



boarding? The simple answer is yes. But the people in the parkour community have been saying that this is going to be the next big action sport for years. But it's taking a lot longer than I thought."

Parkour as a launchpad for soon-to-be popular lifestyle brands is far from a universal opinion, especially since no specialized equipment or clothing is actually needed. While many consider sturdy, lightweight running shoes a basic necessity (K-Swiss launched the first parkour-specific shoe in 2007), some think barefoot is best. Pants are usually loose-fitting enough to allow unhindered movement and offer some protection from abrasion, although here personal choices include running shorts, baggy sweats modified to mid-calf and cargo pants (so maps and other gear can be stowed in the pockets). Tops are soft, lightweight T-shirts.

"As a subculture I don't think it will go too far past rock climbing," says Cliff Kravit, the founder of a California parkour community. "I doubt it will even reach the popularity level of yoga."

But, as anyone who has ever heard the words "downward dog" can tell you, yoga began yoga mats and drawstring pants,

yoga-centric sweat towels and even yoga-appropriate tank tops with built-in sports bras. Now, just imagine the potential for the yoga community if MTV had decided to run six episodes of something called "Ultimate Yoga Challenge." Kravit, who teaches a weekly class locally, said he notices a surge in popularity every time there's media focus on parkour. "After 'Prince of Persia,' the class was overflowing," he said.

As with other issues, the parkour community has a difference of opinion on the idea of using the discipline to move merchandise and make money. Kravit thinks it runs completely counter to everything the sport stands for ("Telling you what clothes are right for parkour is putting you in a box," he says), while Bevine and company see themselves as providing an environment and an infrastructure for the emerging sport as it finds its legs in the popular culture. "We're helping them with the storytelling part," said Francis Lyons, an executive producer of "UPC." "But those guys are the stars. It's going to go wherever they want it to."

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Cavendish wears emotions on his yellow-jerseyed sleeve

By Anne Stein

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If Mark Cavendish wins Sunday's final stage of the Tour de France, don't be surprised if he bursts into tears. Tough, brash and outspoken, the 25-year-old British sprinter, who as of mid-July has notched an incredible 57 victories in his four-year pro career (most pro cyclists are thrilled to win one or two races a year), is known to shed a few tears.

"Things mean a lot to me," said Cavendish, who rides for the U.S.-based HTC-Columbia team, known for its anti-drugs stance. "I'm passionate about everything I do — racing, relationships or anything else in my life," he said via phone while getting a massage after a brutal mountain stage through the Alps on July 12. "With that passion comes tears. They're the most open of emotions, and you really can't fake them."

Cavendish, one of the most successful British riders, has become one of the biggest personalities in the sport, thanks to his uncensored opinions of himself, his teammates and cycling.

He's landed a three-book deal, and his first book, "Boy Racer: My Journey to Tour de France Record-Breaker" (VeloPress), was just published in the U.S. In it, he rips cyclists who use drugs, gives an inside look at pro bike racing and recalls the British coaches who once said he was too fat and slow to be successful.

He also praises the teammates who set up his sprints, delves into his personal life and discusses why he's succeeded while those he grew up with haven't.

Love him or hate him

One on one, the Isle of Man native is soft-spoken, gracious and polite. But occasional post-race bursts of temper have landed him in hot water with cycling's governing body, and he's been accused several times of causing crashes. Bike racing fans either love him or hate him.

"I always wear my heart on my sleeve," Cavendish says. "I'm always the first person to criticize myself. If I think something's good, I say it's good; if it's bad, I say it's bad. I've got high morals and always believe in being open and honest."

And, he adds, "If I have a problem with someone, I make sure they know that. I don't believe in holding back, in being two-faced or hiding behind a mask."

How to win a bike race

For a guy who's so emotional, Cavendish is incredibly scientific about winning, meticulously planning race finishes with coaches. When he's pedaling at 45-50



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY PHOTO

Mark Cavendish after winning stage 11 of the Tour de France. The race ends Sunday.

mph in a winning sprint, Cavendish says he hears nothing, despite the riot of finish-line noise.

"It's a funny thing, being in the zone," he explains. "It's quite sterile. You're making hundreds of split-second calculations, and it's quiet. It's like a tunnel, and the finish line is all you see. The other bike riders are objects that you make calculations about — which ones are going faster, which are going slower."

If Cavendish wins Sunday's stage, which he won last year, it'll be a major victory for him and his team. In 2008, he had 20 victories, including four stages of the Tour. Last year, he had 23 wins, including six at the Tour.

This year was tumultuous for Cavendish, and he came into the July race with just three wins under his belt. Complications from pre-season dental surgery left him unable to train for three weeks. He broke up with his fiancée, and a close friend was seriously hurt in an accident. He publicly criticized a teammate, and the press hounded him about not winning.

The move that turned off fans, however, came at the end of April, when Cavendish made an obscene gesture aimed at his critics as he crossed the finish line first at the Tour de Romandie.

Cycling fans questioned if the boy wonder would crack in the Tour de France. But July 8, he won the 116.5-mile stage 5, dissolving into tears on the podium. He won the next day, and again July 15.

"He hasn't had an ideal year in the lead-up to the Tour, and he obviously had a huge amount of pressure on him from the media, the team and probably himself," blogged teammate Michael Rogers. "All that pressure came out after the win."

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