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PHILIP KIM – ‘BREAKING’ NEW GROUND AND MAKING HISTORY

Every athlete competing at the Paralympic or Olympic Games takes a unique journey on their way to the top. While talent, great coaching, and years of hard work are elements almost all have in common, the elite athletes who represent our nation at the highest level often need to overcome seemingly impossible barriers to create opportunities for themselves. This is Philip Kim’s story.



Philip Kim, aka ‘Phil Wizard’, is one of the most creatively original breakers in the Breaking scene.

Igniting a remarkable athletic ability young, and following his love for breaking, Phil’s success was one filled with perseverance, overcoming doubt, and navigating family expectations – as he went off the beaten path.

With the sport of breaking making its debut at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, Phil was suddenly catapulted from a celebrity in his niche community to one of Canada’s top Olympic prospects. Now a trailblazer, Phil’s journey is a testament to the power of betting on yourself.

Born and raised in Vancouver, Phil was 12 years old when he first came across a breaking crew performing at a local art gallery. Phil was instantly captivated and blown away by their skill.

The crew made an impression on him and, when it was time to take a required dance class at school, Phil expressed his interest in learning breaking. The instructor of that class was, coincidentally, part of the same breaking crew he had watched perform at the art gallery.

“When I first saw breaking, I remember thinking I could do it, and I could be really good at it. The dance instructor from that class referred to me their studio and, until this day, I still train and work with them.”

Phil was always a creative kid and enjoyed artistic expression, getting lost in the imaginary world and characters of anime.

“To me, breaking felt like one big story told through moves. When you perform, you take on a stage name, a persona, and a battle ... and then you go back to just being a regular person.”

In the latter half of high school, Phil started taking his breaking more seriously and knew it was what he wanted to do. Feeling disconnected from school, he deepened his connections with the breaking community.

But, during his final year of high school, Phil was at a crossroads. Coming from a Korean immigrant family, there was immense pressure to pursue a secure and stable career path through education. To please his parents, Phil enrolled in university.

He only lasted one semester.

“My parents were very apprehensive about me choosing breaking as a career path. It was unconventional and they wanted stability for me. But I knew after my first semester of university that I needed to stay true to myself - to take a chance and pursue breaking full time.”

Taking a calculated risk, Phil asked his parents to give him three years to pursue his dream. Although he believed in his ability, having won countless local competitions, Phil needed to prove his own ability to himself. He funded his way to one of the world’s most prestigious breaking competitions in Los Angeles ... and won.

“Although I was at the top of my game, I was still experiencing quite a bit of imposter syndrome, and I had doubts as to whether breaking would be a sustainable life for me. It was a grind, and, in the back of my head, I also had the same concerns as my parents.”

Phil’s parents remained supportive and enabled him to continue pursue his passion. Even with their apprehension, they believed in his ability to succeed at anything he loved and stood by him. Over those years, Phil developed the mental resilience required to better overcome the self-doubt and insecurities he felt about his chosen path.

Then, the announcement that breaking would become an Olympic sport opened a whole other world of possibilities.

“The Olympics was never on my radar - or even a possibility - but now the possibilities seem endless. It’s exciting to see how the status of breaking will be elevated by being on this global stage and finally receiving the appreciation it deserves. I hope that I can do for breaking what Tony Hawke did for skateboarding.”

And what advice would Phil give to his younger self?

"Don't doubt yourself. You're going to pursue your passion anyway because you know it's what you love to do. Why engage in a mental war with yourself? If it doesn't work out, you can always explore other paths. Give it your all."

Through the Olympic Games, it’s Phil’s mission to inspire a new generation of breakers - one that that won’t face the same apprehensions from their parents.

Now a *Team Toyota* athlete, Phil is looking ahead toward Paris 2024, training, staying creative, and championing the breaking community every step of the way. All while making history at the same time.