

Sports Trader

for the sport, outdoor and lifestyle retail trade



THE ALL NEW
ROCKY
PURE ADVENTURE
BERG

What's trending in outdoor?
Heritage is today's top sneaker trend
Can things get *even better* for hockey?



On the cover

Rocky launches their new Pure Adventure Summer 2017 apparel and footwear range this month. The range is specifically designed to provide exceptional quality, rugged durability, great fit and comfort, all at affordable prices.

With over 20 new styles, Rocky offers a versatile range of casual clothing and footwear at great value for today's outdoor enthusiast.

Rocky's authentic clothing products are all made from 100% cotton and cotton rock premium fabrics for timeless apparel.

For more information visit www.rockysa.co.za or contact Crown Footwear on Tel: 031 700 1601.

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Industry loses a legend

DES FONTAINE, who founded Des Fontaine Sports in 1955, passed away in the beginning of April at the remarkable age of 92. Fontaine left this world with more than 50 years of industry knowledge.

He has served in WWII as a telegraphist and radio communicator, was an agent for a clothing company, and worked with his tennis partners (the Hamill brothers), but Fontaine (pictured above with son Bruce) is probably most well-known to industry members as owner of Des Fontaine Sports.

His Klerksdorp store was actually an unplanned decision: the owner of the new building approached Fontaine to ask if he wouldn't like to open a sport store there. The independent sport store has stood the test of time – despite many like it having opened and been forced to close their doors during its reign.

The success of his Des Fontaine Sports store can be attributed to offering good products and service – for him service was everything and the secret to his success. He offered his customers value for money and sold specialised equipment with insight and technical knowledge that chain stores could not match.

Although Fontaine never officially retired, he stopped going to the shop on a daily basis from about five years ago, says Bruce, who runs the Klerksdorp store. He also kept ledgers and checked bank statements for him, he says.

In his day his father loved fishing, playing tennis and badminton. He was well known and loved in the sporting industry for many years, says Bruce.

"He was able to see our new store in Klerksdorp and was very happy with the move to bigger and better positioned shop in 26 Central Avenue, Flamwood, Klerksdorp."



Pro Golfers signed as ambassadors for Skechers' Go Golf footwear and apparel, have been performing well. Wesley Bryan is the first South Carolinian native to win the PGA Tour RBC Heritage since its launch in 1969. He was signed as a Skechers Performance ambassador at the beginning of this year.

Matt Atkins won his first Web.com Tour at the El Bosque Mexico Championship at the end of April. "Atkins has enormous potential and this is

just the beginning of his highly promising career," says Rick Higgins, senior vice-president of merchandising and marketing for Skechers Performance.

Dominican-American retired baseball player David 'Big Papi' Ortiz will be starring in a multi-platform global marketing campaign for Skechers' athletic and casual men's footwear later this year. He joins sporting legends, including Sugar Ray Leonard, Joe Montana and Howie Long, in Skechers footwear campaigns.

People on

The industry will know Liz Woodroffe, responsible for Awesome Tools' marketing, as the wife of owner Bruce Woodroffe, but she also had a two-decade-long career in the world of fashion. "Marketing is a new field for me, as I am a qualified fashion designer who worked in various sectors of the clothing industry for 20 years before joining the higher education sector," she says.



passion." Odendaal ran three stores (Safari Den opened in Ladysmith in 1969, Willem se Den in Vryheid in 1979, and 007 Arms opened in Margate in 1993) before he retired in 2006.

"It was during the Vryheid era that my mother, Violet, set me up with a nice rep from Durban

who called on the shop at the time, and we were married a year later," Liz recalls.

"I bought Bruce his first Leatherman Super Tool from Willem se Den when they first came out!"

"Bruce and I have been married for nearly 30 years and although I have never worked for him before, I have always been part of his business life – from the early days in Durban where he ran Woodroffe Agencies, to our time in Johannesburg when he worked for a sporting brand, and finally embarking on our journey to Cape Town to buy our own business, Awesome Tools."

She lectured during the last eight years of her fashion design career and was appointed as Academic Head at the Cape Town College of Fashion Design in 2014. She has a Bachelor's degree in Fashion Design and a Master's degree in Higher Education studies from UCT.

Although she is new to working in the industry, she has been part of this industry for her entire life. "My father, Willem Odendaal, ran his own sport and gun shops for nearly four decades and was well known for his hunting

PUMA SA ambassador Steven Pienaar returned to his roots (the Westbury Oval in Johannesburg) for Youth Day to host the annual Steven Pienaar Community Tournament. This year 160 teams aged U8 to U20 competed for medals, while the senior players aimed to win the R100 000 first prize, or R50 000 for the runners up. Quarter-finalists across all age groups also received new PUMA playing kit with the tournament branding.



Photo: Maritz Verwey

Pienaar always attends the finals weekend, where he shares his experience gained from playing for teams like Ajax in Holland, Borussia Dortmund, and



Sunderland, Spurs and Everton.

Internationally, PUMA also brought youths and stars like Antoine Griezmann and Thierry Henry together to consult them about what a player wants in a soccer boot. Based on their input, the

PUMA ONE boot was developed. Mamelodi Sundowns attackers Percy Tau (left) and Themba Zwane will wear the real leather PUMA ONE in classic white in the coming season. Its name comes from these players asking for one boot that will work well for any style of play. They also wanted a boot that fits well, helps to move fast and gives more feel ... all in ONE.



The Merrell Adventure Addicts' latest initiative, to encourage more people to take on adventure racing, showed that even the inexperienced can take on the Expedition Africa adventure race. Don Sims, one of the Merrell Adventure Addicts, mentored them for the race. "I'm hugely proud of all of them and they've definitely earned my respect," he said. "This was probably the most emotional finish I've had in all my years of racing."

the move



Members of Footwear Trading, the local distributor of Fila, attended the brand's international product launch in New York, where they met the president of Fila, Young-Chan Cho. He is second to left, next to Laurence Slotsky. Michael Brink (2nd right) and Dale Strimie (right) also attended the event. .

Katz Footwear's new Gauteng agent, Keith Baptista from Hotline Agents, has three decades of top class experience in the Southern African footwear industry. During this time he has worked with several of the biggest names in the industry.



Having started in the industry carrying skips for his brother-in-law Donald Blanshard's wholesale company, Foot Fashion, he 'graduated' after about three years to selling ladies' fashion imports for wholesaler Falkow Bros. He eventually went on to work with Yusuf Bham, helping grow Mega Shoes for about two and a half decades, until Bham retired. Before joining Mega Shoes he had also worked for Roy Eckstein at Jaguar Shoes (former PUMA distributor), Robby Stoller at Dangee Corporation (now Dangee | Carken), as well as for Armadillo Footwear.

Katz Footwear is the local distributor of the Enzoilini, Loxion Kulca, Luciano Rossi, and Willow brands.



After 45 years in the sports industry, Gilbert Dufourq retired from Acushnet at the end of June. The 400 Club, a social club for Durban industry members who between them have almost 400 years of experience in the industry, gave him a farewell lunch. Standing, left to right: Tommy Bilson, Darryl Parkins, Willy Keet, Gilbert Dufourq, Chris Bryant, Dave Northend, Pierre Dufourq (Gilbert's brother), and Shane Norton. Sitting, left to right: Stan Holmes and Rob Blom.

The adidas SA Running BU has a new senior manager (Pieter Warnich, top right) and brand activation and sports marketing manager (Amanda Standley, right below).

Warnich takes over from Kate Woods, who was promoted to head the brand's Running BU for all Emerging Markets from Dubai, and will manage the running team. He is no rookie to the industry with 12 years of experience under his belt and also no stranger to adidas SA as he previously held the position of buy planning and purchasing manager for the company.

He started his career in sports retail in 2005 at Holdsport, where he worked for seven years. During this time he was involved in the planning and buying of apparel and footwear, for both Sportsmans Warehouse and Outdoor Warehouse. Before joining adidas SA, he was the planning manager for Mass Discounters, part of the Massmart group.

Standley also has 12 years of industry experience, and brings her own wealth of marketing experience to the team. She has a post-graduate marketing degree from the Red and Yellow School of Advertising and Marketing, and among her career highlights she lists the period when she represented the IRB as their sponsorship rights agency on the HSBC Sevens World Series whilst working at Essentially Group. She has also been the event manager of the Emirates Airline Dubai Rugby Sevens.



The agencies that ran SASGAM in the 70's

THE PHOTO of SASGAM members from the 1970s provided by Herby Prout and Anne Vilas of Opal Sport, which we published in our email newsletter* certainly stirred up some memories. As Pat Wiltshire points out, a company was invited to become a SASGAM member – the person was merely delegated to attend meetings. The companies the people in the photo represented are therefore important. It is interesting to note how many agents and agencies played a very prominent role in the industry more than forty years ago, as opposed to the distributorships and subsidiaries we have today. The full name of the industry organisation was, after all, the South African Sporting Goods Agents and Manufacturers Association. Thank you to everybody who assisted with identifying the industry movers and shakers of the 1970's – Herby Prout, Pierre Bester, Trevor Bothwick and Pat Wiltshire. We can now report that the people in the photo are:

Back row: Peter Robbs from Robbs, Elliott and Matella, who had the agency for Gray Nicolls. Next to him is Bill van Druuten, who was possibly from Dunlop Sport, followed by Herby Prout from Opal Sportswear, Brian Lidgley from Dunlop Sport, Adrian Lampbrecht, an agent for adidas, Pat Wiltshire from Pat Wiltshire Sports, Barry Burnhill from Slazenger SA and John Pledger from Tatlow and Pledger, which later became Rapala VMC SA.

Middle row: Rusty Pledger (John's father), and next to him is Stan Joscelyne from Atkinson and Joscelyne, described by Pat Wiltshire as



"the finest gentleman I ever met. He was my tutor for twenty years". Next to him is Neville Marsh from the Marsh & Frew agency and on the right is Tony Harris, who was an agent for adidas and Titleist.

Front row: Brian McInnes from Slazenger SA, Colin Bartlett from World Cup (a soccer brand), George Henderson of Taylor & Henderson, who had the Rucanor Agency, and Chester Ambler Smith from the C.A. Smith Sales sports agency.

* If you don't receive our email newsletters yet, please contact us on 021 461 2544 or email carin@sportstrader.co.za. Anyone in your company can receive the newsletter free of charge. Currently we offer two: a sport, apparel and footwear newsletter and one that has news for the outdoor industry.

OVER 20 NEW STYLES



THE ALL NEW
ROCKY[®]
PURE ADVENTURE

SUMMER RANGE **2017**

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ROC211

ROC214

ROC194

ROC105



ROC114

ROC205

ROC117

ROC207

AVAILABLE IN 4 COLOURS



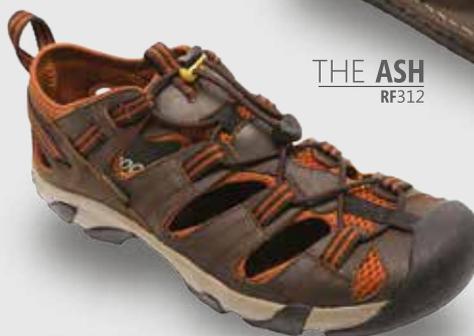
THE WALKER
RF327



THE ASH
RF312



THE RIDGE II
RF331



THE BERG
RF325

Fashion news

Textile trends for summer 2019

FINDING A balance between work and life outside work is becoming more and more important, and consumers are putting more conscious effort into being *in the moment*. This is one of the trends for summer 2019 that were revealed at TEXTRENDS, which was held together with ISPO Shanghai in July.

People are heading to the outdoors ... but to share their experiences on social media. “Consumers now realize activities and experiences shared on social media have much more kudos than having the latest must-have item,” explains trend scout Louisa Smith, writing for ISPO. “This is about taking time out, encountering new experiences and locations in the great outdoors through to more extreme sports, and most importantly sharing it.”



A spin-off about being in the moment is that consumers are realising just how much stuff they have ... an overabundance of gadgets, appliances, other personal possessions.

Sustainability continues to be a hot topic: a range of recycled and bio synthetic fabrics are used together with natural fibres such as cotton and merino wool (also see p20).

Similarly, technology is also being cleaned

up, for example one dye-bath processing, reducing water consumption to layering technology that adds added value to the consumer, eliminating finishing process and harsh finishes.

“Hybrid fabrics that reduce the garment processing stage also feature as body mapping and zoning are applied into the fabric seamlessly, rather than being inserted by machine.”

The third trend identified by Smith, features lightweight fabrics that have sensual, soft-to-the-touch features across all sectors of the market that are also multi-functional and can be used both technically and aesthetically. “Surface effects also come through, with the colour palette for the season ranging from a deep intensity contrasting with a fresh tropical tone through to muted hues.”

Summer 2018 about E'QUALITY

WE'RE IN THE middle of winter, most likely feeling too cold to think of summer, but summer is coming — and with it comes several new trends that retailers should be aware of.

Consumers are focusing on experiences over possessions (and stripping away excess), craving creativity and individuality, and place a bigger emphasis on communities: these are the dominant messages for spring/summer 2018 predicts the IDEAS Design Network*, which keeps an eye on active sport trends.

It calls this trend E'QUALITY, which refers to *quality* (over quantity) and *electronic* achievements — excellent communication with the consumer is crucial today as the consumer is now better informed than ever and has access to both information and your competitors, explains Katrin Eiermann of eiermann + hattenkerl, and a member of IDEAS*. It is “a very positive word and idea; something we all should aspire to — whether it is for gender, religious, social or political issues.

“On the other hand, it also invites us to think about differences (without evaluating) and celebrate them in all their equal beauty. It has a different meaning for everyone and provokes thinking.”

Colours that go with this trend have an overall *vintage* feel. Think oranges, yellow, khakis, browns and forest green used with cool tones (from sky blue, to lilacs, to a dark, purple blue) and strong pinks.

* IDEAS forecasts aim specifically at the international sports market and provides a unique forecast two years ahead of the season — made by sports design professionals for the sports industry. Founded in 1996, the IDEAS Sports Design Network consists of professional studios and agencies that are involved in design, technical research, service and communication for sport brands. Membership is very selective and they only allow experienced freelance design studios. For more information visit www.ideasdesigners.com.



Moject Apparel Design (above) and Birgit Brandt for activewear design (left top) use illustrations to show how colours might be used together.



Left, top to bottom: Colour palettes for summer 2018 by Birgit Brandt for activewear design, Colorcode, FAC, eiermann + hattenkerl, and Moject.

What's with Millennial Pink?

MILLENNIAL PINK has been coming for a few years now: first Barbie Pink popped up, then muddied pink/salmon shades, and eventually pinks evolved into what is now known as Millennial Pink (aka Tumblr Pink and Scandi Pink), which by now ranges from a beige blush to a pink-salmon hybrid.

Now the colour is everywhere. The colour has reached *fever pitch*, says WGSN, a trend predictions company. “There isn't a restaurant, bag or beauty product without a nod to the pink trend. So it makes sense then that the colour would extend to what you put on your feet. What we're now seeing in the young women's category is the rise of Millennial Pink offered on the type of sneakers that would traditionally have been categorised under men's footwear: think bulky kicks with air bubbles that used to come in black and navy.”

“In these Instagram-filtered times, it doesn't hurt that the colour happens to be both flattering and generally pleasing to the eye, but it also speaks to an era in which trans models walk the runway, gender-neutral clothing lines are the thing, and man-buns abound,” writes Lauren Schwartzberg in *Why Millennial Pink Refuses to Go Away* for style website *The Cut*. “It's been reported that at least 50% of millennials believe that gender runs on a spectrum — this pink is their genderless mascot. With Millennial Pink, gone is the girly-girl baggage; now it's androgynous.

“Boosted by social media, celebrities and younger male consumers' propensity for experiment, pink has trickled into the menswear industry, slowly but surely,” says WGSN. In the UK, 2.9% of all new menswear items are pink — and where pinks used to be seen mainly on shirts, tops now make up the majority (43.9%) of new pink items, it reports.

Along with pink, other traditionally feminine details such as velvet, embroidery and florals can now also be seen on menswear.

Millennial Pink is set to stick around a while longer, but other pastels such as baby blue and lilac can also now be seen used together with the pink in colour schemes. It's also a colour that matches well with more neutral shades such as white, black, grey and certain beiges — so it works with a lot.



Pinks and nudes dominate Superga's latest range.

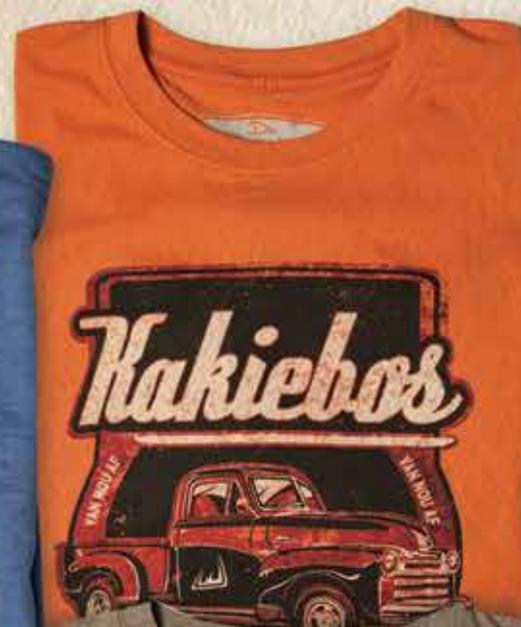
egte Afrikaanse enige-dag-leefstyl drag

BURNT ORANGE - KBM200

STONE - KBM194



BLUE MELANGE - KBM195



SAFARI MELANGE - KBM202



BURGUNDY MELANGE - KBM197



The changing face of outdoor clothing and footwear

Urban Outdoor is a term that we often hear these days, but it's not the only one used to describe this trend. "The fact that the concept has been set in motion can be seen in the many new terms suddenly emerging everywhere," say the ISPO trade show organisers. "What used to be called Urban Outdoor and described as technical collections designed more for city environments has now taken on very diverse designations."

