The local extreme sports scene goes over the top as PMEBs take on punishing challenges, reports TAN TECK HENG

Zany sports

WHAT was going through Bryan Woon’s head when he picked up chessboxing? Was life too easy for the London-based banker? Does he play better chess after a few hard knocks to the head?

Invented by French comic artist Enki Bilal in 1992 before it was officially founded by the Dutch chessboxer Iepe Rubingh in 2003, chessboxing is exactly what it says it is: competitors spar in 11 alternating rounds of speed chess and boxing. It’s currently gaining traction in Europe and even India.

“Tm hooked because it pushes me to mental and physical exhaustion,” says Mr Woon, who started the sport over two years ago. “The closer your body feels to shutting down and giving up from fatigue and pain, you realise the more alive you are.”

Mr Woon is not the only professional around who is going nuts over extreme sports. There’s growing interest by PMEBs here in zany concepts beyond our shores, and they are keen on seeing similar events sprout up in Singapore.

Take private banker Benn Ng for instance, who will head for the Marathon du Medoc in Pauillac, France, come September. Founded in 1984, the Medoc gives other sporting events a run for their money – a scenic 42.195km route that cuts through some of the finest chateaus in Bordeaux, and – you guessed it – you get to hydrate with wines. Hungry? There are also cheese and oysters served mid-race. And forget the tracksuit, it’s also a costume party: this year’s theme is “The Science Fiction”, so Mr Ng – who has just completed the Great Wall Marathon in May – is planning to go as an extra-terrestrial.

“If I have to rate the Medoc as opposed to our local events, the latter is by far the best”, says Medoc alumnus Collin Ng, who completed it in 2010 while dressed as Fred Flintstone. “The crowd support, drinks and food stations, originality and the route through vineyards and old chateaus, were all fantastic. I hope to see such unique events in Singapore.”

Mr Ng's wish may be fulfilled sooner than he expects, as the extreme sports scene here is notching up successes and has begun to mature. Various clubs have been formed to cater to the needs of the extreme sports fanatics, who are usually more adventurous and enjoy participating in activities that challenge their physical limits.

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The extreme sports scene in Singapore has seen a significant growth over the past few years, with the establishment of various clubs catering to different extreme sports. These clubs have been instrumental in providing structured training and offering a safe environment for enthusiasts to pursue their passion.

One of the prominent extreme sports in Singapore is Parkour, where athletes navigate through urban environments using their upper body strength and agility. The sport has gained popularity among youth, and several clubs have been formed to promote and develop Parkour in the country. The Singapore Parkour Federation (SPF) has been actively involved in organizing events and promoting the sport.

Another popular extreme sport in Singapore is Skydiving, which offers adrenaline junkies the thrill of freefalling from great heights. The Singapore Skydiving Club (SSC) has been a key player in promoting skydiving in the country, with regular training camps and events.

The extreme sports scene in Singapore is continuously evolving, with new clubs and organizations forming to cater to emerging trends. The government has also taken steps to regulate and standardize extreme sports, ensuring the safety and well-being of the participants.

Mr Ng’s wish for extreme sports to become a popular trend in Singapore may soon be realized, as the sport gains momentum and attracts more enthusiasts. With the right support and infrastructure, extreme sports have the potential to become a significant part of the local sporting landscape.

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