

From Tempe to the Thames: Sparky takes London

ASU's mascot touring city to promote ASU London and Union Jack Classic football game

By Scott Bordow, ASU News
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Here's a sentence you don't often read: Sparky the Sun Devil, Arizona State University's official mascot, has been invited to London this summer at the behest of the British Consulate.

So thanks to this personal invitation, Sparky is packing his bags in advance of the [Union Jack Classic](#) to be played between ASU and the University of Kansas Sept. 19 at Wembley Stadium.

Along the way, he'll help British Airways celebrate the 30th anniversary of the airline's direct flights from Phoenix to London — and on July 1, its 80th anniversary of flying to the United States.

While in London, Sparky and team will promote the game and [ASU London](#), a U.K.-accredited higher educational institution that will open its doors to students this fall with degree programs that combine a three-year U.K. bachelor's degree from ASU London with an accelerated, one-year master's degree from ASU.

Building on the success of [The Engineering & Design Institute London \(TEDI-London\)](#), which was co-created by ASU in 2020, ASU London incorporates TEDI-London's project-based programs in engineering alongside new degree offerings in business management, computer science, and electrical and electronic engineering.

"We appreciate this wonderful opportunity to help showcase ASU in London," Athletics Director Graham Rossini said. "It will be a special way to connect with alums and students and fans, and help spotlight the official opening of ASU London — and the inaugural Union Jack Classic football game at historic Wembley Stadium in September against Kansas.

"Athletics is a tool for the university that helps us connect to communities, not only here but overseas as well. Sparky is excited, packed and ready to go."

**Follow along for
Sparky's postcards from
London**

[Sun Devil Athletics Instagram](#)

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Sparky's visit is designed to benefit London tourism as well.

Jason Miller, senior director of brand and creative for ASU's Brand Strategy and Management Team, said the consulate and Visit Britain, the official website for tourism in London, hopes the social media coverage of Sparky's trip will persuade ASU fans to not just come to London for the game, but to stay a while.

"This is our proactive way of reaching out a hand and saying, 'Come over here, support the team, have some fun and go on vacation,'" Miller said.

And if you have questions about traveling overseas, Sparky has you covered. He'll be releasing an educational video with the [ASU passport office](#) designed to help Sun Devil fans navigate the trip.

So where will Sparky go while he's there? After hitting up famous tourist locations like Buckingham Palace, the British Museum of History and Big Ben, Sparky will also attend an ASU alumni pep rally at a Philadelphia-themed sports pub called Passyunk Avenue, which will host ASU fans during the Union Jack Classic.

Finally, Sparky will take a ride on the London Tube, the city's rapid transit system.

That should make some commuters sit up and take notice. Let's hope he remembers to mind the gap!

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Sparky, ASU's official mascot, will be in London this summer to promote ASU London and the Union Jack Classic football game. Image courtesy of Jason Miller