These include terms such as *Everyday Outdoor* or *Outleisure*, depending on the company you talk to. "As different as the terms are, the concepts are similar: it's always about setting highly fashionable accents and combining them with technical know-how."

"Urban Outdoor is a modern-day development," says Nora Kühner, a freelance designer and trend expert. "Today there are already more people climbing in halls rather than outdoors in nature. The future will also see people indulging their yearning for nature in the city."

"Urban Outdoors is one of the biggest trends for the future of the performance sportswear industry," adds Charles Ross, a UK-based lecturer in performance sportswear design. "If the outdoor industry does not grab the market, then rivals from outside the industry will. Companies will have to promote their own strengths and shift the focus to a certain attitude towards life — and this attitude must gel with urban consumers." He adds that functional garments should be socially acceptable, and therefore look good.

It's not all about the looks, though, adds Frederik Sturm of start-up Arys, a functional clothing company. "Urban Outdoor should not in any way lag behind the usual outdoor products in terms of function, but nevertheless meet the fashion requirements of modern customers. The fabric suppliers offer marvellous innovative materials to achieve a successful balance between the demands of functionality and fashion."

For the first time, the OutDoor trade show in Friedrichshafen now features a Lifestyle Collection area in one of the exhibition halls, where exhibitors can show their current clothing, footwear and accessory lifestyle trends. "At OutDoor, the focus is on the functionality of products," says Head of OutDoor Stefan Reisinger. "The overlap between the two markets of fashion and outdoor, however, is growing all the time."

Outdoor companies are also collaborating with fashion houses to create smaller ranges for the fashion consumer.

A younger target group for outdoor companies is emerging: one that enjoys the merits of outdoor products, but that doesn't want to look like he's wearing outdoor products. Instead he wants to look fashionable, for



Photo: Messe Friedrichshafen.

example with fashion prints on clothing and soft equipment.

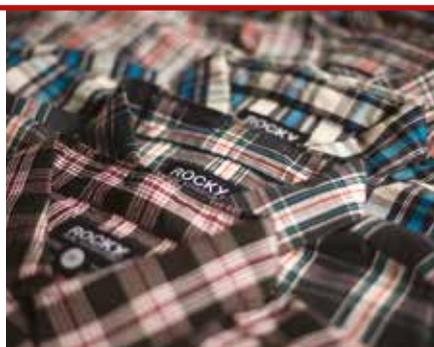
This group is also catered for by the outdoor footwear sector — but these companies are rejecting the term Urban Outdoor. Teva, for example, prefers Modern Outdoor. "We are talking about shoes aimed at a younger target group that offer both fashion and functionality. This is not urban outdoor: those shoes might look like outdoor footwear, but offer little functionality."

And then you have customers who buy outdoor shoes that are designed with a technical purpose in mind, but also wear them for other activities. "The Adidas Terrex footwear collection clearly focuses on multi-functional and trail running shoes," says Marc Fischer of Adidas Terrex Western Europe. "At the end of the day though, it's up to the customers what they use them for."

Footwear is responsible for more than a quarter of the European outdoor industry's turnover, reports the European Outdoor Group (EOG). "Hiking boots might be one of the most long-lasting of all outdoor products, but the trend is now towards owning four pairs of footwear rather than three," says OutDoor show organiser Messe Friedrichshafen. "Outdoor footwear is more than just hiking shoes. It means multi-functional shoes for everyday use and travelling, sporty shoes for trail running or workouts, sandals for summer, warm footwear for winter and footwear for a range of other activities."

"Customers expect more technicity and functionality from outdoor brands than they do from normal shoe retailers," adds Valentin Strohmaler of Marmot, who says that multi-functional shoes are going to become even more popular.

The 2018 OutDoor show will be held 17 to 20 June in Friedrichshafen, Germany. The next ISPO Shanghai takes place 6-8 July, Beijing 24-27 January 2018, and Munich 28-31 January 2018.



Rocky offers Pure Adventure in new clothing range

ROCKY'S PURE ADVENTURE range of casual clothing and footwear for summer 2017 is designed to "provide exceptional quality, rugged durability, great fit and comfort — all at affordable prices," says distributor Crown Footwear.

It has only just been launched, so the brand new range should excite your customers who can now extend their love for the rugged Rocky brand into more lifestyle products.

The versatile range features 20 new styles, per-

fect for today's outdoor enthusiast. Among these are the Berg and Rugged Man styles.

The clothing is made from 100% cotton and cotton rock premium fabrics for timeless apparel.

Soccer brand winners

Adidas is the kit sponsor of the most valuable, as well as strongest, soccer club brands

Adidas again emerges as the winner of the international soccer brand stakes. According to the latest *Football 50* report prepared by the brand valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance*, adidas' \$96-m a year sponsorship of Manchester United and \$44.7-m deal with Real Madrid netted them the world's two most valuable soccer club brands, as well as the world's most powerful soccer brand – Real Madrid.

They developed a Brand Strength Index (BSI)**, whereby a brand is assigned a score out of 100 based on popular interest in the brand and how this is converted into support and commercial values. This determines how powerful/strong a brand is.

Brand value** (see below) is calculated according to a royalty rate based on the percentage of revenues that a third party would have to pay for the use of the brand - the higher the brand strength, the higher the royalty rate. This is applied to historic as well as forecasted revenues, which is then discounted back to a present value.



According to Brand Finance, Manchester United, valued at \$1.733-bn, remains the most valuable club brand for the third year in a row. Real Madrid, winner of the La Liga and Champions League, is the second most valuable soccer brand, worth \$1.419-bn, but it is the most powerful club brand with a BSI score of 96.1. Manchester United is the fourth most powerful club brand with a BSI of 91.4.

More adidas clubs in #10

Another adidas club, Bayern Munich, is the third most powerful soccer brand (BSI 92.1) and fifth most valuable, valued at \$1.222-bn. They earn \$100.5-m per year from their kit deal with adidas. Juventus (also adidas) is the fifth most powerful (BSI 90.5), but drops below the top 10 in terms of value, coming in at #12 and valued at \$492-m.

Nike pays \$173.2-m a year to Barcelona, the second most powerful club brand with a BSI score of 95.4, and the third most valuable,

Club Name	Sponsor	Kit sponsor income	Value rank	Worth	Strength rank	BSI	Country
Man United	adidas	\$96-m	1	\$1.733-bn	4	91.4	Eng/Wales
Real Madrid	adidas	\$44.7-m	2	\$1.419-bn	1	96.1	Spain
Barcelona	Nike	\$173.2-m	3	\$1.418-bn	2	95.4	Spain
Chelsea	Nike	\$76.8-m	4	\$1.248-bn	8	87.9	Eng/Wales
Bayern Munich	adidas	\$100.5-m	5	\$1.222-bn	3	92.1	Germany
Manchester City	Nike	\$19.2-m	6	\$1.02-bn	9	84.8	Eng/Wales
Paris St-Germain	Nike	\$22.3-m	7	\$1.011-bn	10	82.7	France
Arsenal	PUMA	\$38.4-m	8	\$941-m	7	88.3	Eng/Wales
Liverpool	New Balance	\$35.8-m	9	\$908-m	6	88.4	Eng/Wales
Tottenham Hotspur	Under Armour	\$12.8-m	10	\$696-m	15	79.1	Eng/Wales
Borussia Dortmund	PUMA		11	\$519-m	12		Germany
Juventus	adidas		12	\$492-m	5	90.5	Italy

worth \$1.418-bn. Chelsea's 15-year jersey deals costs Nike \$76.8-m a year. It is the fourth most valuable club, worth \$1.248-bn, and the 8th most powerful, with a BSI score of 87.9.

Manchester City (annual cost \$19.2-m) and

While the two most powerful club brands are from Spain (Real Madrid and Barcelona) and the third from Germany (Bayern Munich), clubs from England and Wales totally dominate in terms of value: six of the top ten most valuable

brands are from the English league, namely Manchester United (#1), Chelsea (#4), Manchester City (#6), Arsenal (#8), Liverpool (#9) and Tottenham Hotspurs (#10).

Eighteen of the top 50 clubs are also from the English Premier League, and they have a combined value of \$9.3-bn - 45.7% of the value of all soccer clubs.



Paris Saint-Germain (annual cost \$22.3-m) also have kit sponsorship deals with Nike. They are worth \$1.02-bn and \$1.011-bn respectively, which makes them the 6th and 7th most valuable brands, although only the 9th and 10th most powerful. Manchester City scores 84.8 on the BSI and Paris Saint-Germain 82.7.

PUMA sponsors Arsenal (above), the 8th most valuable club, worth \$941-m, with the seventh highest power ranking of 88.3. They pay the Gunners \$38.4-m per year and have just introduced the latest home shirt at an event at Kings Cross Station in London, where Gunners fans could have their photos taken with some of their heroes and the Emirates FA Cup. The red shirt features special athletic tape that maintains body temperature at the optimal level and a cannon is depicted on the yoke to celebrate the 50 years that they've featured a cannon on the home shirt.



The CAF champion, Mamelodi Sundowns' home and away kits (here shown by Percy Tau) pay tribute to the club's Brazilian bloodline. This forms part of sponsor PUMA's global Play Loud mantra. The word Brazilians, written with African symbolism and embossed on both jerseys, is a stand-out design feature. The jerseys also feature PUMA's ACTV THERMO.R technology, that ensures players maintain their body temperature at an optimum performance level.

* The Football 50 report is based on an annual global study by brand consultancy company Brand Finance to calculate the power and value of the world's fifty leading football club brands. They calculate the Brand Strength Index (BSI) out of 100 based on investment in the brand, emotional connection with the brand (equity) and commercial performance.

** To determine the brand's value, they developed a Royalty Relief approach, which includes estimating potential future sales when calculating the royalty a third party would have to pay for the use of the brand. Revenue is separately calculated for match-day, broadcasting and commercial income, with a royalty rate applied to each of the streams. To calculate the brand's royalty rate the brand's BSI score is calculated as a percentage of the royalty range per sector.



The sport-inspired Club S retro range is Superga's answer to the demand for athleisure styles (left). Their Italian-chic sneakers for men, women and children are available in interesting new upper materials.

Canvas makes way for heritage styles

Nostalgia for better days, a crippling economy and the reigning athleisure trend have all conspired to disrupt the sneaker market – to the benefit of European brands like Superga and more affordable South African brands with great styles

The good old days is not only a nostalgic yearning from old fuddy duddies. In these tough times, even young trendsetters hark back to happier times, like the fifties and sixties. The trendy styles their parents or grandparents grew up with, were from the European – especially Italian – brands that epitomised fashion style at the time.

The preppy look of these heritage brands has pushed the canvas and galvanized rubber basketball sneaker styles off some shelves. A com-

European heritage brands and South African sneaker brands are doing well from the current nostalgic trend and economic decliner

combination of an economy on the downside and the rise of the European heritage brands have resulted in a rearrangement of the brands at the top of the sneaker popularity poll.

This has benefitted Italian brands like Fila and Superga, German brands like adidas and PUMA on the one side – as well as South African brands that have the look but do not come

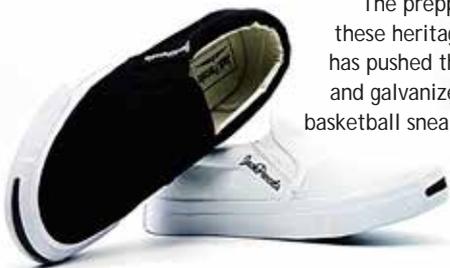
at the price.

They have embraced the current popularity of the athleisure trend – where fashion and sport merge to create a new on trend style.

Superga, for example, launched their new athleisure Club S range, which they believe retro lovers will obsess over! "Inspired by retro designs and a sporty tennis aesthetic, the Club S collection is a hot commodity this season," say the brand's local distributors.

"We're very much in a retro fashion cycle today," says Matt Powell, vice president and sports industry analyst of the US market research company, The NPD Group. "Millennials are really flocking to wearing old-school looks."

In the fifties and sixties sneakers **To p12**



Some of the heritage styles in the latest Fila lifestyle range, locally available from Footwear Trading.



SUPERGA
sport



Ivan Lendl



Retro sport and lifestyle cont. from p10

were often referred to as *tennis shoes* and it is this heritage that inspired styles like Superga's Club S, or the renewed demand for adidas' Stan Smith tennis style shoes. In addition, slides, espadrilles, pumps and mules complement this trend.

This look is combined with old school big logos on t-shirts, baggy jackets and sweatshirts, shorts and pullover sweaters, as seen in the recent Fila lifestyle ranges.

Earlier this year retailers were shocked to find that sneaker brands that always guaranteed good sales, were not moving.

New textures and profiles

"It is important to note that the bottom had dropped out of the galvanised rubber and canvas sneaker market, NOT the whole sneaker market," qualifies a local sneaker brand distributor who wishes to remain anonymous.

The latest sneaker range developers have taken heed.

Superga's sneaker range for spring/summer 2017/18, for example, feature an exciting array of textures, uppers and styles. It has something for everyone: on-trend fashion items, sneakers with retro-inspired sporty looks, even sneakers for the mini-me's.

The new sport-inspired range is an up market range, with suedes and leathers in the uppers instead of canvas. This, together with "a classic design featuring trendy yet functional perforated holes the Club S collection will take your ensemble from the court to the streets," explains David Abramsohn of Superga SA.

Internationally, Superga is big in the ladies' market, while locally they had been focusing on the men ... up until now, says Abramsohn. The local distributor is now investing in ladies in South Africa and making a concerted effort

to also bring them fashionable sneakers that they will love.

The ladies range comes in a variety of uppers: snakeskin, suede, canvas, etc. There is an option for any taste.

While there is an increased emphasis on ladies now, Superga definitely still caters for its male customer – and there is a variety of styles to choose from.

The men's ranges are dominated by neutral black, white, navy and browns. Here and

there is a surprise colourway, though, such as a purple.

The youngsters are also catered for in Superga's fashion and Club S ranges. In addition to bright colours, the kids' footwear range also features trends spotted in the adults' range, for example pastels, metallics and glitter.



Comfort and style from Willow

Another local sneaker trend has been for cash-strapped consumers to buy a more affordable shoe in a style and design they fancy. This is where local brands like Willow and from JFK Trading have an edge over top-end international brands.

"But, it is tough for everyone out there as consumers are struggling to make ends meet," says Graeme Katz of Katz Footwear. His Willow brand now has a range of lightweight, comfortable sneakers, that is within reach of the pocket of the average consumer. **To p14**

Feet on with FILA's Slide

THE *ugly-chic* pool slide trend isn't going anywhere anytime soon and this summer Fila is hitting the fashion scene in full force.

The look was first introduced in the early '70s and was particularly popular amongst athletes, as it was the perfect shoe for wearing in changing rooms and showers. Then, in the mid-1990's, when flip-flops moved from the beach, slide sandals followed their infiltration into urban life.

The style re-entered the scene in a major way a few seasons ago when

a generic, replaceable, functional, beach shoe became a badge of laid-back cool, says local distributor Footwear Trading.

"The international celebrities and A-listers wearing pool slides proves that this is a *must-have* shoe silhouette. The Fila Slide is destined to become a much-anticipated addition to wardrobe staples this coming season."

The Slides are available in a variety of colours and feature a PU mesh upper with neoprene padding, EVA grip-on outsole to prevent slipping, and a signature Fila printed logo.



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Graeme Katz has reason to smile about his new Willow sneaker range.

Local sneakers cont. from p12

“The first collection is bursting with style, comfort and endurance,” he says.

The sneakers each feature a woven nylon upper that has been designed to use as few pieces as possible to reduce seams, and makes the sneaker lightweight. This allows unobstructed flexibility to the midfoot while walking.

The soles further help to reduce weight. They are also flexible and durable, and are made from compressed EVA pellets that are heat expanded to close the air bubbles. “We are able to achieve a variety of beautiful colours using this material.

“Comfort is important to us because it allows you to wear the shoes and keep doing what you do for longer,” says Katz. For this, every pair of Willow sneakers have Gravity Cushion insoles, which combine latex memory foam and neoprene. “Over time, the inside of the shoe starts taking the shape of the foot and each stride becomes easier.”

Katz Footwear also has display and marketing equipment available for retailers to help support the product in-store.

ASICS South African apparel sales get a hefty boost from the Springbok jersey. The latest jersey had to undergo a last-minute change after the late sponsorship announcement by MTN. The tight fitting jersey has minimum underarm seams for comfort, and reinforced body and neckline seams for added strength when the jersey is stretched and it snaps back to its original position.



ASICS grows 9% in South Africa

ASICS' BUSINESS in South Africa has continued the positive growth of the past two years by growing 9% in Q1 2017. The brand predicts further progress for the remainder of 2017.

The whole EMEA region has shown positive signs across a number of key strategic growth areas during Q1. The region reported a 3% increase in apparel sales (10% for running), and 4% for ASICS Tiger. ASICS' own stores reported an increase of 10% in sales, with apparel taking a significant share of all sales in ASICS own stores.

