

Parkour and a Norwegian Adventure

AN INTERVIEW WITH A GOLD AWARD HOLDER

Twenty-year-old Tomáš Vavrečka is from Hlubočec, a village close to Ostrava. He joined DofE and earned the Gold Award. We asked him about his experience.

Why did you start DofE?

Our class teacher presented it to us in the first year of secondary school. He himself is a Silver DofE Award holder. There were ten of us who started DofE at the bronze level. We thought it might be a fun thing to do.

You have just finished the gold level. Why did you continue from bronze to silver and on?

I liked the activities I was doing and I would have continued even without DofE, so I thought it was better to have it recognized with a certificate that I spend my free time actively. It is something I can always put on my CV.

What activities did you pick?

In my Skills section, I chose writing for the school newspaper. For the Voluntary Service section, I was volunteering in a children's centre where I was preparing different activities like games, competitions and trips. For Physical Recreation, I chose

parkour. I started doing parkour more than seven years ago and I wanted to continue. DofE helped me to get better, to learn new tricks and especially to train regularly. It also motivated me to start our own non-profit organization, Parkour club Freerun Pražská. Later, for the Voluntary Service section of the gold DofE level, I became a parkour trainer for younger kids.

So you were one of the first parkour teams in Czechia?

Yes, we were. Nowadays we work with different YouTubers and well-known people, and also perform at festivals and events. We have weekly training sessions, clubs, summer camps. There are so many things happening. We just really want to get Czech parkour to the best level possible.

Part of DofE is the "Adventurous Journey". How did you enjoy your time in the wilderness?

The Adventurous Journey is always in a group and you are there with your friends. I remember that on the bronze level there were several boys who had never really slept outside before. They were from a town and it was their first experience of nature, and sleeping under the stars was a great challenge. But I enjoyed our gold Adventurous Journey the most. We went to Norway and visited the famous Trolltunga rock formation. The weather wasn't really kind to us but in the end we made it. To stand 600 metres up over nothing was breathtaking. I enjoyed the three expeditions the most from the whole programme

Tomáš now runs his own parkour club.



Tomáš and his friends at the Trolltunga rock formation in Norway.



Tomáš receives the Gold Award from the British ambassador Nick Archer.

because we decided to really take the challenge and make it adventurous.

You spent four years in the programme. What has it given you?

I learnt to be independent and to organise my free time. I stepped out of my comfort zone and tried new things. Before that my parents were helping me with everything, now I have my own non-profit organisation.

I know that DofE motivated you to travel more. What are your plans now?

I plan to return to Norway (for the third time) and want to visit Dubai and Thailand. But I don't want to stay in posh hotels; I don't want to be a tourist. I want to do it the "DofE way": outdoors, adventurous and fun.

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