

## History of Break-Even

As a boy, I (Bart Hilhorst) always wanted to dance. I remember trying to breakdance in the late 80s in elementary school, but there were no teachers around to teach me. However, the dream to learn this dance always stayed with me. When I was in high school, the song *It's like that* by *RUN DMC vs Jason Nevins* was released in 1997. Immediately I was impressed once more by the moves in the videoclip, but I did not make it past some half-baked attempts at imitating the acrobatics.

When I started studying at the UT, I quickly found some fellow students who liked the idea of learning to breakdance. We found a dancing school in Enschede where it was taught and I met Rudsel Cameron and Dennis van den Bos there. Rudsel had learned breakdance as a kid on Curaçao and was, as an 'oldskooler', relearning his old moves. Just like me, Dennis was a student, learning the dance for the first time.

Unfortunately for us, the dancing school closed not long after and we had no a place to train. With Rudsel as our mentor, we moved to a shopping center in the city (the Irenepromenade). Amidst the shopping people we practised our moves and danced, a bit like how breakdance came to life in New York.

One day someone found out that there was a ballet room with a mirror in the Vrijhof, where we could practice. We snuck in to train there a few times, until I was asked by the Vrijhof to explain our activities. I explained my vision to start a breakdance association together with other students. The Vrijhof supported this idea and we were allowed to use a gym for our trainings.

Throughout the years more students joined us, one of them being Ivo Kleine Schaars, who had been busy with rapping in high school and also wanted to learn to dance. We became a group of friends, with dancing as our shared passion.

During the introduction weeks at the UT, we performed and did workshops to promote Break-Even. Eventually our annual performance at the Batavierenrace was our yearly highlight, which we would work on for months in advance. In 2005, together with Dennis and Ivo, I founded Break-Even officially, with us being the first board members. This student association was the only of its kind in the Benelux.

The best thing about Break-Even was that, besides it being an awesome association, it was also a place where friendships for life were formed. Almost all my good friends that I'm still in touch with, have been a Break-Even member. I find that a very valuable thing.

One thing in life is assured: everything changes sooner or later. When breakdance started getting less attention in the media, a lot of the 'first generation' members were finished with their studies. To prevent the association from having a shortage of members, hiphop was added to the association in 2016. Using this dance style, Break-Even could persist and now it has more members than ever.

For me, the most important reason to found Break-Even was to share my passion for dancing with others. To feel the energy in the room while we are all dancing. I hope this thought will stay present within Break-Even forever!

Bart Hilhorst