“We are making all the right moves for the brand by ensuring our legend products are re-positioned in the right retail environment, we have strengthened the senior management team and are heavily investing in the brand presentation,” says Alistair Cameron, CEO of ASICS EMEA. “I’m particularly pleased to see the development of apparel across the region – a key growth area,” says Cameron.

“After more than doubling sales between 2010-2015, in 2016 ASICS made the strategic decision to streamline the distribution of iconic running shoe models – including the Gel-Nimbus, Gel-Kayano, GT-2000 and GT-1000 – across EMEA in order to provide a more diverse collection across its distribution network.”

Brands on the move

Skechers grows and enjoys triathlete support at Ironman

SKECHERS RECENTLY gave some triathletes from the Club100 cycling club the opportunity to get first-hand tips from Freddy Lampret on how to prepare for the next Ironman (sponsored by Skechers) and other triathlon events. Winner of numerous triathlon titles, Lampret is a professional triathlete, who also coaches and motivates other athletes through MPG (*My Programme Generator*).

He has already helped more than 150 triathletes to complete their first Ironman and is a renowned swimming coach.

Around 30 triathlon members of the Club100 intently listened to Lampret's experiences in the tri world in the Johannesburg showroom of Skechers' local distributor Brand Folio LLC. The group shared their fears, anxieties and interests during the Q&A session – and were reassured by Lampret's advice.

Lampret received a pair of Skechers' new GoRun5 running shoes, and promptly proclaimed them to be "the MOST comfortable shoes I've ever put on my feet!"

All the guests were then introduced to the Skechers Performance range, and they commented favourably on the quality of the product, the growth of the brand, as well as the vast range on display in their head office showroom in Melrose Arch.

Skechers Performance's partnership as the official footwear and apparel sponsor of the Standard Bank Ironman South Africa got off to a good start in April in Nelson Mandela Bay. It marked the start of a three year partnership between Skechers Performance and the event, during which time the brand will supply Standard Bank Ironman South Africa with finishers' t-shirts, staff t-shirts as well as staff footwear.

The company selected six triathletes across all levels to represent the brand during the expo and during the run leg of the triathlon and they weren't disappointed.

All their athletes, including two first-timers and one who received a slot in next year's 70.3 Ironman World Champs event in Port Elizabeth, finished strong.

Next year's 70.3 Ironman World Championship will take place on 1 and 2 September in Nelson Mandela Bay, Eastern Cape.

YOU fits in women's lifestyles

Skechers' new YOU shoe collection (see top right) meets the lifestyle and wellness needs of the young woman who wants to go from the office, to the yoga studio, to dinner in comfort and style, says the brand.

"It is an exciting crossover between our lifestyle lines and performance, and really speaks to the way the modern, busy woman is living her life," says Kathy Kartalis, senior vice-president of global product at Skechers.



Skechers Performance athletes Robbie Glen, Gavin Mofsowitz and Darren Lang.

Skechers spotted a desire for lightweight wellness footwear in the athleisure marketplace and the new collection gives them "the perfect opportunity to fuse the best aspects of both our performance and lifestyle experience to meet that need," says Skechers president Michael Greenberg. "We expect this versatile collection to resonate strongly with active women across multiple demographics."

Q1 sales record for Skechers

Skechers net sales exceeded the \$1-bn mark in Q1 for the first time, setting a new quarterly record – a sales growth of 9.6% over Q1 2016 to \$1.073-bn.

The growth is attributed to double-digit increases in the company's international wholesale business (16.8%) and in its own global retail business (12.8%), which includes comparable same store sales increases of 2.9%.

"In 2005, we surpassed \$1-bn in annual sales and

now, less than 12 years later, we had our first \$1-bn plus in quarterly sales," says Skechers CEO Robert Greenberg. For Q2, Skechers expects to see net sales in the range of \$950-m to \$975-m, which would be a second quarter sales record. The projection includes low to slightly positive sales increases in its domestic wholesale business, and increases in its international business and company-owned retail stores.

Omnico honoured twice

LOCAL DISTRIBUTOR Omnico has been doubly honoured by Dorel Sports: it has been recognised as Dorel Sports' International Distributor of the Year and for Continued Excellence in 2016. Several key performance indicators contributed to its International Distributor of the Year award, including its year-on-year growth, local marketing activity and initiatives, extensive model ranges and number of dealers. Dorel Sports works with 123 distributors in 80 countries.

Omnico also received an award for *Continued Excellence* in 2016 for



work done on the Cannondale brand. "The new Scalpel Si especially has been a game changer and sales of this model in South Africa are unprecedented," Omnico says in a statement.

"It provides the South African XC/Marathon racer the perfect package in terms of specs, pricing and graphics," continues Alan Hodson, MD of Omnico, which has been distributing the brand for approximately 10 years. "Most important of all is the incomparable ride of this bike. We have been absolutely blown away by the response of the South African cyclist to these bikes. I have no doubt that it's currently the bestselling dual suspension bike in the country."

Hi-Tec's footwear for urban casual perform in the outdoors

THESE DAYS outdoor shoes are worn for casual wear, and some casual shoes are suitable for wearing in the outdoors.

Hi-Tec's Sierra X-Lite Low men's shoe is a mixture of casual style and outdoor features. Wearers can explore the outdoors safely with the MDT technology outsole that gives up-and downhill traction through the use of its strategically-placed flex points that help the foot move in as natural way as possible.

The moulded TPU heel clip helps add stability, protection and durability. A nylon fork shank supports the foot and helps improve gait, and the impact-absorbing CMEVA midsole and the removable moulded EVA footbed adds cushioning and comfort.



Its high-performance synthetic and mesh upper further supports the foot, and is also breathable and durable. The shoe also has a microfleece moisture wicking

lining to further help keep the foot dry.

Ox Discovery built for city & trail

Hi-Tec's new men's Ox Discovery Mid i Waterproof is built for the city, but is able to perform on the trail as well. The versatile boot is a comfortable cross-over that is *designed uniquely for a great fit and fashionable eye*, says the brand. On top of this, the shoe is also

built to keep the foot dry, for comfort, durability, stability, and for traction. With a leather upper,



Left: The Ox Discovery

padded collar and tongue, gusseted tongue (to keep the debris out), OrthoLite Impressions insole with slow recovery foam, and an impact-absorbing XLR8 cushioning midsole, the foot is going to stay comfortable while wearing this Ox. The leather upper also adds to Ox's durability, as does the molded heel chassis, which also adds stability and protection.

The lightweight, durable fork shank adds extra stability, but also flexibility. Its Michelin rubber outsole provides multi-surface traction.

One of the things that can make a walk unbearable is wet feet. To prevent this, Ox features a microfleece moisture wicking lining and a Dri-Tec waterproof and breathable membrane on the inside, and i-shield technology (that repels water and dirt) on the outside – the latter is even stain resistant.

The Ox is rounded off with durable nylon and rustproof hardware and an extended lacing system that work together to get a personal fit and greater adjustability.



"When the weather's warm, it's time to get feet in a true outdoor classic," says Hi-Tec of its Crater sandal. Its "cool and breezy" design features a neoprene lining and adjustable hook-and-loop fastening straps, EVA footbed for cushioning, and a durable, lightweight carbon-rubber for increased traction and comfort.



The Equilibrio Bijou low i Waterproof is a comfortable, everyday women's urban-outdoor shoe that has a sleek look that's ready to take on the city and mountain, is how Hi-Tec describes its latest ladies' offering. Dri-Tec keeps the shoe waterproof, i-shield repels water and dirt, and the OrthoLite Impressions insole keeps the foot comfortable and creates a customizable fit by taking the shape of the foot over time. The MDT outsole in turn ensures up and downhill traction through the use of strategically placed flex points that help the foot move as naturally as possible. It also has a high performance synthetic upper that is breathable, durable and comfortable, a padded collar and tongue, gusseted tongue to keep debris out, and a micro-fleece moisture wicking lining to keep the foot dry.

Photo: Warren Talmarkes.



Latest adidas hoodie helps athletes focus

THE SECOND EDITION of the adidas Z.N.E. (Zero Negative Energy) hoodie launched by adidas Athletics – namely the Travel hoodie – is designed to ensure complete focus and help athletes remove distractions and maximise their preparation as they travel to and between competitions.

The hoodie's oversized sleeping hood blocks out noise, and enables athletes to sleep and relax when travelling. A series of easy-access, hidden pockets that keep travel items close at hand is built into the hoodie, which is made from heavyweight cotton/polyester/elastane blended fabric. "With the inception of adidas Athletics we have focused on making conditions perfect for athletes in their crucial pre- and post-game preparation. A huge part of this is travelling to compete," says Brett Burgess, adidas' senior manager for Training. "It's crucial that athletes are able to get into the zone and focus on the competition ahead or reflect on their performance when they travel and we've worked with athletes to design a range that meet these needs."

More than 18 000 athletes have been equipped with the first edition of the Z.N.E. hoodie since its launch last September, among them Sija Kolisi, Cheslyn Kolbe, Wayde van Niekerk and Akani Simbine.

New adidas fitness garment technology for women

ADIDAS HAS launched the first apparel technology for women only: warp knit. The seamless knit construction delivers uncompromised comfort, matched only by a woman's own skin, says the brand. Warp knit is an innovation in knitting with high compression and a blend of soft nylon fabrics to ensure great comfort.

"Adidas warp knit is the perfect blend of performance meets beauty and comfort, and supports the female body in the toughest workouts," says Brett Burgess, adidas SA senior manager Training Division. "The collection is both stylish and functional, making the perfect statement piece for the woman who loves looking and feeling great while she pushes her limits in the gym."

The unique knit structure creates decorative open mesh patterns, carefully placed to provide breathability where it is needed most. "While each warp knit piece is carefully crafted for beauty in any environment, they are pure performance with a personalized compression feel from hem to hem," he adds.

Warp knit technology was also employed to create some pieces of their new yoga and training apparel range introduced on International Yoga Day (June 21). The collection was developed in collaboration with their Wanderlust partner, a community that promotes physical activity amongst women and is known for the mass-attended yoga festival events they stage.

The collection was designed with input from yoga teachers, who ensured that they don't inhibit any body movement. See more sastpstrader.wordpress.com.



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♂ CRATER – OLIVE STONE YELLOW

- Three adjustable hook & loop fastenings ensure a perfect and secure fit
- Neoprene lining provides added comfort during wear
- Compression moulded EVA midsole provides long-lasting cushioning
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Brands on the move



PUMA Netfit changes lacing

PUMA's new Netfit customisable lacing system "offers infinite performance and style options in one shoe," says the brand. The Netfit technology combines a high grade engineered net with form-fitting base materials to create enhanced fit and support. Where traditional shoelace holes restrict lacing options to where the holes are made in the upper, this netted mesh provides the wearer with many more options. "With netted mesh, users will now have complete control and versatility over how they lace up," says PUMA.

The technology can be used by anyone – on the street, track, in the gym, etc. – and will be featured on several of PUMA's sport and

performance shoes.

It can be used to lace up in five different ways: standard for minimal support; stability for additional medial support; to accommodate a wide foot and extra room; lacing for a narrow foot; and a tighter fit around the heel to provide better support.

Usain Bolt (above left) is one of the PUMA athletes who is making use of the Netfit technology. Netfit works well for him as his training is always different, he says. "The best thing about the Netfit technology is that it is customisable and I can lace them any way I want; not only to get the best fit, but it gives me the opportunity to be creative with it."

Selling insoles with running shoes

Runners and running shoe sellers alike often make the mistake to believe that only athletes with foot problems need to wear insoles. Not so, says a foot expert.

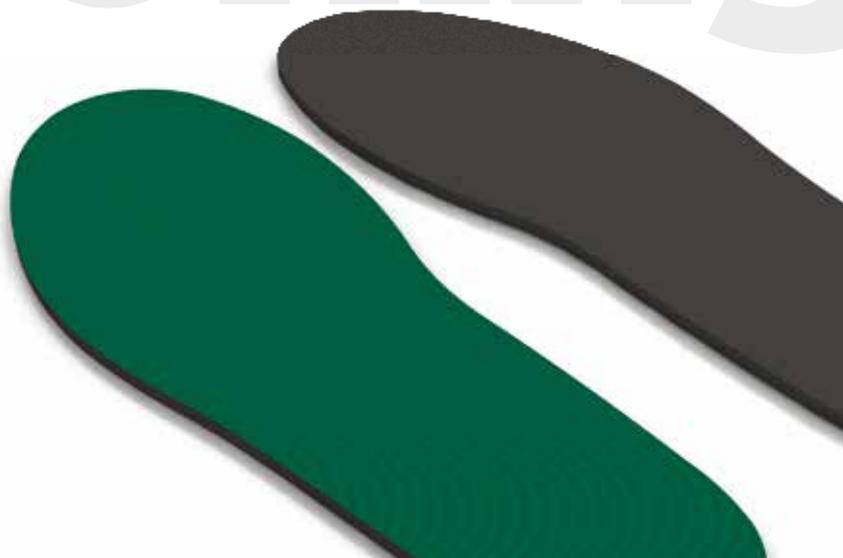
He believes that an insole should become an accessory that is purchased with most running shoes. "An insole is the closest that a runner will get to a custom-fitted, personalized running shoe," he says.

By casually presenting your customer with a running shoe to try on with an insole, will help get the message across that this can enhance his running experience – rather than introducing an insole as an afterthought.

He points out the following benefits of insoles:

- Running shoes are usually lower in the forefoot than in the heel. An insole adds contour in the middle to create a more customized fit
- Insoles increase shock absorption in the shoe
- An insole improves body alignment by encouraging a more upright position
- The more rigid heel cup of an insole makes the foot land more naturally as it offers more support.

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Sustainable in and out of the water

New Speedo activewear is kind to the environment

SPEEDO'S NEW H2O Active Collection, a work-out range for women to wear both in and out of the water, is sustainable and eco-friendly. Waste from fishing nets, manufacturing by-products and even carpet were turned into an innovative regenerated fibre yarn, Econyl, which was used to create a functional fabric that is also kind to the environment.

The Speedo H2O Active range was created from a fabric called Powerflex Eco, which is made from 78% Econyl yarn. Speedo has been working with Aquafil, creators of Econyl, on their Take Back Programme that transforms waste product into new material. Aquafil turns Speedo's waste into raw material for nylon, which is transformed into Econyl yarns through an innovative fibre production process. The result is new fabric that is durable, lightweight, chlorine-resistant and breathable, with the

added benefits of using regenerated waste.

Traditionally, swimwear fabric has never been suitable for recycling due to its technical composition. Thanks to the partnership between Speedo and Aquafil, it is now possible for post-production waste - which otherwise would be sent to a landfill - to be regenerated for the production of Econyl fibre. Figures show that 20% of global waste comes from the textile and clothing industry, and with Speedo's help there has been a 21% increase in recycled, non-hazardous waste.

Fashionable and functional, H2O Active is available in energetic prints and bright clashing colours. "Using vibrant florals, the new season's collection blends bold summery hues of orange and yellow with neutral tones of white, grey and black," says local Speedo distributor, Brand ID. The new collection includes



crop tops, capris, shorts, briefs and swimsuits, allowing it to be mix-and-matched to reflect personal style.

"Designed with comfort, durability and style in mind, H2O Active is perfect for fitness enthusiasts who want to look and feel good while working up a sweat both in and out of the water," they continue. "The innovative fabric lasts twice as long as standard swimwear, making it perfect for multi-fitness needs."

Sustainability top-of mind for ASICS

OVER THE COURSE of 2016, ASICS has continued a number of projects to make the company more energy efficient, it shows in its 2016 Sustainability Report.

One of them is its Global Retail Concept, launched at the opening of their flagship store in Brussels, that places sustainability at the core of the store design and operations. These efforts are apparent in the use of LED lighting, energy efficient systems and materials for the floor, and hangers, mannequins and other POS materials that are made from sustainable, certified and/or renewable resources.

The company also now includes Tier 2 suppliers in its auditing process, which helps ASICS ensure that human rights are respected throughout its supply chain. It also enables the company to manage its environmental impact: Tier 2 is the part of the supply chain responsible for fabric dyeing and other industrial processes that involve potentially harmful chemicals.

It has also implemented new systems and sustainability databases that will ensure product traceability and supply chain transparency. "In 2016, ASICS started working towards the operation of new environmental guidelines for suppliers in 2017. On a product materials level, we have formalised a new materials guideline with clear do's and don'ts for supplying partners and product development teams. Animal-based materials and the continued phase-out of PVC are two of the main focus subjects of the guideline implemented in 2016."

Since 2015, ASICS Corporation has been in-



cluded in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index Region Asia/Pacific, and in 2016 it was also included in the FTSE4Good Global Index and attained the B rating from CDP (former Carbon Disclosure Project) - recognitions of its approach towards sustainability in its operations.

During last year, ASICS contributed over \$690 000 in funding as well as over \$1.3-m in donations to help communities. It has also created a consumer and community engagement platform in Europe.

Over the holiday period, the company asked consumers with every purchase if they would like to donate towards its charity partners, which resulted in 24 379 donations across 85 retail locations and online stores with *Right To Play* receiving the majority of donations. These donations benefit 3 432 children who can take part in *Right To Play's* educational sport and play programs twice a week for a year.

The company has also been open about where it is falling short of its own CO2 emissions targets.

The number of own-branded retail stores almost doubled during 2016 from 444 to 867,

mainly due to the brand taking over partner outlets in Korea, which weren't included in the initial total. As a result, the company's CO2 emissions rose 6.5%.

