [Eva Glettner, Mum Blogger](http://Eva Glettner, Mum Blogger), 2013

**Endurance & Perseverance:** Skateboarding is all about falling down and getting back on the skateboard. With the right coaching and encouragement, kids learning to skateboard will be motivated to learn how to fall. They will then learn how to keep going and become better no matter how many falls it takes. Thus, a great lesson on endurance and perseverance can come with skateboarding.  
— [School is Easy Tutoring](http://School is Easy Tutoring), 2015

**Growth in Mindset:** Our kid learned two critical life lessons (not including how to tic-tac): with practice, she could get better at anything, and falling down is an unavoidable part of the process. These "get better" lessons are cornerstones of a "growth mind set;" that is, a mind-set that leads one to persist despite lack of obvious talent and despite inevitable setbacks.

**Helps Children Accept Differing Learning Speeds:** Seeing other kids slowly master tricks that had previously been impossible for them had a powerful positive influence on my kid. She still can't ollie, but she can ride the bowl.

**Sense of Belonging:** Skating provides an increasingly rare sense of belonging for kids.  
— [motherly.com](http://motherly.com). Edward Shepard, 2017

**Self-confidence:** Novice skaters will learn in time that if they believe in themselves, and have faith that they can land the trick they are about to attempt, it makes success significantly easier. And this benefit translates into all sorts of non-skateboarding situations and environments, which is good because self-confidence in anything is a desirable trait.  
— [infobarrel.com](http://infobarrel.com). Travis Aitch, 2011

# SKATEBOARDING ENCOURAGES PROGRESSION AND CHANGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

### **Community Projects**

Skateboarders all over the world are engaging in community building projects and awareness campaigns for important social issues such as mental health.

Just about every UK council, having realised that skateboarding is healthy and accessible, now boasts at least one new skatepark in the heart of the local community.

### **The Undercroft, Southbank, London**

*One healthy sign of this emerging shift came in 2014, when an immense public campaign saved the historic undercroft skateboarding spot at London's Southbank Centre from being turned into retail units. Today, as well as its section 106 agreement guaranteeing the continuance of skateboarding in the undercroft, the Southbank Centre is keen to pursue further skateboarding and other urban arts activities under its Hungerford Bridge site.*

— The Guardian. Iain Borden, 2015

### **Stockwell Skatepark, Brixton**

*Brixton-based Friends of Stockwell Skatepark have followed the Southbank Centre undercroft in gaining "asset of community value" status for their 27-year-old facility, and are looking to expand the skatepark still further. The new city skateboarding is increasingly central to debates about the value of public spaces, while simultaneously adding artistic, cultural, educational and commercial value to our urban lives.*

*It is even helping to address some of our most difficult social challenges, and providing hugely disadvantaged children and youths with new hopes, skills and futures.*

— The Guardian. Iain Borden, 2015

### **International Community Projects**

*Community-oriented projects such as EthiopiaSkate and Megabiskate in Addis Ababa, Ride It in Detroit, Skateistan in Afghanistan, Cambodia and South Africa, SkatePAL in Palestine, 7Hills in Jordan, Bedouins in Tunisia, the All Nations Skate Project in America all deploy skateboarding to build social capital and counter deep-rooted issues with alcohol, drug abuse, unemployment, violence, gender prejudices and access to education. Skateboarding here is part of an answer to complex social conditions in the city.*

— The Guardian. Iain Borden, 2015

### **Free Movement Skateboarding**

Free Movement Skateboarding is a non-profit organisation based in Athens, Greece working to introduce positive impacts to those in need with the support of UK charity Help Refugees founders Will Ascott and Ruby Mateja.

*As skaters ourselves, we know first-hand the many positive impacts skateboarding can have for your sense of self-worth and fulfilment; binding you into an inclusive community of diverse friends.*

## THE BENEFITS OF SKATEBOARDING

*Since January 2017, we have been working to establish connections with projects operating inside refugee camps, community centres, squats, the local Athenian community, and other skate charities from across the globe.*

*We teach 8 skateboarding workshops every week, engaging 16 different nationalities, with 45% female participation overall.*

*Our portable skatepark allows us to teach in a variety of locations, most importantly those which are under provisioned due to their distance from the city.*

*As our project grows, we will continue to reach out to the more marginalised communities on the outskirts of Athens, and partner with other youth projects to provide the best services we can offer.*

— Will Ascott and Ruby Mateja,  
Free Movement Skateboarding

### **Make Life Skate Life**

Make Life Skate Life also works with local skateboarding communities to create free of charge, community-built concrete skateparks. They have completed projects in India, Bolivia, Jordan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Nepal, and Morocco and are now planning their next stop, Iraq.

*Skate communities are super inclusive. You see lots of different backgrounds, even in places where there are ethnic tensions. Whether you're rich or poor, you're coming together through a shared experience.*

— Jon Chaconas, Make Life Skate Life

### **Ride Against Depression**

In New Zealand Blair Benefield, on returning from serving in Afghanistan, took on a fight to combat mental illness, raising funds through an epic cross-country skateboard journey. Starting in February 2018, he skateboarded the entire length of New Zealand, roughly a 3000km journey.

