



Gymnastics New Zealand

Date: November 29th, 2018

Level 2/6 Arawa Street
Grafton, Auckland

OPEN LETTER

Dear Gymnastics NZ, and the New Zealand gymnastics community,

It is our understanding that for "[parkour to be officially recognised as an FIG discipline, the General Assembly must ratify the necessary changes to the Federation's Statutes](#)" (pg. 79, para. 3) at the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) Congress in Baku, Azerbaijan on December 2nd – 3rd 2018. The FIG must pass this vote in order to *retrospectively justify* their deeds, that have to date been outside the bounds of its governance, authority, and the scope of its statutes.

It is of deep concern to Parkour NZ and the New Zealand parkour community, and should be of deep concern to Gymnastics NZ and the New Zealand gymnastics community, that all of the FIGs efforts to appropriate parkour have been both unilateral and conducted ultra-vires. It is of additional concern (and utterly absurd) that the FIG consider it appropriate to ask its national *gymnastics* federation members for their consent without asking national *parkour* federations for theirs.

Parkour and gymnastics are distinct disciplines in [history, values, and culture](#). Nonetheless, we welcome the opportunity for respectful collaboration with the New Zealand gymnastics community in ways that support the holistic and autonomous growth and development of both our sports in New Zealand. However, the actions of the FIG only serve to undermine such efforts. We see the inclusion of parkour under the FIG as harmful to the future of the gymnastics community itself, particularly in relation to its present and future Olympic disciplines. The IOC have confirmed that "[the athletes for any new sports added to the programme for Paris will be included within the overall quota of 10,500](#)". This means that any attempt by FIG to include parkour at the Paris 2024 or subsequent games will come at the cost of established gymnasts, whose disciplines must reduce the number of eligible athletes



from their existing Olympic disciplines (e.g. artistic gymnastics). This is also likely to harm, if not prevent the chances of other gymnasts ever competing at the Olympic Games as parkour will prevent other gymnastics disciplines from entering the Olympics (e.g. acrobatic gymnastics). We are not prepared for the misappropriation of our sport to condemn the promising Olympic futures of New Zealand gymnasts.

It is crucially important for the New Zealand gymnastics community to understand that *the New Zealand parkour community, from its grassroots practitioners to its elected representatives, is in firm opposition to parkour under the FIG*. The FIG have claimed that adopting parkour is the same as the previous adoptions of trampoline and acrobatic gymnastics. This is grossly inaccurate, as the international federations for both sports willingly merged with the FIG. The FIG have received no mandate from [Parkour Earth](#), the International Federation for Parkour/Freerunning/Art du Déplacement (parkour), and thus have no right to assume control of parkour. As the rightful National Sport/Recreation Organisation for parkour in New Zealand it is our duty to look after the rights and interests of our practitioners and community, ensuring that our sport is neither misappropriated and/or encroached upon by the FIG internationally and/or nationally by any of the FIGs national federation members.

Parkour is not gymnastics. We, therefore, earnestly request that Gymnastics NZ cast a vote of **no**, or otherwise abstain from voting, on any resolution of the FIG to adopt parkour as a new gymnastic discipline, and thus avoid a clear conflict of interest.

We appreciate your due diligence in this matter and welcome your support in championing good sport governance in the wake of other appalling situations among other sporting communities in our nation.

Thank you for respecting our right to look after our own affairs.

Yours sincerely,

Damien Puddle
Chief Executive Officer



Nigel Elvidge
Chair

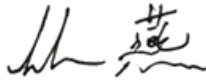




Tim Rogers
Elected Member



Michelle Kan
Elected Member



Maika Hemera
Elected Member



Terri Hendriks
Co-Opted Member



CC: Sport New Zealand
New Zealand Olympic Committee
Hon Grant Robertson, Minister for Sport and Recreation
Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
International Olympic Committee

ADENDUM

We have closely followed the attempts by the FIG to misappropriate our sport and have kept abreast of pertinent details regarding the FIGs impropriety. Here we provide a summary list of those actions to date that are significant and worth repeating. As expanded upon by Parkour Earth in their [open letter to FIG dated December 14th, 2017](#):

- The FIG have presented a misinformed and misrepresented historical context and lineage of parkour.
- The FIG is in breach of the established principle of solidarity as outlined in the Olympic Charter.
- The FIGs actions regarding parkour to date have been 'ultra vires - beyond the governance, authority and scope of the FIG's statute'.
 - As above, it is grossly inaccurate for the FIG website to have claimed international governance over parkour without having been given that mandate from the parkour community.
- The IOC commissioned report, '[Youth Perceptions of the Olympic Games: Attitudes Towards Action Sports at the YOG and Olympic Games](#)', firmly recommends that the IOC work with action sport specific federations and not subsume sports like parkour into traditional national sport federations.
- The FIG plans to develop a parkour coaching education programme that will be in conflict with the already established coaching certifications and qualifications in nations around the world, including New Zealand.



- The open letters to FIG by Parkour Earth ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#)) and the national parkour federations and communities around the world signaling their opposition to parkour under FIG, including:
 - [New Zealand](#), [Australia](#), [United Kingdom](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [South Africa](#), [Switzerland](#), [Poland](#), [Finland](#), [Sweden](#), [Indonesia](#), [Singapore](#), [Argentina](#), [Denmark](#), [Israel](#), [Italy](#), [Colombia](#), [Mexico](#), [Austria](#), and [Spain](#).

And additionally:

- The FIG claiming that parkour was simply inspiration for the development of a new contemporary gymnastic discipline was a fabrication. [Leaked documents demonstrate that parkour was always the end goal](#) and that the initial claims were falsehoods meant to dissuade the parkour community understanding what was taking place.
- The speed of the FIGs efforts to absorb and misappropriate parkour have allowed no room for the necessary care, consideration, and respect required of adopting any new discipline let alone the diverse and ever evolving practice of parkour.
- [The resignation of David Belle](#), parkour founder, President of the FIG Parkour Commission, and central figure to the FIGs parkour mission.
- [The resignation of Florian Busj](#), Sports Manager for the FIG Parkour Commission.
- [The en-masse resignation of Ahmed Al-Breih, Aleksandra Shevchenko, Kamil Tobiasz, Estelle Piget from the FIG Parkour Commission.](#)
 - [And subsequent cover up by FIG to downplay the situation.](#)
- Overall lack of transparency from the FIG to both the gymnastics community and the parkour community.
- And finally, statements of opposition from the other founders of parkour, conveniently missing from any dialogue with the FIG, including [Malik Diouf](#), [Chau Belle](#), [Laurent Piemontesi](#), and [Yann Hnautra](#).