Overall, however, the company also noted that CO2 emissions per unit revenue also increased by 14% compared to 2015. "It is clear that the company needs to accelerate energy efficiency projects in order to both increase efficiency and reduce absolute emissions in 2017."

Looking at the 2017 period, ASICS expects that it will double the renewable electricity it uses in Europe, with renewable sources accounting for 10% of the company's total global electricity usage.

The company also plans to conduct energy efficiency audits in its most energy-intensive locations and implement efficiency improvements where necessary.

It will also publicly disclose which suppliers it partners with in the manufacturing of ASICS, ASICS Tiger and Onitsuka Tiger footwear, apparel and accessories.

ASICS does business in 33 countries, sources from 21, and has 7 864 employees. The EMEA region reported ¥107 601-m for the 2016 period. Across the globe, the company reported ¥399 107-m net sales, where footwear accounted for 82.6%, apparel 12.8% and accessories 4.6%.

Running event aims to be better for the environment

ASICS is also the technical sponsor of the IAAF Gold Label Sanlam Cape Town Marathon, which is promoting its Run4Change programme and encouraging event participants to take a pledge to RunGreen in order to reduce the impact of the event.



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**The next step in the adidas journey to create
a million pairs of shoes from up-cycled marine plastic**

adidas' Parley editions of UltraBOOST, UltraBOOST X and UltraBOOST Uncaged running shoes, all in blue inspired by the shades of the oceans, are manufactured from up-cycled marine plastic debris. This latest milestone in the Parley partnership reflects both parties' commitment to the oceans through a mutual focus on the implementation of the Parley A.I.R Strategy – avoiding virgin plastic, intercept plastic waste, and redesigning new alternatives; challenging the status quo together, one step at a time. The launch is the next step in adidas' commitment to create a million pairs of shoes from recycled marine plastic.

Reusing an average of 11 plastic bottles per pair, UltraBOOST Parley, Parley UltraBOOST X and UltraBOOST Uncaged Parley feature laces, heel webbing, heel lining, and sock liner covers made from recycled PET material. Not only do the latest additions to the adidas Parley collection have a purpose, they also deliver the same elite performance with every stride.

Mike Jaeggle, Marketing Director, adidas SA, says, "Virtually every piece of plastic that's ever been created still exists in some shape or form, and a vast percentage of this ends up in our oceans. Through Parley for the Oceans, adidas globally has been turning threat into thread by re-using marine plastic debris to form a signature element of its iconic performance-led running shoes. Parley Ocean Plastic™ is also be-

Key benefits include:

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- **Rubber outsole** – with superior grip that adapts to every runner's foot strike by moving in harmony with boost to provide a smoother and more flexible ride
- **BOOST** – industry-leading, ultra-responsive comfort and cushioning that stores and returns energy every time the foot hits the ground

ing used for other adidas sporting products, including swimming gear, soccer jerseys and outdoor items."

Follow the conversation at @adidasZA on Instagram and Twitter and using #UltraBOOST #adidasParley.

For trade enquiries contact adidas South Africa on Tel: 021 442 6200.

From Threat to Thread: adidas is transforming plastic into performance

PLASTIC WASTE is a big threat to our oceans. To help reduce this problem, adidas has partnered with Parley to “transform marine plastic pollution into high performance sportswear, spinning the problem into a solution. The threat into a thread,” says adidas. The brand is also recycling plastic into performance footwear and clothing, where a significant part of the products are made from recycled plastic.

“The deterioration of our oceans has happened over some time and we can’t fix the situation with the wave of a magic wand. But Rome wasn’t built in a day. That is why we should take the first step, and the sooner the better.”

Through the partnership, adidas has developed its Parley A.I.R. Strategy: “the plan that can end plastic pollution”.

- Avoid: No plastic bags, micro breads, or virgin plastic in its supply chain;
- Intercept: “we are already recovering marine debris and stopping plastic before it gets to the oceans, but the change is on all of us.”
- Redesign: “we are driving eco-innovation around materials, products and new ways of using them. New methods. New mindsets. New future.”

“Recent studies indicate that at least 40 million pounds of plastic has accumulated and is floating in the North Pacific Ocean alone,” explains adidas. “After sunlight photodegrades the plastic into small pieces, aquatic life and seabirds mistake these fragments for food and ingest it.”

Not only does this affect the animals, but humans too since we eat several ocean-based species.

“The oceans are dying, but it’s not too late to save them. Only creativity and collaboration will end marine plastic pollution. The Parley A.I.R. Strategy addresses the fast-growing and global threat of plastic pollution based on the belief that plastic is a design failure, one that can only be solved if we reinvent the material itself. We all have a role to play in the solution.”

To this end, the brand asks the public to take action and to take the Parley A.I.R. pledge. They can also create and share a personalised badge to show their support.

During the week of Oceans Day more than 59 000 runners globally ran 572 712km to raise awareness about just how fragile the oceans are. They were invited to sign up and take part in a digital run between 5 and 11 June, and to add their daily running mileage. In 2018, adidas will continue its #RunForTheOceans initiative to celebrate the beauty of oceans and raise awareness about the impact of plastic.

Where is the plastic collected from the oceans going? Recycling of course: adidas is showing that plastic can be converted into a performance product that benefits active people.

The Parley women’s swimwear collection features bright, eye catching colours and designs.

The latest in adidas’ Parley range of products, launched today into retail, is a swimming collection that transforms abandoned fishing



nets into swimwear to protect our oceans. “Why? Because it’s time to deviate from business-as-usual like the future of our ecosystem depended on it,” explains adidas.

The men’s Parley swimming range offers both boxer and trunk styles.

Recently, adidas also announced its latest UltraBOOST range of recycled plastic, high performance, running footwear. On average, each shoe is made from 11 plastic bottles – laces, heel webbing, heel lining, and sock liner covers are all made from recycled PET material. The range consists of the UltraBOOST, UltraBOOST X and UltraBOOST Uncaged.

There’s even a special woman-specific UltraBOOST with its own mystery blue colourway, which will be introduced into retail for Women’s Month.

Previous product ranges, made from recycled plastic, included Real Madrid and Bayern Munich jerseys, released at the end of 2016. Proving that they’re not only for show, but have been re-used to create performance benefits, players wore them on-pitch during matches between these two teams in November.



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New look for Brand ID

Having grown their brand portfolio to an impressive stable, Brand ID has restructured the company to flatten management layers that enables the re-energized company to provide faster and more efficient service to their customers, explains CEO Wayne Bebb

After six years of acquiring brands, the Brand ID distributorship has undertaken an extensive overhaul of all their brands, business units and sales reporting structures.

"We wanted to change the way our customers deal with our big, multi-branded business," explains CEO Wayne Bebb. "We asked ourselves: *how do we make it easier for our customers to work with Brand ID?*"

They found that there were some functions that were duplicated and in order to become leaner and quicker, they centralised these functions.

"The other objective was to become more pro-active, efficient and excellent in what we do." So, they changed the structures to do away with some management levels. Bebb also wanted a closer role in dealing with customers.

Therefore, instead of the sales forces in the former divisions like Performance Brands, Dunslaz, Love SA etc. reporting to their respective Brand Presidents, the brands are now housed in functional units, managed by a dozen national sales managers, reporting directly to Bebb.

"Everything can now happen a hundred times quicker," he says. They can also take a more holistic approach to servicing customers, by offering complimentary products from other brands within the company. "For example, in the bike unit we have the Craft brand, but we can now ask ourselves, *what else can we sell to the customers in that unit?*"

Another big driver was looking at ways to become more efficient. Webb believes that

Brands are now housed in functional units, managed by a dozen national sales managers, reporting directly to CEO Wayne Bebb.

because their retail customers now have direct access to himself, decision making has become much easier. "I can now immerse myself in the part of the business that has a core influence on success: sustainable relations and generation of sales."

Sales teams have been grouped into functional units. For example:

- **Court Sport/Arena:** sales of Dunlop, Slazenger, Karakal, Ashaway, Swingball and Karimor – brands formerly grouped under the Dunslaz business unit – will now jointly be managed by national sales managers Eugene Brown and Jon Haughton in this functional unit. Brown will continue to be based in Johannesburg where he will use his years of experience of these brands to service customers, while Haughton will act as liaison between centralised planning and procurement from Cape Town;
- **Pool:** Deidre Scodeller will continue to manage Speedo sales; The former Performance Brands division have been divided into the following business units:
- **Field Sport:** Du Toit Botes will manage Canterbury and Opro (mouth guards) as national sales manager.

- Botes will also be the national sales manager for **Outdoor:** Columbia.

"These were the two focal areas of his business silo and are also where his strengths lie," says Bebb, who is excited by the prospect of the new Canterbury training range that will arrive for summer. "It is different to everything currently in the market – in terms of colour, design and fabrication."

- **Bike:** Craft cycling gear sales will be steered by Steyn du Plessis, a new appointee with strong experience of the very specialised cycling retail industry, among others with ASG;
- **MSM:** Paul Copson will continue to be in charge of sales of Mizuno (footwear), Skins (compression) and Mistral (SUP). Mizuno has enjoyed calculated, sustainable growth in specialised running outlets – a market that is not easy to penetrate, says Bebb. Skins is very much entrenched in the rugby market, "where it is doing very well."

Objective feedback

In addition to her function as national sales manager **Specialist** (for brands like Love SA and Disney Sports) Blanche Veerapen will work closely with Bebb to focus on customer service levels, engage with customers about in-store merchandising and provide objective and accurate data for sales teams.

"Her role is basically to ensure that our customers are happy," says Bebb. "She runs our partner programme – she independently checks that our partners are being looked after. Her other fundamental role is consumer engagement: how do we look in **To p24**

THE NEED
In a time-scarce and value-seeking society, our consumers need to have easy access to and trust our brands to enhance their lives

THE MISSION
Identify the needs of our consumers through digital engagements. Place our brands within easy reach of our consumers through mutually beneficial partnerships with all distribution channels

THE VISION
Ignite sustainable brand development through an effective and efficient distribution network that guarantees:
CUSTOMERS act with loyalty;
CUSTOMERS prioritise our brands;
EMPLOYEES are unconditionally proud and **INVESTORS** realise growing long term returns

THE VALUES
Instill **INTEGRITY** in the business personality
ASPIRE our customers to grow and consumers to be loyal
INNOVATE through digital disruption
Demonstrate **PASSION** every day with everyone
Create **AUTHENTIC** consumer and customer relationships

Brand ID restructures cont. from p23

the store? Her role is to give me an objective view of how we are doing in the market.” As he points out: they can only fix mistakes if they know which mistakes are made.

She is also responsible for the Love SA and Disney brands in the Specialist unit. Disney is a new brand for them, and will be aimed at reaching kids through the mass market and getting them active. Bebb believes that products like tents, roller blades, skateboard, cycles and accessories, branded with Disney characters will entice youngsters to get outside and enjoy healthy activities, instead of

sitting in front of the TV or computer games.

Pierre Thackwray (Corporate), former Columbia brand manager Letha Viljoen (Own Retail), Carika van Blerk (Direct to Consumer for all teamwear) and Elinor Johannes (Telesales) are national sales managers that have been appointed in new business units. In addition, Evert Ferreira, is responsible for looking after their sponsored athletes and teams.

Africa is the responsibility of Kyle Hartmann, who has previous experience of growing a brand further north on the continent, has “established a nice footprint in Africa,” says

Bebb. “Our approach is to achieve slow and steady and ethical sustainable growth.”

Nigeria is currently their biggest African market, with brands like Columbia and Mizuno making the most inroads. “It is important to maintain integrity and ensure our products are displayed in the right places,” he continues – adding that some of the African retail spaces compete very favourably with local retailers.

“Other centralised functions such as Procurement, Sourcing and Development, Planning and Financial Administration are consolidated, enhanced and clarified,” he continues. “I am



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Slazenger helps to make a Wimbledon dream come true

SLAZENGER helped to make 17-year old Connor Smith's Wimbledon dream come true. The *Reach for a Dream* organization approached Wayne Bebb, CEO of the local Slazenger distributor Brand ID, to help Connor reach his ultimate dream to attend a match at Wimbledon.

Connor, who is in matric this year, is fighting Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Sport is an integral part of his life — be it playing or watching — and he longed to attend a tennis match at Wimbledon. Brand ID and Dunlop Slazenger secured Wimbledon match tickets on Court One for Connor and his mom, Kim Smith, for the 7th July, where they watched Venus

Williams, amongst others, play.

The Pepkor Group and two of their directors, Leon Lourens and Sean Cardinaal made sure their accommodation and flights to London were taken care of.

"It was a real honour to make Connor's dream come true as he represents an incredible energy and spirit," says Bebb. "It was incredible to see the support of Slazenger out of the UK and we are humbled to have been a part of the truly remarkable Reach for a Dream Foundation."

Slazenger has been the Official Supplier of tennis balls to The Championships (Wimbledon) since 1902. This is the longest partnership in



sporting goods history.

Slazenger's team of experts work with sports scientists at Loughborough University to guarantee The All England Lawn Tennis Club's high standards are met in the 52 000 balls they will supply for this year's tournament. Each of them are tested for weight, bounce and compression.

Above: Connor and his parents are surprised by Brand ID, Slazenger and the Reach for a Dream Organisation. Left to right are Dr Craig Nossel (Reach for a Dream and Discovery Health), Blanche Veerapen (Brand ID), Connor Smith, Mr and Mrs Smith (Connor's parents), Heidi Rowley (Reach for a Dream) and Karen Rous (Brand ID Slazenger).

confident that these changes will ensure we are able to be nimble and proactive and set the benchmark for multi-brand distribution businesses in South Africa."

During the restructuring process they also looked at the areas where they get the most return — and where their main focus should be.

One conclusion was that Brand ID's strength is in sporting goods and technical products, not mens formal wear. They therefore decided to divest from these menswear brands like Jonty's, Brooksfield, Danie's etc. "There are other companies out there that are more focused on fashion, it is not really our strength," says Bebb.

Likewise, small brands like Nathan and Sklz were dropped because they were no longer a good fit for their "authentic technical brand portfolio."

The restructuring has resulted in a stronger team with a new sense of unity and purpose, he believes. "We changed the landscape and had a new look at our vision, mission, values, purpose and fundamentally rejuvenated the company — why we exist and why we are here, what values we bring as a brand."

These values, vision and mission are prominently on display in the reception area — to inform visitors and remind staff members what Brand ID is about.

"As a business we owe a deep commitment to unlocking the most amount of value from our people," says Bebb. "It was exciting for us to restructure and re-energize, because what we have built is so much stronger."





Above left to right: The New Balance sponsorship of the Comrades won them several awards; accepting the Brand of the Year trophy; Katherine Stewart with arms full of trophies they won. All photos courtesy of New Balance.

New Balance Brand of the Year

New Balance SA won the South African Brand of the Year title — plus four other trophies — in the 2017 Discovery Sport Industry Awards. They have also achieved double-digit growth in a time when many companies have been contracting and their commissioned adverts won Loerie and Bookmark awards.

Their sponsorship of the Proteas national cricket team won them three trophies: for the Best New Sponsorship, Campaign of the Year (Feel the Fire) as well as Best use of PR (Feel the Fire). They won the Best Sponsorship of an Event for the Comrades.

In total, New Balance SA's marketing and sponsorship teams won five of the seven categories they were nominated for. At the annual Discovery

Sport Industry Awards the best advertising, marketing, PR and media campaigns are recognised, and sports brands, rights holders, venues etc. are rewarded for hosting, managing and promoting events and teams.

According to the judges, New Balance was voted the Brand of the Year because of their outstanding achievement across a number of categories, as well as an industry beating commercial performance.

New Balance reports that in 2015 and 2016 the brand grew net revenues 25% and 29% respectively with a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) over the last 3 years of 27%. During 2016, the brand grew its key account business 26%, vertical retail 10% and independents sports channel 35%, "despite tightening distribution, a weak retail environment and volatile currency".

"Our world class activation at the Comrades Marathon resulted in record royalties being paid to the Comrades Marathon Association two years

in a row," says the New Balance team. They also won a silver and two gold awards for their expo stand and accumulated sales of over 47 000 pieces of technical running apparel in total between 2014, when they became the official technical partner, and 2016.

"Our highly emotive Feel the Fire Proteas campaign was arguably the most aggressive, multi-faceted national team apparel partner campaign to date in the country, resulting in us breaking cricket replica sales records (in a non-World Cup year) with over 41 000 pieces of apparel sold to date, and delivering an incredible return of 36:1 on our Proteas partnership."

New Balance online campaigns were also rewarded in 2016: the popular Baby vs Dale Steyn online video won a silver Loerie, as well as gold and bronze at the IAB Summit Bookmarks awards for digital content; their IComrades campaign won two bronze Loeries as well as a bronze Bookmarks award.

Best fit with Boa

NEW BALANCE'S FuelCore Sonic running shoe features The Boas System, a special dial system that makes finding the perfect fit a breeze, and super easy.

The Boa System consists of three integral parts: a micro-adjustable dial, super-strong lightweight laces, and low friction lace guides. Each unique configuration is engineered to optimise fit and provide precision, adaptability, and control, explains Boa Technology Inc., creators of The Boa System.

"Dial in your perfect fit for a more efficient stride and increased comfort. Whether you're training for a race, or enjoying life on the road or trail, Boa helps you push your performance further.