In Canada, 21 year old Melani Hatter used her love of skateboarding to put herself on the road to recovery from depression. She has now raised over \$5,000 for the Canadian Mental Health Association.

### **The Tony Hawk Foundation**

One of the most famous skateboarders of all time is Tony Hawk. He created the Tony Hawk Foundation in 2002 in response to the lack of safe and legal skateparks in America.

As of June 2018 his foundation awarded US\$5.8 million aiding 596 skatepark projects and received the Robert Wood Johnson Sports Award, honouring innovative and influential approaches to using sports to build a Culture of Health in communities.

### **Athletes for Hope**

Hawk, along with other prominent skateboarders, also founded Athletes for Hope, an organisation that aims to inspire people to volunteer and support their communities through the actions of professional athletes.

# SKATEBOARDING HAS LONG BEEN CONSIDERED COUNTER-CULTURE, SO CAN IT FIT INTO THE CLEAN-CUT WORLD OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES?

The International Olympic Committee has announced that skateboarding will officially be added to the Tokyo 2020 Games, held between the 24th of July and the 9th of August.

*There will be two disciplines on the Skateboarding programme at Tokyo 2020: street and park. The competition will include both men's and women's events, with athletes demonstrating spectacular tricks in a festival atmosphere.*

— [Tokyo2020.com](https://www.tokyo2020.com)

We want to raise awareness of skateboarding's inclusion in the upcoming Olympics to encourage future skateboarding Olympians to enter the sport and to see our students prosper as much as possible from our lessons.

### **Why is the addition of skateboarding as an Olympic sport so important?**

We believe it is and marks a defining turning point in skateboarding's history and acceptance.

Our belief is that the 2020 Olympics will be completely different to any other. In 2012 there were 26 sports contested, and in 2016 there were 28, and 33 are scheduled for 2020.

Similar to skateboarding, we believe Bicycle Motocross racing (BMX) began as a counter-culture sport and it's success and progression since becoming an Olympic game is a viable blueprint for the future for skateboarding.

BMX started in the late 1960s in California, around the time that motocross became a popular sport in the USA, the inspiration behind BMX.

In April 1981, the International BMX Federation was founded and BMX rapidly developed into a unique sport, officially being recognised in 1993 when it was fully integrated into the International Cycling Union (UCI). The sport made its Olympic debut at the 2008 Beijing Games.

The men's event was won by Latvia's Maris Strombergs and the women's event was won by France's Anne-Caroline Chausson who took the first Olympic title in this discipline. For the first time BMXers were credited and awarded for the efforts and contributions on an Olympic stage.

BMX is one of the fastest and youngest cycling disciplines. Its principle is simple: eight riders compete on a track filled with jumps, tight bends and obstacles.

At its introduction, BMX was compared to cycling, which has been at every Summer Olympic Games since the birth of the modern Olympic movement in 1896, with mountain bike racing joining at the Atlanta Olympics, followed by BMX in 2008.

The exciting part about this is that cycling has been a very successful Olympic sport for the UK with Team GB achieving the most gold medals in cycling after athletics. This could be the case for skateboarding too.

# OLYMPIC INCLUSION ENCOURAGES DIVERSITY, CULTURAL INVOLVEMENT AND FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

## **The Benefits of Olympic Inclusion**

Skateboarding has been compared to snowboarding which has become an extremely popular winter Olympics event. We are certain that skateboarding will follow the same pattern of success BMX and snowboarding have had since their inclusion in the Olympics.

BMX freestyle will bring a “fresh look” to the Olympic games; the addition of the BMX freestyle park to the programme completes the event’s rise from the streets to the top table of international sport and demonstrates the same rise skateboarding is expected to reach.

The stamp of approval from the Olympic Games has also led to a more professional attitude among BMX freestyle riders and allowed it to be taken seriously as a sport, another positive effect of Olympic inclusion skateboarding could have.

Shanaze Danielle Reade is a perfect example of progression through the introduction of counter-culture sports. Reade made her Olympic debut in 2002 and progressed into freestyle BMX, winning UCI BMX World Championships three times and has since undertaken an ambassadorial role at British Cycling.

"What Shanaze has accomplished over the years is really quite remarkable," said British Cycling's head coach Iain Dyer. "Being a world champion five times in two different cycling disciplines is no mean feat and Shanaze can leave the team with a strong sense of pride in her achievements."

This demonstrates that the inclusion of BMX as an Olympic sport has allowed new and exciting sports to be taken seriously and encouraged diversity and success in new avenues.

Britain is desperately short of genuine medal contenders in all of these new sports - with Jersey-born Alex Coleborn, who claimed silver at the first-ever UCI Urban Cycling World Championships in 2017; demonstrating how the inclusion of these sports incites a rise in participation and enthusiasm towards the games, particularly in the UK.