"Whether you're after a better experience on the road, or more stability on the trail, The Boa System stays secure mile after mile. You can even make instant micro-adjustments for a precision fit that keeps you in control — anytime, anywhere."

New Balance wins CSA Golf Day

THE NEW BALANCE team showed they could swing with style, when they beat nearly thirty other teams to win the Cricket South Africa (CSA) annual golf day — with one point. The golf day forms part of the annual CSA Week when players' kit is launched, marketing content shot and commercial plans shared with stakeholders.

This year they launched and handed out the new ODI kit to the Proteas before their UK tour, which included the Champions Trophy tournament, during the week.

The New Balance four-ball (right), consisting of sponsored cricketer David Miller, Coenraad Hefer (National Sales Manager), Katharine Stewart, nee Tromp (Marketing Manager) and Craig Bowen (Country Manager), then took on all the other sponsors and CSA affiliates. The golf match format was better ball, two scores to count, which Team New Balance won by a single point.



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Pros & cons of running expos

Expos where athletes and their supporters have to pass exhibitors' booths when they pick up their race numbers, have become part and parcel of most big running events. They provide exhibitors the ideal opportunity to promote their new ranges and technologies to a captive audience of thousands and thousands of dedicated runners, especially at big events like the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon (OMTOM) and the Comrades. On the surface, this would appear to be a retailer's paradise. Which makes one wonder why not all retailers — especially running specialists — exhibit at all expos.

"We have exhibited at expos like Comrades in previous years, but don't anymore, says Justin Hand of the Durban Runner in Morningside. Even though Hand considers it a good place to show products to runners, it is not a good sales environment for him. "Especially not for someone like me who is a specialist retailer because I can't give the one-one attention to runners as I would like to."

In addition, the cost of stands is very high and if you don't sell enough products, you will lose money, he adds. "Exhibiting is just not cost effective."

Because all his suppliers already exhibit at expos, it makes no sense for Nick Velthuysen of Runner's Rest to "go and advertise our stock as suppliers are doing it for us."

Marketing exercise

Jax Snyman of The Sweat Shop, a regular at expos, agrees that these shows are more marketing exercises than profitable sales generators. "We believe it enhances our profile and

Runners who are not based in big cities are exposed to brands and products they may not be aware of.

makes runner's aware of how much larger our offering is than that of our competitors."

On the plus side, runners who are not based in big cities like Johannesburg or Cape Town, are exposed to brands and products they may not be aware of, he adds. "Particularly in the wearable tech area the consumer is able to interact with knowledgeable sales staff, who can assist him in matching his needs with a unit, instead of him getting home and discovering a whole lot of functions that he doesn't need, and that the one he really wanted is not on the device."

While a running show can be good marketing for a brand, it can also affect a retailer negatively "because you'll find there's a dip in sales around expo times when customers hold back on purchases to buy at discounted prices from suppliers at expos," says Velthuysen. "It's a good place to be if you're new in the industry. But generally, people go to expos for deals or promos, which means they don't really look at the guy only starting out in the industry, they look at where they can get the best priced items."

The shoe specials offered to show visitors subsequently have a negative impact on other retail sales, agrees Glen Treub of The Barefoot Concept Store — although he believes that it offers good exposure to running products.

Running expos attract thousands of dedicated runners to one spot over a few days. Is this a retail paradise, a great marketing opportunity, or just more competition in a very tough market?

Expos are therefore more suited to brands exhibiting, rather than retailers, reiterates Hand, adding that being involved in the local running community and local clubs all year round has a much more positive impact on his sales than expos.

Better for brands

Most of the serious running brands therefore exhibit at running expos — clearly with the blessing of their retail customers.

Brands that are the official technical partners of events naturally make a prominent statement at expos: adidas at the OMTOM, New Balance at the Comrades, ASICS at the Cape Town marathon — as well as all other major running events that have expos, including Comrades and OMTOM — Skechers at Ironman, etc.

"Skechers will be the official footwear and apparel sponsor for Ironman South Africa for the next three years and so we have a large presence at all Ironman expos," says Kim Aires of local distributor Brand Folio LLC. "Next year we will be present at many other racing events."

Omni Sport (Saucony) usually partners with a retailer like The Sweat Shop at Cape Town expos like the OMTOM and the Cape Town Marathon, while SBR Agencies are also active exhibitors of their Brooks and other running-related brands at running expos. Mizuno also promoted their latest technologies at the OMTOM and Comrades expos this year.

"We don't usually exhibit at many expos, but we were at the Comrades Expo this year and will potentially be at the 11th Biennial Podiatry Association Congress in August this year," says Robyn Frick of PUMA SA.

For brands, this offers the ideal opportuni-



Clockwise from top left: Skechers had a prominent stand as sponsor at the Ironman Expo in Port Elizabeth; ASICS' stand at the Comrades explained their Flytefoam technology; New Balance is official partner of the Comrades marathon; Mizuno and Skins promoted their premium running products to hard core runners at the Comrades Expo.

Left: The prominent stand adidas earned as official partner of the OMTOM.

ty to introduce their technologies and latest styles to runners, and also answer all the runner's questions.

Common questions asked

Questions they get asked on their stand is mainly around technology, not on cosmetics or fashion trends, says Brian Kerby, MD of ASICS SA. "Runners want to know if I run like this, what shoe should I be wearing, or how long should I wear my shoes for?"

Questions around wear on running shoes are quite popular, as well as about their technologies, he adds. The ASICS Foot ID or Motion ID scan enable them to determine the runner's gait and advise him on the appropriate shoe for his specific gait, or they can recommend shoes for certain distances or activities, etc.

Running gait (i.e neutral or stability) is the one topic most visitors want to discuss on their stand, agrees Pieter Warnich, senior manager adidas SA Running. "But, the questions visitors ask us REALLY depends on the level of the runner, as well as the specific requirements they are seeking. The faster runners seek lighter weight shoes, high mileage (ultra-marathon) runners seek cushioning."

In addition to the above, visitors to their stand also enquire about cushioning properties and a recommendation for the best value for money, adds Mia Goslett of Omni Sport, local distributor of Saucony.

"The question I get asked the most is, *is this a running shoe...?*" jokes Frick, explaining that their shoes look so great some runners mistake them for casual shoes. Other than that, race distance is a large determining factor whether a customer will purchase a specific shoe. "Aes-

thetics will probably be next, and lastly support. Comfort naturally plays a large role, but I am not surprised if a runner chooses aesthetics over comfort, as image, especially in the younger consumer, is becoming a large motivating factor."

Apart from the above questions, they are often asked about the heel drop measurement in running shoes, says Aires. "Remember, we have many different kinds of runners looking at Skechers Performance shoes — from novices, all the way to elite runners." Other questions include the type of shoe they should choose to prevent injuries, for cushioning, for good support, properties of uppers and ventilation, or which shoe offers the best value for money.

"Injuries are a runner's worst nightmare and pretty much every question that we get asked about a shoe relates back to *how will this shoe enable me to run longer/faster without being injured?*" says Snyman, explaining that the runner would in other words be saying I need good cushioning. "Why? Because he perceives that good cushioning will reduce the risk of him being injured when running or training — hence virtually all questions have injury prevention at their core, except of course *does it come in another colour?*"

But, while most of these questions are asked "the most common will be what deals or specials can I offer the customer," adds Hand wryly.

New styles and trends

While new running shoe trends pique runners' interests — and sometimes cause confusion — Snyman found that runners are generally risk averse, and that they will try and replicate a

shoe that is comfortable and keeps them relatively injury free when purchasing a new model.

But, runners are also curious to hear an experienced retailer's take on a new brand or model — and whether he agrees with the advertising and marketing hype that accompanied the launch of the product, he adds.

Warnich agrees that consumers will ask questions about a new trend that is being marketed, but, not always with the intention of purchasing. "If it is a new technological breakthrough, like Boost was, then we see consumers willing to make the purchase."

ASICS ensure that they have tech reps on their stands at expos who are able to advise runners about the latest trends, says Kerby, because "runners are by nature very inquisitive about new trends, where things are leading, etc."

Younger consumers seem to be more open to trying new things as they like to stay *trendy*, is PUMA's experience. "We find those runners who have been running for many years are usually set on what brand works for them and it is very difficult to convince them otherwise."

"What the average consumer doesn't realise, though, is that an updated version of a previous model is not always the same," explains Frick. A change in the type of material used can, for example, drastically change the mechanics of the shoe. "This is why specialist running stores are becoming so popular, as the sales staff have intricate knowledge of each brand and how the changes could affect the consumer."

While there are those that get caught up in the hype around minimalist and maximalist movements, most runners like to keep to the middle ground, i.e. medium cush- **To p30**



Left: The Sweat Shop uses expos like the Comrades as a marketing exercise.

Right: Specialist runner brand Brooks at the Comrades.

Below: Happy Socks Distribution was popular with OMTOM Expo visitors says RJ Prinsloo.

Bottom: Implus Africa generated plenty of interest in their Balega socks and running accessories at expos.



Running expos cont. from p29

ioning, she continues. "The consumer is much more knowledgeable than say, ten years ago, as they have access to thousands of product reviews and YouTube videos, so they usually know what they want before they even walk into a retail shop."

Because the expo visitors are mostly experienced runners who come to register for the event, they also know what they want, agrees Kerby. "At our stand we will advise them if what they are requesting is the right fit for them, after we had done a Foot ID or Motion ID scan on the stand."

But, of course, runners' susceptibility to change will depend on their satisfaction with a specific range, points out Warnich. "If they experienced niggles or discomfort then they are obviously more open to trying something different."

Making new converts

An expo also offers a brand that is confident of the appeal of its technology or shoe styles the opportunity to win over new customers. It is a very concentrated running-focused environment, where exhibitors have the opportunity of drawing runners to their stand who might not otherwise be exposed to the brand.

This was the experience of Skechers SA when they had very prominent stands as the official technical sponsor of the Ironman events. Even customers who are comfortable with the shoe they have been using, "happily move across to the brand once they try on a recommended Skechers shoe," says Aires.

Because Skechers Performance is new to the market and is still for the most part unknown within the running communities, expos offer them a good opportunity to get **To p32**

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 **asics**

New for the urban runner

ADIDAS' NEW PureBoost DPR running shoe (right) is made for runners whose fearless attitude leaves no urban environment unconquerable, says the brand.

The new 8mm heel-to-toe offset creates a natural Boost platform

"that stores and unleashes energy more effectively every time it hits the ground. The shoe enables runners to truly *feel* the streets," explains Pieter Warnich, senior manager for adidas SA Running.

"We are seeing runners from all over the world exploring their cities and expressing their own creativity in the routes they choose and the challenges they take on.

"As a brand we wanted to build something purely designed for this type of runner, and loved the idea of creating a more adaptive running experience."

The one-piece engineered circular knit upper is Aramis-tested for a seamless and adaptive fit. It wraps the foot from the inside of the midfoot around to the outside to ensure comfort no matter the route or obstacle runners face. The heel fit counter system is designed to improve support for the foot and Achilles



tendon, and a wider forefoot creates a more stable platform that makes it easier to run over varied urban surfaces and around corners.

The Stretchweb outsole enables a smoother and more

flexible ride.

ASICS' new GEL-Quantum 360 Knit running shoe is made for "the runner who finds adventure in any urban environment," says the brand. The adaptive knit upper provides a smooth fit and the 360 degrees of GEL technology creates extra shock absorption. It also features a 10mm heel-to-toe drop and weighs



only 370g. This is "the perfect running shoe made for athletic performance with a sleek new design," says ASICS. "Don't let the urban environment get in the way; hit the ground running with the ASICS GEL-Quantum 360 Knit running shoes."



Packed with technology, the 24th version of the ASICS GEL-KAYANO (above) is designed for the performance runner. The MetaClutch exoskeleton external heel counter wraps the lateral and medial side of the ankle, and together with the built-in memory foam lining, provides individuals a more personalized heel fit with more hold. "The medial side on the GEL-KAYANO 24 incorporates sloped Dynamic DUOMAX Support to maintain stability from the first strides to the final miles of a run," says ASICS. It also features a redesigned jacquard mesh upper, which creates a more adaptive and seamless fit. In addition to this, the shoe also offers a dynamic ride (courtesy of the Ortholite X-40 sockliner and the SpEVA 45 last-ing), increased comfort from the visible forefoot and rearfoot GEL and FlyteFoam midsole, and additional forefoot support for overpronators through the new forefoot fit system with patented structured panels in the shoe's upper.

Running expos cont. from p30

their message across. "We have had a very positive reception and runners are eager to learn more about the product."

The majority of serious runners are familiar with the adidas brand, but do not necessarily know the full offering, and are therefore eager to learn more on their stand, says Warnich.

With more than 40% of serious South African runners wearing ASICS, the bulk of the running community already knows their products. ASICS runners are very loyal, says Kerby, "because they know the brand offers them premium quality, technology and products."

For PUMA the expo offers them the ideal audience to change old perceptions of the growing performance category of the brand, says Frick. "Our latest performance technologies are state-of-the art and for the first time in a long time we have a product that can compete against the best in the business. So yes, this makes them want to learn more about our performance products."

Do they buy?

Brands and retailers have had differing experiences with sales at expos.

Adidas, for example, was surprised to find that more runners purchase at an expo than they thought. "What is even more interesting, is the number of runners we see wearing our footwear the next day for the actual race," adds Warnich. "Our footwear is not like old

conventional footwear that requires a long wear-in time. If you need an update and you know the range of shoe that is suited to your biomechanics, the shoe is ready to go, due to the latest innovation in our upper technology."

Skechers was also very happy to see how many runners actually buy shoes at an expo. "We had a very successful expo at the Standard Bank Ironman African Champs in Port Elizabeth this year, where we sold out all stock of our new running shoe, GoRun 5," says Aires.

ASICS doesn't retail at expos and will instead showcase products and new technologies in upcoming ranges, for example, with a stand featuring an overall theme explaining a certain technology. Runners visit shows to do their research and have a number of brands' advice at their disposal, rather than to purchase new shoes, Kerby believes.

Smaller accessories like socks, and nutrition tend to be top sellers at expos, PUMA found. "The runners already have their shoes for race day, and most runners know it is a very bad idea to change your shoes the day before a major event," says Frick.

Overseas participants, who are unable to purchase a particular model in their home country, or only at a higher price, are his main expo customers, says Snyman. "Despite the perception that South African running shoe prices are high, they are, in reality, quite competitive on a global scale."

But, the main reason why runners will wait for expos to buy products, is because of the better prices suppliers offer them there, Velthuisen adds a cautionary comment.

But, while he agrees that most visitors from major cities centres come looking for deals, people from outlying areas, on the other hand, are interested in the products they can get there, because the stores in their areas won't stock the wide range that is available at expos, qualifies Hand.

Different price points

Most brands and retailers agree with Goslett that the *hard core* runners who attend these expos are mainly interested in premium running shoes, and are therefore prepared to pay top end prices.

But, because the market is going through a tough time, Kerby believes you have to strike a fine balance between the value you're offering for the asking price, in order to attract consumers. Price is becoming a major factor in determining if a customer will buy.

While R2 400 – R2 900 for a pair of quality running shoes is becoming widely acceptable – especially when the runner is looking for durability – a runner could be motivated to look elsewhere when there is a high jump in price on their chosen model, believes Frick.

But then again, their new GoRun5 Performance running shoe has been selling extremely well, says Skechers – probably because it is priced at R1 499.



Holdsport CEO Kevin Hodgson.



Brian Joffe (right) and Graham Dempster, flanked by the JSE's Donna Nemer and Nicky Newton-King, celebrate Long4Life's listing.

Holdsport next Joffe acquisition?

Holdsport – owner of Sportsmans Warehouse, Outdoor Warehouse and brands like First Ascent, Capestorm, Second Skins and African Nature – is in the sights of Bidvest founder Brian Joffe's new Long4Life investment firm. Just as we went to print, the firm made a non-binding offer to purchase all Holdsport shares in a share exchange at a ratio of 10:44 Long4Life shares for every Holdsport ordinary share.

The companies issued a joint cautionary announcement, after which Holdsport shares rose nearly 7% and Long4Life shares 5%.

Neither of the companies could supply additional information before we went to print.

Joffe retired from Bidvest, which he founded 28 years before, in 2016, but stayed on as executive chair of the unbundled Bidcorp, operating in the food industry. In March this year he stepped down from Bidcorp and listed Long4Life on the JSE in April, with R100-m of his personal funds. The listing promptly raised R2bn of funding.

He soon entered into negotiations to acquire the beauty franchise Sorbet, which has 160 salons and nail bars, for R16-m. This is in line with Joffe's stated objective to invest in companies in the lifestyle sector.

Shortly after listing Long4Life, Joffe told *Financial Mail* that he will be targeting companies with a proven track record, strong cash flow, market-leading brands, capital-light businesses, attractive growth prospects, and an experienced and entrepreneurial management team.

Joffe is CEO of Long4Life and former Nedbank COO Graham Dempster chairs the board. Holdsport non-executive director and former Famous Brands CEO Kevin Hedderwick was appointed Long4Life COO.

Retail sales up by single digits

Despite a challenging retail environment, the Holdsport Group managed to grow sales for the year ended 28 February 2017. Group sales grew 5.8% to R1 828.6-m (retail grew 4.4% to R1 753.2-m and wholesale 54.9% to R75.4-m).

The group's operating profit, however,

dropped 11.4% to R273.7-m compared to the previous year.