Speaking on the subject Coleborn says it's an "Unbelievable' and priceless experience". BMX as an Olympic sport has allowed inclusion and allows people to achieve the unachievable.

Other riders that demonstrate this same inclusion, cultural acceptance and means to reach a very respectable goal include Izzy Burrell the youngest competitor at just 17 and Liverpool-based 20-year-old rising star Emma Finnegan, likely to be GB's strongest female medal contender who says: "Representing GB in BMX freestyle wasn't a thing when I started, especially for me and for women, but now we've been welcomed into the sport along with the guys I think it's really great to be a part of".

Since BMX's inclusion, in 2018, over 100 BMX tracks are said to have been instated by local authorities worldwide to encourage and push the sport. In London, sixteen BMX tracks have been built with many more on the way.

## TOKYO OLYMPICS 2020

### **BMX Tracks Built Since Olympic Inclusion**

Norbury Park - Croydon  
St Mark's Academy BMX Track - Merton  
Brockwell Park - Lambeth  
Burgess Park BMX Track - Southwark  
Beckenham Place Park - Lewisham  
Hornfair Park - Greenwich  
Old Dagenham Park - Barking & Dagenham  
Gooseley Playing Fields - Newham  
Mile End BMX Track - Tower Hamlets  
Haggerston Park - Hackney  
Cheney Row - Waltham Forest  
Tottenham Bike Club - Harringey  
Wormwood Scrubs BMX Track - Hammersmith  
Gurney Leisure Centre - Ealing  
Chalkhill BMX Track - Brent  
Lake Farm Country Park - Hillingdon

Financial investments into new Olympic sports is thought to rise by up to 80% in the first year of inclusion, opening the industry, its recognition and availability even further.

Statistics suggest that the value of the BMX industry doubled following its debut. Thomas Barker, the Executive Director of the International Association of Skateboard Companies stated "A lot of funding for recreation is based off the Olympics, so we're going to see a lot more skate parks and skate facilities built worldwide".

In some ways, we are already ahead of the curve with London already having over fifty skate parks in comparison to other cities such as Paris with twenty and Berlin with only seven.

BMX and skateboarding came together officially for the first time on the Olympic stage at the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Buenos Aires 2018.

An impressive line-up of champions showcasing their skills and creating a demonstration about the future of these street sports included: Leticia Bufoni (BRA), professional street skateboarder and reigning world champion, Nyjah Huston (USA), professional skateboarder and overall champion at the Street League Skateboarding competition series in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2017 and 2018 and Logan Martin (AUS), BMX freestyler and 2018 X-Games winner.

Another highlight included an initiation in skateboarding with Tony Hawk, one of the most influential skateboarders of all time.

Innovative and all inclusive, the concept of Urban Park will be replicated for the first time in Tokyo.

The potential for the future of skateboarding is certainly comparable to the stellar rise BMX has seen since Olympic inclusion and we are certain skateboarding will quickly follow in BMX's footsteps.

# THE WORD IS OUT...

### **Pro Backing**

It's not only Skates & Ladders who are excited and backing skateboarding in the 2020 Olympics, with many widely recognized names and faces fully behind the progression.

Skateboarding superstar Nyjah Huston, USA's eight-time X Games gold medal winner stated "The word is out. Everyone is on it. Being here only makes me look forward to it (Tokyo 2020) more. I am stoked to have a chance to be at the first one".

Also, while bashful about her contribution to the sport, Bufoni does admit to feeling a rush when she considers how far skateboarding has come, even in the four years since she was part of its showcase at the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games Sport Lab. "I am really proud," she said.

"We are getting more and more support now. We are getting more and more women in the sport. It's a great time for skateboarding and it's going to be even better after the Olympics."

Giving an insight into his opinions, global title winning skateboarder Chris Cole, who turned pro aged 20 in 2002 says "It is the natural progression for skateboarding and the Olympics".

"Neither can go back but must move forwards in a positive direction that captures more of an audience and creates a bigger fan base. Skateboarding is a part of each skater as much as their childhood memories and upbringing are".

Now 35 years old, Cole knows that some of his fellow competitors, especially the younger ones, are likely to "bring new tricks" at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, but emphasises that his sport will always be about more than who occupies the podium places at the end of a contest. "Creativity will remain a drive with or without competition".

### **Conclusion**

Olympic skateboarding is set to include two events: street and park, both with male and female teams. In Skateboarding, the rider is free to select which parts of the course to tackle and which tricks to perform. Following its exciting and creative debut skateboarding is set to attain better financial investment, more facilities, encouragement of inclusion and diversity, a new avenue for Team GB to flourish in and increased potential for young people to take part and find success.

Given this positive forecast for the future, we believe that this is the best time to invest as a country into the growth of skateboarding and, with investment, we will have a better potential for winning medals along with an abundance of social and cultural benefits.

We want to pioneer skateboarding as an Olympic sport and are excited at the chance to help make this a reality for young people and see them prosper and flourish through skateboarding.