Sales in both Sportsmans Warehouse and Outdoor Warehouse grew more than 4%: respectively 4.4% to R1 335.1-m and 4.5% to R418.1-m. But, like-for-like sales increased only 1.8% – Sportsmans Warehouse 2.1% and Outdoor Warehouse 0.6%.

During the year Sportsmans Warehouse expanded its Pavilion Centre store and opened stores in Mall of Africa and Menlyn Park Shopping Centre. It now trades from 39 stores.

Outdoor Warehouse owns 24 stores: it relocated its Nelspruit store, expanded its store in Somerset West and opened a new store in George during the year.

The wholesale division also performed well and grew external sales by 54.9% to R75.4-m. Sales to Holdsport's retail divisions grew 11.1%.

During the financial year, the wholesale division acquired Second Skins and African Nature. "These acquisitions enhance the group's specialist manufacturing capacity and its access to niche markets," says Holdsport.

TFG to oppose proposed club fee sanctions

THE FOSCHINI GROUP (TFG) will oppose the National Credit Regulator's (NCR) finding that the magazine and club fees they charge account holders contravenes the National Credit Act (NCA). The NCR referred TFG to the National Consumer Tribunal (NCT).

In June this year MrP Group was also referred to the tribunal for adding club fees to accounts. In April the tribunal had ruled that Edcon was contravening the NCA by adding club fees to store accounts.

Both TFG and Edcon (and their legal counsels) argue that the club and magazine subscriptions are optional and account holders can subscribe, unsubscribe, or opt out at any time without paying any penalty – they therefore view it as any other product purchased by the customer.

"The company is of the view that the referral is based on an incorrect interpretation of the applicable legislation, as the NCA does not limit which products retailers may sell to its customers on their credit accounts," TFG said

in a statement to shareholders.

The credit regulator, however, argues that while the club subscription does not present a problem, the fact that the subscription fee

is added to the customer's monthly credit account, contravenes the NCA, which does not permit the charging of any additional fee to a credit agreement.

Sport does better than fashion in SA retail stores

SPORT AND OUTDOOR provided some relief from the doom and gloom surrounding the 2017 financial results reported by some of South Africa's major retail chains. The 21% revenue growth by The Foschini Group (TFG) Sports Division especially showed that some consumers, at least, are still spending. MrpSport also reported 7.7% revenue growth, which was by far the best performance in the Mr Price group, which reported a 1.7% drop in retail revenue for all divisions.

The TFG Sports Division now contributes more than a fifth (20.4%) to revenues, which includes international revenues. This is the second highest divisional contribution to group sales, following fashion clothing and footwear (24%).

The ten new stores mrpSport opened during the year contributed to the division's revenue growth to R1.4-bn – but comparable store sales decreased 1.8%. From 2016, when comparable store sales grew 5.3%. Their Maxed footwear performed well and grew 10%, but apparel only grew 3%. Maxed equipment and accessories sales dropped 4%. "Fitness performed well, but, outdoor declined mainly due to the pitch of product in ladies wear," mrpSport reported. Online sales grew by 22.6%.

Read more on sasporttrader.wordpress.com.

Fall-out from Stuttafords and Edcon closures

THE FALL-OUT from the local department store woes can have a see-saw effect on the lifestyle clothing and footwear retail trade: while some brands and retailers are in a strong position to secure retail space vacated by Edcon and Stuttafords at rental rates they can live with, other brands are smarting from the discounts offered to buy-shy consumers.

Edcon has been closing stores since last year to stop retail cannibalisation, as outgoing CEO Bernie Brookes terms it. During the last financial year Edcon closed 24 stores – eight of them Edgars stores, which are usually considered anchor tenants in mid-size malls, and four Edgars Active. Edgars retail sales for the year was down 6.7%, with comparable store sales down 6.6%.

In the run-up to closing its remaining stores

at the end of August, Stuttafords was offering consumers as much as 50% discount on certain brands in a desperate attempt to sell its remaining stock.

After a prolonged shareholder battle since the department store was placed in business rescue last year, 61% of the retailer's independent creditors (owed R450-R500-m of the total R836-m owed to creditors), in June voted that it must be placed in business rescue wind-down, instead of liquidation (which remains a future option).

But, not only department stores are struggling. House of Busby also recently closed their seven Mango and eight Nine West brand stores.

Read more: *Is Edcon debt deal the magic wand needed? Fall-out from Stuttafords and Edcon closures on sasportstrader.wordpress.com.*



Decathlon sets up shop in SA

DECATHLON, THE FRENCH warehouse-style sport discount retailer, is putting down roots in South Africa in the form of a megastore they are building across the way from the Mall at Newmarket in Alberton. This 2 500m² store is scheduled to open in September 2017.

On July 1st they opened a pop-up store in the Greenstone Shopping Centre in Edenvale. "We closed the Soweto pop-up store in order to move to our new pop-up store in Greenstone," said Decathlon SA Communications Leader Japie Kruger before the opening. "The main purpose of this is to move into a bigger space where we can offer a wider range of our products."

They will not only expand their product offering in the new store, but will also re-open their online store with 3 200 products – instead of the previous 700.

With more than 1 000 huge stores across 26 countries, Decathlon is considered to be amongst the biggest sport retailers in the world – if not the biggest. Founded in Lille, France, more than 40 years ago, Decathlon stores across the world follow the same formula: huge trading spaces filled with products representing more than 50 sports and outdoor codes, sold at low prices. Their popular Kalenji running shoe, for example, sells for about R199.

For more information, read *Decathlon sets up shop in South Africa on sasportstrader.wordpress.com.*



ASICS SA national field sales manager Allan Smith, ASICS SA MD Brian Kerby, ASICS SA operations manager Craig White, Brian Bands Sports' John Cooney and Michael Bester, and ASICS SA sales representative Donavon Shehab.

Below: John Cooney, Donavon Shehab, Michael Bester, and Pierre Bester who owns Brian Bands Sports.

New PE showroom for ASICS SA

IN ORDER TO connect more effectively with strategic key accounts throughout the Eastern Cape region, ASICS SA has opened a new showroom in Port Elizabeth. "This is a great step forward in terms of showcasing our up and coming seasonal products to our retail accounts and partners more effectively in the Eastern Cape," says ASICS SA MD Brian Kerby. "We are committed to providing our partners with the guidance and tools to maximise their potential and ensure successful sell through."



Earlier this year SA MTB legend Greg Minnaar's GM Cycle store joined the growing list of Specialized Elite Stores in South Africa. The new Greg Minnaar Specialized Elite Store in Pietermaritzburg is within cycling distance of the Cascades MTB Park where Minnaar won his second UCI Downhill World Championship title in 2013, back-to-back. He had also won in 2012 and 2003. To celebrate his third World Cup title on a V10 Santa Cruz Downhill frame, his team sponsor created a limited edition of only 25 Minnaar V10 Replica bicycles. For more information visit sasportstrader.wordpress.com.



Trappers franchisee is only hen among roosters

OF THE 32 Trappers store franchisees spread across eight provinces, Antoinette van der Merwe stands out as the only hen among the roosters – hers (the Brits outlet in Brits Mall) is the only woman-owned store franchisee in the group and has been running since 2010.

This has never been obvious to her as she has always had support from mostly men in business, she says.

"That said, my mother was an excellent example of how women could hold their own in a typically male-dominated business environment. She taught me how to be confident

and stand my ground."

Her experience extends beyond the years of running the Trappers franchise: Van der Merwe has been living in and been a business owner in the North West for more than 20 years. She also comes from a family that was involved in retail: her father was a senior accountant for OK Bazaars, her mother an area manager for one of the largest Foschini outlets in the country, and her stepfather started Woolworths' franchise concept.

For more information, see sasportstrader.wordpress.com.



Trappers' directors Grant Ponting (left) and John Black believe the retailer is in a growth spurt.

Trappers over 40 years

MICHELLE CAVÉ discusses why Trappers has grown successfully over 4 decades.

This year, Trappers celebrates its 40th anniversary with a healthy 17% growth in group sales for the 2017 financial year. This South African outdoor retailer achieved this in a period when there has been a notable decline in national consumer confidence and retail sales.

Over the past four decades it gradually grew from a mom and pop wholesaler to a national retail enterprise, successfully entrenched in the South African outdoor retail environment. As one of the longest standing market players, Trappers is well recognised amongst customers, having built capability and scale across the entire supply chain to improve its footprint and points of difference.

The Trappers logo has become well-known among outdoor enthusiasts across the country.

Trappers is still growing and is outperforming the retail index (less than 3%) with double digit sales growth. Its ambition is to grow revenue from R274-m to R320-m by 2018.

The Johannesburg-based executive directors, Grant Ponting and John Black, say that they have never forgotten the brand's heritage and continue to focus on their core customers, whilst still managing to keep up with trends in a rapidly changing retail environment. This approach, combined with strong operating values, is paying off, they say.

In 2004, Grant Ponting and his family acquired the then struggling group, which comprised 14 franchised stores, after initially providing a management consulting service to the owners of the company. Ponting had 5 years' retail experience at the family-owned Dunns retail chain, as well as a Master's degree in Retail Management from Stirling University, UK, when they acquired Trappers. He also has a B.Comm-degree, majoring in economics and marketing, from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

John Black joined Trappers in 2011, and was appointed director soon after. He has a wealth of retail experience and impressive qualifications, including a B.Comm in Marketing Management from UNISA. The topic of his MBA-thesis at UCT was also retail related, namely, *Innovation:*

aspects of management practice that inhibit or enable and accelerate innovation within South African retail organisations.

Through their combined knowledge and experience, they turned the struggling brand around to become a thriving outdoor equipment retailer and strong market competitor.

Today, the Trappers Group comprises three entities: Trappers Franchising (Pty) Ltd, Trappers Retail (Pty) Ltd and Outland Distributors (Pty) Ltd. And the business boasts 32 stores across eight South African provinces, selling a wide range of outdoor equipment and clothing.

Earlier this year, Trappers opened two new stores in Gauteng in Clearwater Mall and Springs Mall. This expansion forms part of a greater vision to grow the store base to between 45-50 new stores within the next three years in both existing and untapped locations across South Africa.

There are currently eight corporate owned stores, while the rest are franchised. "Much of our success can be attributed to strong franchisees," says Ponting. "We're very particular about who we work with and as a result, have built up a loyal and stable franchisee base that mirrors our values and vision. We pride ourselves in having an almost nil franchisee turnover.

"Trappers operates in a highly competitive market and so customer interaction, local market relevance and a wide range assortment remain our key focus," he adds. "Our franchised stores are community-focused owner-run stores that are often key differentiators in the outlying urban areas they trade in.

"Being owner-run ensures a vested interest

Reason for Trappers' success

- A focus on their core customers
- Keeping up with trends in a rapidly changing retail environment
- A loyal and stable base of strong franchisees who mirror their values and vision
- Most stores are owner-run, which ensures a vested interest to get to know and understand their customers
- Their *We Love Local* initiative

approach to get to know and understand customers personally. Most (85%) of the store products are core to the group, and we allow for 15% flexibility in order to ensure our franchise stores are relevant to local markets."

Expansion is a strategic priority for Trappers and as such, the directors have negotiated a significant private equity investment that will serve as capital to increase the store base within the next three years.

The company has registered trademarks in SA and Southern Africa, and there's potential to expand into neighbouring Botswana and Namibia.

Given the increased size and scale of the business, Trappers is now able to drive private label ranges across apparel, footwear and accessories. As part of the business' short-term growth strategy, these exclusive ranges will gradually become more available in-store and expand to meet customers' diverse needs and offer wider choices.

"We've always had a large contingent of male customers, but this is rapidly shifting to include more women, so we're evolving our ladies offering," explains Black. "We also recognise the value of the younger customer and aim to appeal more generally across the sector."

Culturally, Trappers is driven by a caring, optimistic and committed long-term set of values. The leaders of the business strongly support local suppliers and locally made goods. Paramount to the brand's value is its *We Love Local* initiative, which is evident across the business.

Conservation is another issue that's aligned to Trappers' corporate value system. It established a partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) based on core synergies, and continually supports its initiatives. More recently, Trappers helped contribute and raise almost half a million rand for EWT's anti-rhino poaching initiative.

"We face challenges almost daily, many of which are unique to the South African business climate," adds Ponting. "As long as we remain true to our core values, whilst continuing to improve operational efficiencies, I believe we have an opportunity to make further in-roads in our market segment."

Specialist shoes for netball and hockey

Netball and hockey players often make do with shoes developed for other sports – for example, soccer balls and boots or cross-trainers. No more. There are now sport-specific footwear to meet the demands of these sports



SOUTH AFRICA'S best hockey and schools netball players will be wearing Olympic International footwear from now on, as the brand has signed a two year agreement to be the official footwear partner of both the South Africa Hockey Association and SA Schools Netball.

The senior netball Protea players wear the netball-specific shoes from official supplier ASICS SA.

"We need to grow awareness around the improved technical capabilities of our sport shoes, specifically for hockey and netball," says Stuart Hopwood, group head for marketing at Olympic International distributor Bolton Footwear.

"And there is no better way to raise this awareness than amongst the top athletes who use them."

The strobol sock in the Olympic International hockey and netball shoes provides flexibility and comfort. The removable inner sock is made from comfort EVA with memory foam and gel pads on the heel, as well as fore-part, to provide additional comfort.

Lace locking eyelets offer players toe protection by preventing their toes from hitting against the shoes' front during jarring movements.

The addition of a breathable mesh and durable sports PU upper give these shoes a light and comfortable feel and the lightweight phylon sole with a durable rubber outsole has a tread that is designed to offer players maximum grip on playing surfaces.

Both the brand's hockey and netball models are designed to withstand the pressure these sports place on players' knees and ankles.

The Blast netball shoe (above) is designed for comfort and support in all the right places, says Hopwood. "They're sturdy, supportive and provide vital support when changing direction and moving horizontally."

Specialist shoe for netball

Netball requires a specialist shoe that can handle short bursts of multi-directional movement, jumping and pivoting, says ASICS SA. "With the GEL-Netburner Super 7 netball shoes on your team, it's a perfect match."

As the official footwear partner of the netball federation, all the top players wear ASICS' netball shoes on court, including the Spar Proteas.

"Offering side foot support and a personal-

ised heel fit that molds to your foot over time, the GEL-Netburner Super 7 provides optimal comfort and stability as you move across the court," the brand explains.

Upgraded features include rear foot and forefoot GEL for soft, cushioned landings, Sol-lyte midsole material for reduced weight and AHAR+ for durability and grip on any surface. It weighs only 300gm.

For Summer 2017 ASICS will offer a comprehensive range of netball-specific product like the GEL-Netburner Ballistic, GEL-Netburner Professional, GE-Task and GEL-Estoriil Court.



The GEL-Netburner Super 7 from ASICS is a netball-specific shoe that meets the demands of the sport.

Sweeping hockey action



PLAYERS wearing the Olympic International Sweeper hockey shoe, won't be worried about rough play.

This shoe has features that suit field hockey. "Not only is the synthetic upper trendy, but it's also flexible and water resistant," says Stuart Hopwood of local distributor Bolton Footwear.

"Designed with a stabiliser feature, these shoes will make players more agile on the field. The Sweeper Hockey promises to protect feet from the ball and from dragging with a protected area around the toe. With this shoe, you won't miss any of the action!"

Photo: Zaid Joseph Photography.

New winter sport styles from Olympic

THE 46 STYLES in Olympic International's new winter range offer retailers a wide selection to choose stock for their training, trail running, cycling, soccer, netball and hockey customers.



The Ramble Ladies (right) is a rugged trail shoe with a durable suede and breathable mesh upper. The sole has an aggressive TPR outsole with super grip cleats. Both the collar and tongue are padded for extra comfort.

The Cyclone for men (left), a lightweight sporty shoe with a breathable mesh upper, should also appeal to outdoorsy types. The super light phylon midsole has a bold yellow and black trim and the comfortable inner sock is removable for easy replacement if needed.



The Defender soccer boot (right) features an eye-catching, water resistant, synthetic upper in a striking colourway, and lightweight flexible soles with colourful multi-stud designs, offering great grip. The inner socks are made from memory foam to enhance comfort.

The Burn for active ladies (left) is a lightweight everyday wear shoe with a mesh upper and a two-colour phylon sole. The speckle lace and side trim add a modern edgy look and the inner sock is removable.



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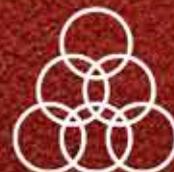


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Gauteng CBD	Gary Wilson	n/a	n/a	gary.paul@netactive.co.za
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SA Schools Netball and the
SA Hockey Association



High hopes for hockey

South African national team captain and goalie, and TK International GM, Rassie Erasmus (front) and Dylan Swanepoel in action in the 2017 test against Germany. Peter Wright of K&T Sport, distributor of Malik, is the umpire (right). Photo: NICOL DU TOIT

A story about hockey in South Africa has to address two issues: hockey at school level, where there is healthy growth, and hockey at senior level, where – like in most other sports – a drop in the number of hockey players occur.

According to the South African Schools Hockey Association (SASHOC) there were 125 633 primary and high school players in South Africa last year.

Boys' hockey, especially, has had a massive growth spurt over the past few years. Nearly half (49%) of the schools that responded to a Sports Trader survey on hockey participation at school*, now have more boys' teams than five years ago. This is in comparison with 8% of the respondents who say they now have fewer teams than before and 22% that say that the number of boys' teams stayed the same.

There has also been steady growth in girls' hockey. Nearly a third (32%) of respondents' schools have more girls' teams than five years ago, while 27% say that the number of girls' teams have stayed the same and 14% report that the number of girls' teams has gone down.

"The sport is growing very fast at primary school level too," says Marli Klynsmith of Vastrap Primary in Rustenburg, in the North West province. "But, because it is one of the newer sports at this level, we are in a constant battle against the other sports that the learners are interested in." On the other hand, the learners at Universitas Primere Skool in Bloemfontein "are very interested in playing hockey," reports Philip Marais. Mo Pearson of Auckland

Boys' hockey, especially, has had a massive growth spurt over the past few years. Nearly half of the schools that responded to a Sports Trader survey on hockey participation at school now have more boys' teams than five years ago

Park Preparatory School in Johannesburg concurs. "Hockey is at a good level in our school," he says.

Only one respondent, Mervyn Mooi, who represents all township schools Southwest of Johannesburg, reported that unfortunately none of these schools currently have hockey as school sport, but that they did five years ago. "Lack of funding and school coaches are the reasons why they no longer offer hockey," he reports.

Greater interest

The growth in hockey participation at school is mainly driven by a demand from parents and learners, 22% of the respondents report, as well as access to better coaches. Not surprisingly, an inspiring coach is an important factor why learners want to play hockey, report 38% of respondents.

"Hockey, like any sport, will grow depending on the level of enthusiasm put into the programme by the school and the coaches," comments Dean Dollenberg of Hatfield Chris-

tian School. "We have put in high amounts of energy and have reaped the results with both our boys' and girls' hockey exploding."

But, playing opportunities is still the main driver, as 49% of respondents say the number of hockey tournaments they can play in, influence participation.

"There is a very strong ability level among the top schools in Cape Town," says James Peverley of SACS, where the number of boys' teams have grown over the past few years.

Hockey shown on television also has an impact on participation numbers, report 30% of respondents. This is good news for the future, in the light of the high-profile coverage of the FIH World Series semi-final played in Johannesburg in July this, as well as the coverage of the colourful PHL (hopefully) later this year.

Last year the live broadcasts on SuperSport [of the PHL] have had a major impact, says John Wright, former top FIH International umpire and director of hockey and cricket at Tshwane University of Technology.

His brother, Peter, agrees. "The TV coverage from SuperSport has been great for the game, it has inspired many people to play hockey." He is also a FIH International umpire, president of the Northerns Hockey Association and local distributor of Malik hockey via K&T Sport.

"The PHL has definitely engaged the non-hockey community and many more people were watching hockey because it was televised," agrees Basil Gasparis, Operational Manager at TK Sports in South Africa. "It has created a buzz in the hockey and non-hockey community, with many people enquiring about the sport."

Hockey is continuing its good run of the past few years, especially at school level, a *Sports Trader* survey shows. With bonuses like the hosting of the prestigious Hockey World League semi-final in Johannesburg and the R10-m sweetener the Premier Hockey League (PHL) brought to the sport last year, can things get better? asks LINZA DE JAGER.

**Sports Trader invited a large number of schools to participate in our survey on Survey Monkey on hockey participation in schools. Most of the respondents (78%) were from high schools and 35% were from primary schools. Respondents could remain anonymous and only those who gave permission were quoted in the article.*

International hockey, however, plays a minor role in gaining converts to the sport: a paltry 3% of respondents say their charges are influenced by the performance of the national team, while only 5% is interested in the performance of international teams.

To a lesser extent factors like 'facilities have improved and that they can now use them' (8%), 'other schools in the area against which they can play hockey' (5%), and more funding for the school to offer more sports (3%) encourage learner interest in hockey.

Feeder school impact

But, where learner numbers in a school are low and girls have to choose between playing hockey or netball, player numbers go down, as V. Jonker of Hoerskool Nylstroom experienced.

Hockey coaching at primary school level is very important for future interest in the sport, several high school respondents pointed out.

"The hockey coaching in the primary schools (our feeding area) is not up to standard," says Jonker. The result is that they now have fewer girls' teams than five years ago.

"Our primary school feeder schools are no longer offering hockey as a sport, hence fewer players at high school," explains Andrew Gifford of Norkem Park High in Gauteng. "Dominant sports like netball and basketball are attracting more learners."

The non-development of hockey players in the primary schools in their feeder area, puts

a damper on hockey participation in their school, especially among boys, Kyle Talbot of Sutherland High School found. They do, however, have more girls' teams than five years ago.

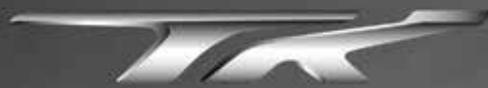
On the downside

Lack of funds to provide coaches, facilities, and playing opportunities, seem to be the main reasons why hockey participation declined in some schools. Facilities that have deteriorated so much that they can no longer be used resulted in less interest from learners, report 14% of respondents, while less funding (8%), no other schools in the area to play against (5%), and coaches who left the school (3%) are other reasons why hockey participation dropped, others reported.

In the schools where participation is down, learners rather want to play more dominant sports, report 30% of the respondents - especially where peer pressure to play another sport is strong (27%).

This often goes hand-in-hand with lack of funds to buy equipment (27%), problems created by having to stay after school to practice (16%) and lack of transport to matches (11%). A further 16% say that their disinterested learners know little about the sport.

"The need for an astro field is becoming essential if you wish to stay competitive, and many schools cannot afford one," adds Ian Kennedy from Rob Ferreira **To p40**





Natalie Esteves attacking for the Tuks hockey team, which this year won both the South African Universities (USSA) Tournament and the Varsity Championship. Photo: ZANDER ERASMUS.

Hockey participation cont. from p39

High in Whiteriver, where the demand for more hockey teams has grown among boys and girls.

Most learners have to buy their own hockey equipment, report 84% of the respondents. In 57% of the schools learners pay for their own team wear and 51% respondents say their learners have to provide their own protective wear as well.

Hockey sticks and shin pads are predominantly individual players' purchases, with only 8% respondents saying that their schools buy these items in bulk. Their schools would, however, provide equipment and clothing for players who can't afford to buy their own, 16% said.

The majority of the schools, however, buy goalkeepers' protective wear (81% of respondents) and more than half of the schools (59%) purchase hockey balls in bulk. More than a third (35%) also provide the team kit for their hockey players.

Nearly a fifth (19%) of respondents' schools have their teamwear donated by sponsors, while 5% get equipment from sponsors.

"Only our first teams are sponsored," qualifies Talbot - an occurrence in most other schools. Their school also buys shorty masks. "Learners must buy their own gum guards, shin pads, etc."

After school participation

Senior hockey has significantly smaller numbers than school hockey, but the SA Hockey Association and many players have high hopes that the Premier Hockey League (PHL) will not only raise the level of play, but attract more senior players by providing more playing opportunities.

It's too early to be able to say whether the PHL has made an impact on the number of people playing hockey, says John Wright. "The PHL is critical for hockey in South Africa at the moment," he continues. "The need for a high performance competition to allow players, coaches and officials to perform, is of paramount importance. There is currently nowhere near enough top quality competition for our players. The PHL provides for this."

The fact that there are more than 120 000 South African youngsters playing hockey, indicates that there is vast interest in the sport.

"One just has to observe how many schools are making major capital investments in artificial hockey surfaces to realise the interest in the sport," he adds. "At senior level, however, this number is greatly reduced."

While he believes the PHL has improved participation, it has only been held once - and there was no news yet if, and when, the second addition would be held by the time we went to print.

"I think if the inaugural PHL was anything to go by, then we are on the right track," says Wright. "It's not only about the athletes, but more so around the spectator experience, and the 2016 tournament did that."

Many more players have been exposed to a high level of competition, which is critical for the top echelon of players. "They need to play tougher, more competitive hockey, more regularly," he adds.

While the hockey televised during the first PHL would have inspired young players to take up the sport, "the PHL will have to continue for a number of years before it can be considered a success," says Gasparis, "This has been a good start to a new era of South African hockey," he adds. "I was at a junior tournament (U5-U13) a couple of weeks ago and there were easily 1 200 girls and boys running around and playing hockey. It was great to see!"

He believes that the standard of hockey has improved across the country. "We saw this at the senior inter-provincial tournaments (IPT) this year, where a B-team (Witsies) reached the finals and the KwaZulu Natal Raiders winning both the men's and ladies' IPT for the first time in several years." Many of the KwaZulu Natal players also played for PHL teams, he points out.

The PHL created a competitive environment for our top players, and it is important that this is a yearly event, adds Peter Wright. "It has exposed fringe players who were given a chance to play in this tournament. So yes, it has made and will continue to make a positive impact on hockey in South Africa."

He believes it can have a major impact on hockey, if used constructively. "It exposes players to a competitive structure and enables them to be part a professional set up, so it can only add massive value."

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The price of hockey's success: An overtraded market

The vast popularity of hockey, especially at school, has created a perplexing dilemma for established brands and the retailers they have always faithfully supported: there is a huge influx of new suppliers who have watched the growth ... and realised the potential of this market. But, a retailer only has so much shelf space, while the direct-to-consumer option beckons, oh, so temptingly, TRUDI DU TOIT found

There are more than a dozen recognised hockey brands, and about double the number unrecognised brands, vying to get a bigger foothold in the lucrative South African hockey market.

It is a difficult task for brands to gain shelf space, as most retailers – except a few hockey specialists – stock the top three brands, plus one or two others. Which leaves the majority of the brands out in the cold.

About half of the recognised brands in the market show their commitment to the retail industry by marketing their equipment mainly to the trade.

But, many others speak directly via consumer and social media, and sell at tournaments and through clubs to reach the end user: the players and schools.

Some manufacturers don't even have a local distributor. They fly in to sell a few bags full of sticks, and fly out when that had been accomplished. Just to return a few months later.

Thou shall NOT sell directly!

In the *Sports Trader* survey (results published in Q1 2017 issue) of how retailers and suppliers view their respective roles, 84% of the retail respondents said that brand distributors may NOT sell directly to consumers; 63% retailers said distributors may NOT sell to coaches and 58% said that distributors may NOT sell to consumers at events.

Only 5% of retailers said that distributors may sell directly to consumers if retailers refuse to stock their brand.

It was therefore a pretty decisive vote from retailers against suppliers selling to consumers.

Yet, now many of these brands are being rewarded by retailers who offer them shelf space – at the cost of loyal brands. The reasoning: *if we offer them shelf space, they will be less inclined to sell directly to consumers, and therefore offer less competition to us.*

This does not go down well with retail-loyal brands, several have told *Sports Trader*. It also creates a dilemma: do they show retailers how much consumer support they have by direct-to-consumer sales, or do they continue to support the retailers who reduce their shelf space to accommodate other brands that used to sell directly to consumers?

This is a global problem, says Rassie Pieterse, whose position as GM of TK Sports gives him insight into markets worldwide. *Sports Trader* tracked him down at the Inter-provincial

Tournament in Randburg, where he captained hosts Southern Gauteng, in-between captaining last year's HPL winners, the Cavemen, as well as the national hockey team. Add to that his role as local distributor of TK hockey, and it is clear that he has a comprehensive understanding of what is happening in hockey.

Despite the excellent growth in hockey participation, establishing brands are facing the problem that many retailers are reducing their stock of top end sticks, says Pieterse.

When a retailer reduces shelf space of an established brand to accommodate two or three sticks from a smaller brand, he is most inclined to discard the top end sticks. This is not good for a sport where so much is being done to try and raise the performance level of players.

Top end sticks = higher profit

Sometimes these decisions are made without understanding that if a retailer has the appropriate knowledge, he will be able to sell many more top end sticks with higher margins, Pieterse adds.

A knowledgeable retailer can explain to a customer why, for example, his game will benefit from using a 24K carbon stick instead of 8K – and the consumer will therefore understand that the R5 000 cost will be worth it.

Also, by encouraging brands to sell from car boots or tournaments, the players are deprived from receiving knowledgeable advice or after sale service, say other distributors.

The established brands, on the other hand, do product knowledge training and provide back-up for the retailers they supply. This ultimately benefits the whole hockey market.

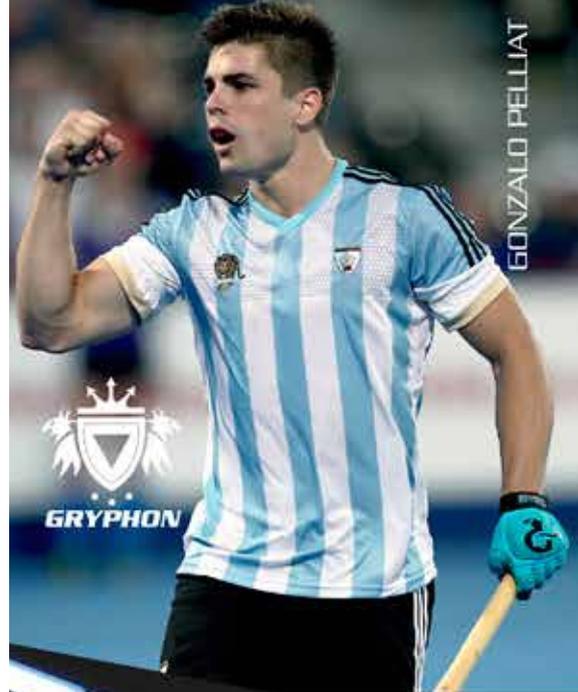
A retailer who understands the new technologies introduced by brands, can make sure that a player enjoys the game more, because the stick he buys suits his playing style – and he will be more inclined to play for many years.

Donating profits

Sponsorship of schools or billboards at tournaments are also popular ways of introducing an unknown brand ... but not always profitable.

For example, how many sticks do you have to sell to show profit after paying R8 000 for a billboard? suppliers ask.

Or, when do you expect that members of the school teams you sponsor with sticks will start paying for their own sticks ... or will they merely switch allegiance to the next sponsor?



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The PDC SA Masters Tournament hosted by Unicorn at Emperor's Palace in Johannesburg introduced South Africans to darts as an exciting spectator sport. Photo NICOL DU TOIT



Going like a Boeing

The evolution of darts dazzle. The dart has evolved from being a weapon and has been turned into futuristic, fun and fanciful player equipment. LINZA DE JAGER explores the turbo-charged changes

There's no beating about the bush. The first darts were rude and crude. The darts that came onto the scene in 1314 were lengths of wood with sharpened metal tips.

Short spears, in other words. The earliest dartboard was equally rough. It was the end of a tree log.

Wood would remain the material of choice for darts for a long time. By the 1880s, when the first purpose-made darts were brought to Britain, they were manufactured in one piece from wood, and wrapped with a strip of lead for weight. Change was in the air, however. There would be new materials and brilliant features that would change the dart beyond recognition.

"The wooden dart was succeeded by a brass

barrel with a steel point," Stanley Lowy, non-executive chairman of dart innovator, Unicorn Products, unpacks the changes.

"The flight end of the dart was essentially of two kinds."

The earlier, somewhat crude, untrimmed feather flight, was refined to neatly-trimmed four feather wings, affixed at 90° angles to a wooden spigot, which was shaped at the front to push into a brass dart body.

An alternative, cheaper, flight assembly was a bamboo length of cane, split at its rear to accept a folded paper flight, which could be easily and cheaply replaced when damaged - as was inevitable when it was in the board and struck by the next dart.

"My father - dart pioneer and founder of Unicorn Darts, Frank Lowy - found the cane-shafted dart unsatisfactory for several reasons," says Lowy. "Firstly, when the atmosphere was humid, it was difficult to insert the cane in the brass barrel. And contrary-wise, the cane was apt to fall out when the atmosphere was dry," he says.

The cheaper paper flight would fall out from time to time when the dart was thrown, so that the dart fell to the floor and the score was lost.

The first modern dart

The Silver Comet that Frank Lowy developed in 1937, was futuristic in comparison with these older darts, which came in many different shapes and weights. Lowy describes it as "precision made, chromium plated, with an aluminium shaft, instead of wood, and a vulcanised fibre flight replacing the paper flight. This was prevented from falling out in flight by a streamlined screw cap."

Because they were precision-made, the three Silver Comet darts that were sold together in a box, became the first darts to be made with a similar weight.

Since 1949 Unicorn has been selling darts classified by actual weight - the first company to do so. And today the manufacturer prides itself on guaranteeing the weight of its tungsten darts to within 0.33%.

"The shaped wooden shaft had the same negatives as the cane," explains Lowy. "It was also difficult to fit it to the barrel, or it would fall out of the barrel, and my father designed a plastic adaptor, which accepted a wooden stick onto which the feathers were stuck at one end. At the other end it had a screw thread, which attached to the dart barrel with ease."

The feather flights made by **To p44**



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Harrows now offers display stands that will showcase darts in an elegant manner – whether in the store, or your customers' home. The Darts Station is "the ultimate organising system for home, pub and club environments," says Colin Farrer of local distributor CorSport. It can be placed on any flat surface, or mounted to a wall (it has wall mounting slots, but fittings aren't included).

The station can hold four sets of 12 steel or softtip darts, 12 shafts and 12 flights, and is manufactured from hi-grade, shatter proof, crystal acrylic. It is also supplied in a full colour display carton, sized to fit Harrows' merchandising modules.

There is also a Harrows' display stands available in two options: a three hole stand to house one set, or a larger stand that will hold 12 darts (four sets).



Dart changes through the ages cont. from p42

Unicorn also evolved. More accurate wings, with different shapes to give more or lesser lift to the dart, were developed. The turkey feathers were dyed to introduce colour choices to the mix.

The feather flights were replaced almost overnight by polyester flights, which were decorated with colourful graphics, champion players' signatures or advertising slogans. They often come in different shapes.

"These shapes were developed to provide different characteristics to the flight of the dart through the air on its way to the dartboard, and when it sticks in the board," Lowy says.

New materials

Plastics have played an enormous part in the evolution of dart equipment: in flights, shafts, cases and other accessories. Plastics lend themselves to mass production, and are very versatile. They come in an endless array of colours, can be stiff or flexible, can be printed, embossed, and are usually very durable.

By the 1970s tungsten alloys came onto the

scene, and so began a new chapter for darts. The commercial tungsten alloy darts first introduced to the market by Unicorn in 1972, were slimmer, while still having the required density. This allowed darts to be grouped together closer on the board.

"Tungsten permitted the development of more intricate machining and finishes over the next forty years, which resulted in acceptable premium prices for not only the darts, but more complicated shafts, flights and presentation carrying cases. Barrels are frequently laser engraved with signatures and other information," Lowy says. In 1987 they introduced the first titanium tungsten darts in their Golden Unicorn range.

More recently, Harrows used new research into the properties of tungsten to create their I.C.E. range, with a very high 90% tungsten content.

Rapid changes

Decisive changes to dart designs have taken place over the last 20 years. With the result that darts players now have a wide range of features to take choose from when selecting their favourite dart - whether it is a preferred barrel shape, the flexibility of the shaft, or the shape of the wings.

There are now also removable dart points, and dart points that are permanently integrated into the barrel. The moveable point can retract into the barrels upon impact, thereby virtually eliminating bounce-outs.

Barrels and shafts

A wide variety of barrel shapes are available:

- Pencil shape, i.e. a long thin barrel
- Front loaded barrel, which is teardrop-shaped
- Torpedo, which is thicker in the middle and tapered at both ends
- Scalloped barrel, which has a notch in the barrel for one's finger
- Stubby barrel, which is compact.

Rigid and flexible shafts are available, as are longer and shorter shafts. Longer shafts provide greater stability and allow for a reduction in flight size. This means that darts can be grouped closer together. The longer shafts can however increase the chance of the darts' wobbling. Switching to shorter shafts can alleviate this.

Specialty shaft styles with replaceable tops, adjustable lengths and spinning shafts are also available. The spinning shafts allow incoming darts to slide past without bouncing off other darts, or damaging other flights. This creates the opportunity for tighter groupings.



TV darts and standardization

After the National Darts Association (NDA) was formed in London in 1925, the first formal darts rules and a standard dart board were introduced. But, darts was still pretty much a free for all game.

"Different scoring zones and rules were used in different parts of the United Kingdom until the mid-1960s," says Colin Farrer of CorSport, local distributor of Harrows darts.

"It was television that really standardised the modern board in 1973. This meant that players could compete nationally and eventually internationally, on the same board."

Yet, darts have been televised since 1937, when a darts tournament was televised for the first time – by the BBC, no less!

In the 1970's, however, television made darts a truly global spectator sport, with sponsorships attracting flamboyant players who became international icons, and some, like player Eric Bristow, even a M.B.E.

It was, in fact, this TV exposure and re-



Andy Hamilton signature darts from Unicorn.

sultant popularity of the sport, that led to the founding of Harrows Darts in 1973. They teamed up in 1985 with 5-times world champion Bristow, with the biggest endorsement deal of that time.

Big sponsorships and *dart ambassadors* became a regular part of the sport when *The News of the World Tournament*, founded in 1927, was revived in the 1990's with the help of Unicorn. Corporate sponsors from outside the sport soon saw the benefits of aligning themselves with televised tournaments and celebrity players known by nicknames like *The Power* (Phil Taylor), *The Legend* (John Lowe), *Darth Maple* (John Part), *Mighty Mike* (Michael van Gerwen), *Crafty Cockney* (Eric Bristow) and *The Man* (Raymond van Barneveld), to name but a few.

"Professional players have become sporting icons with large followings," adds Lowy, who started the trend in the 1950's when he signed up top players to become members of *Team Unicorn*, which over the years included most of the *big names* in darts, like world champions John Lowe and John Part.

"Increasing prize money has created millionaire dart players who train seriously, and who refine their set-ups of dart barrel, flight and shaft, seeking that edge in equipment."

During the 1970's Jocky Wilson was the Susan Boyle of his time, says Patrick Franck of W.E.T. Sports, local distributor of Datadart, which was aligned to this world champion. "His larg-

Additions to the Datadart range

DATADART, distributed by W.E.T. Sports in South Africa, now provides a full range of products, including dartboards, darts, stems, flights and accessories.

The Datadart Ambassador Dartboard with embedded wire, is very popular with the more competitive players.

The Omega 80% Tungsten dart features a choice of stems in the most popular weights to cater for every player's preference.

Datadart is one of a few companies still manufacturing the Titan Wire Shafts, says Patrick Franck. These are available in medium or short. The 100 micron Datadart G Force Flight is long-lasting, without sacrificing accuracy or feel.

"Another new addition to the range is a Dart Punch that allows you to punch a hole in your flight, to be used with the JW Ring, for precision scoring," says Franck.

er than life persona, fuelled by the television coverage of the 1979 World Darts Championship, made him an instant crowd favourite," adds Franck.

The Professional Darts Corporation (PDC) and the big prize money on offer for regional winners at razzmatazz spectator-friendly tournaments, also created a stir in South African darts circles, especially with the likes of *The Power* Taylor there to inspire local players.

Electronic darts

Apart from the upsurge in interest in the sport due to steel tip darts matches being shown on television worldwide, there has also been a move towards electronic/soft tip darts, comments Farrer.

"Electronic darts were created in the 1980s by Americans who were tired of doing the men-

tal arithmetic needed in traditional steep tip darts," he explains. Electronic dartboards have built in scoring computers that are pre-programmed with a wide variety of game types.

"The introduction of computer chips made it possible to score for a number of different games, to hook up remotely with players in a different place, or a different continent, for a match and the establishment of electronic leagues," adds Lowy.

But, he believes the more conventional – and perhaps the more serious player – still wants a traditional bristle dartboard. Perhaps with a digital capability added. It was with this player in mind that Unicorn introduced *Smart-board*, a seemingly conventional bristle board whose scores are relayed to a smartphone or standalone Pad or computer.

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Neo Mothiba coaching the Tuks basketball team.
Photo: Reg Caldecott

Basketball is scoring at top schools and universities

Former South African national basketball team captain Neo Mothiba explains to Wilhelm de Swardt and Trudi du Toit why the sport is doing so well in private schools and university leagues, and what can be done to raise the level of play.

Basketball is a resilient sport in South Africa. Despite the best efforts of former national federation members to bring the sport into disrepute, it is thriving in university and schools leagues where the most prestigious sport schools – private and former Model C – compete.

Schools with Saints in their names vie with others that are well-known for their prowess on the rugby field or cricket pitch, to top the league rankings of this sport with its urban inner-city roots.

The South African high school basketball programme is definitely one of the best in Africa, says former South African national basketball team captain Neo Mothiba, who retired this year after being a member of the national team since 2003. He was the longest serving captain of a South African national sports team.

The level of basketball talent at school has improved a lot in the past five years and high schools are starting to offer good basketball players sport scholarships, he says. "We have performed well in the African championships at U16 level and most of the players have been promoted into the senior national teams."

The local invitational tournaments nowadays attract teams from outside the country, due to the strength of teams that participate.

"But, there is still a big gap from the high school game to playing at a senior level. That is why basketball at university level is so important."

Mothiba got a basketball scholarship to study mechanical engineer and Sports Management at the Vaal University of Technology, and the

strength of the top university teams can be directly related to the number of students on basketball scholarships they have, he says.

The reason why Gauteng universities like Wits, Vaal and the University of Johannesburg have been winning the national championships for the past ten years, is because each of them have a minimum of eight players on full basketball scholarships, says Mothiba. The University of Pretoria, where he coaches, have at most two basketball scholarship players.

The South African high school basketball programme is definitely one of the best in Africa

"Until we can attract players of high calibre we will always be a step behind them."

Also, for South African basketball to grow successfully, he believes community clubs have to be resurrected in order to have the kids playing more outside of school. He was introduced to basketball as a 14-year old when his brother took him along to a local club. He mainly played community basketball as a teenager because his school – Pretoria Technical High School – at first did not have a basketball programme.

This changed three years later, when his school introduced basketball as sport in 1998. They played in the Pretoria school league and at age 17 Mothiba not only played for the first team, but also became their coach.

He had attended a FIBA coaching programme organised through Basketball South Africa, and

has since made a name for himself as much as a coach as a player. He is currently the coach of the Tuks basketball team, Director of Sport at St Mary's Diocesan Junior School for Girls.

"I have noticed a marked improvement over the last few years in the standard of athletics and gymnastics and I would love to do the same for basketball.

"But, our high school coaches are very inexperienced when it comes to world trends and that disadvantages the less stronger teams that cannot afford to send their staff for FIBA accredited programmes," he observes.

That is why he passionately believes that for the level of basketball played in South Africa improve, Basketball SA needs to run programmes for players, coaches and umpires in order to get on par with world requirements.

The professional Basketball National League (BNL) also "needs to be successful in order for players to have something to look up to for the future," he says. "At the moment the BNL is inconsistent, even though it has grown by attracting players from the schools and universities."

Mothiba was selected as a member of the South African national team after his coach invited him to attend a national team camp in 2003 – but due to the demands of his studies, he initially had to pull out.

He was elected again later that year and played his first game for South Africa against Senegal. "I did not play much, but just to be part of it was special. It certainly motivated me. Another highlight for me was captaining the South African side that competed in the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne."

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Wicket keeper Jonny Bairstow got a big fright in a recent test against England, when South Africa's AB de Villiers had a close encounter with a cricket ball. De Villiers could have been badly injured had he not been wearing the right protective equipment. Photo: Nicol du Toit.

How does gear protect players?

The dark side of sport is that injuries can often be crippling, disfiguring or mortal. Head and face injuries, especially, can be life-changing. But, manufacturers have designed equipment to keep players safe when engaging in high-risk sport, explains CARIN HARDISTY

Supporting codes such as cricket, hockey and rugby have a high impact risk for participants, not only from equipment such as hard balls travelling at speed, but also from fellow players.

Head and face protection, especially, is of the utmost importance in these high-risk sports. It is therefore essential, and often compulsory, for athletes to be suitably protected against possible injury – or even death.

In 2014 Phillip Hughes died after being struck by a cricket ball during a match. The ball missed his helmet and hit him on the side of his head. Following this incident, the ICC (International Cricket Council), cricket councils and cricket suppliers, had a serious relook at adjusting the helmet specifications for safety.

The latest update to helmet specifications was published at the beginning of this year: helmets must now be British Safety Standard compliant (BS7928:2013), and tests should include:

- Use of a ball at realistic ball impact speed and conditions to test penetration through the faceguard onto the face.
- Both senior and junior helmets should be tested for different sized balls: 5 ½ and 4 ¾ ounces.

Gunn & Moore's Icon and Purist senior and junior helmets are among the brands that comply to these specifications. The geodesic designs on its Geo Steel Grille are "mathematically proven to be ultra-strong structures," explains the brand. They ensure that "the grille has optimal impact resistance from all frontal directions."

The brand is locally distributed by Opal Sports. Kookaburra's Pro and Viper cricket helmets also comply with the BS7928:2013 standard. The faceguard is reinforced, the KCS dial allows players to quickly and easily adjust the fit that further increases protection and maximising visibility, and the airflow vents in the outer shell and interior lining work with airflow channels to wick sweat

and heat away to make for a more comfortable experience while out on the field.

Kookaburra is distributed by JRT Crampton.

Hockey face protection

Hockey is an extremely high-impact sport, with players having to dodge blows from sticks and balls.

In its updated 2017 rules, the FIH legalises face masks. *Field players are permitted to wear a smooth, preferably transparent, or white, but otherwise single coloured, face mask or metal grill face mask, which follows the contours of the face, when defending a penalty corner or penalty stroke* the body states in its rule book.

"With the short corner postman in hockey facing ball speeds of around 130km/h, even the best made polycarbonate masks on the market do not provide sufficient protection for the face and skull," says Shane Schonegevel of distributor OBO SA.

OBO's Faceoff steel mask features high forehead protection, openings next to the ears, medium density foam around the head, full chin and jaw protection, and a hi-tensil steel chassis cage.

StormForce's hockey helmet features a cat-eye steel mask for maximum visibility in all directions. The helmet itself is made from strong, rigid plastic and is fully adjustable to ensure the player is comfortable. Players up to university level can use this helmet.

It also has face masks that use impact-resistant plastic together with a high density foam backing. StormForce is distributed by Orbit Sports Manufacturers.

Rugby protective gear

According to World Rugby (the rebranded IRB), headgear worn during rugby matches may be made from material thinner than 1cm when uncompressed. The rules also state that player movement may not be impeded, and that head-

gear must cover the crown, temple, forehead around the sweatband area, and the ears.

Shoulder pads may only cover the shoulder and collar bone, and extend from the neck to a maximum of 2cm down the upper arm. It may also not impede the player's movements. No part of either of these may have a density of more than 45kg per m³.

Since these rules were adopted, the federation and protective brands have been arm wrestling about the maximum thickness of protective gear. Second Skins' headgear and shoulder pads have been awarded the IRB Approved status, which means that they comply with regulations, explains Jean-Claude Roux. They have a lightweight design, but have been tested *hard*.

StormForce's shoulder pads with compact foam padding fits tightly over the bi- and triceps without hindering movement. The ribs and sternum are protected by condensed foam cushioning that absorbs impact, and the shoulders and collarbone have compressed foam that minimise injuries without sacrificing flexibility.

They are available in International eight mould, Cyclone's five mould, and Typhoon three mould. There is also a lightweight, two mould shoulder pad for kids (Thunderkids), that has compressed foam over the shoulder and collarbone.

Its IRB approved headgear has strategic air vents to improve airflow and prevent overheating. Cut out sections improve on-field communication, and the open face design allows better peripheral vision.

StormForce can also customise its rugby headgear: choose from a range of standard colours or a full pattern sublimation.

Soft protection in cricket

Facing a 90km/h hard cricket ball without body protection, is unthinkable. But, a batsman's protection should not only keep him safe from harm

— it should also not hinder his performance.

Slazenger: the angled knee roll and contoured dual flex knee bolster in its Ultimate batting pads provide the batsman the freedom to move freely, while his legs are protected by molded impact foam, which absorbs the impact from the ball.

Slazenger's 1500K armour finger protection system in its Advance batting gloves, not only provides protection, but also includes an airflow system to allow air around the hands, which helps them stay cool, dry and comfortable.

Its Impact Protection System (IPS) for wicket keepers, used in the Ultimate wicket keepers' pads, is made from a composite laminate structure formed from high and low density foams, which absorb impact and distribute the shock evenly. "These pads have been given an international protection rating and offer a perfect fit thanks to the adjustable hook and loop tape straps," says Jon Haughton of distributor Brand ID.

Aero's cricket protective products use 3D molded high-impact plastics, multiple closed cell foam combinations and user-friendly anti-bacterial polyester mesh. Its Stripper pants are the most well-known example, says Schonegevel of distributor OBO SA. The design provides an integrated system that protects the upper and lower thighs, around the groin, the hip bone, as well as part of the buttocks.

In addition to his lower body, a batsman's fingers are also constantly in the *firing line* and in danger of being injured by the hard, fast-paced ball.

Gunn & Moore features the Poron XRD Extreme Impact Protection technology in its batting pads, which is open cell, comfortable, flexible, breathable and lightweight. It works especially well for high-speed impact, at which point it hardens instantly.

In a *resting state* (not receiving impact) the molecules repel each other slightly, which makes the material soft and flexible, but upon impact they bind together, hardening the product and allowing it to absorb and redistribute the energy from the impact. Once this energy dissipates, the molecules return to their original state — making the material soft again.

Its batting gloves also feature the same XRD technology as in its pads. In addition, the Microban anti-microbial protection inhibits the growth of stain and odour-causing bacteria.

Kookaburra's batting pads fea-

ture lightweight high density foam (HDF), either reinforced with cane rods or used in square shapes to provide added protection, which also covers the side wings and thigh area. Each Pro version has a Penta Flex Contour+ knee rolls, a Quad Flex integral shin bolster as well as thigh, knee and vertical bolsters made from mesh and lycra.

The brand's Pro guards further protect the legs with HDF materials, and together with ergonomic cutouts they create a 'body shell' for increased shock absorption in important areas. Thermo Flex foam molds to the body for better agility, comfort and movement speed, the guards are lightweight for added flexibility, and the guards are customisable (each component is adjustable and removable).

Kookaburra's gloves feature ergonomically-placed flex points, with HDF protecting the hands and fingers. On the higher-tier gloves, the fingers are covered with HDF and have reinforced fibre protection

fingertips are open. The gloves also feature elastic trims and is closed with a touch-and-close adjustable wrist strap.

OBO makes use of its 3D molding process on its goalkeepers' protective, which uses different foam densities that are bonded (not glued) together through a heating and cooling process.

This allows the brand to use foam with a tighter cell structure, and to mold a permanent 1mm skin onto all foam surfaces.

Hockey softs and guards

With the force of the player and stick behind the ball, speeds of up to 130km/hour have been recorded. Protective is therefore *essential*.

StormForce's hockey chest guard is made from closed cell foam, which offers "excellent protection," says Orbit Sports, distributor and manufacturer of StormForce. It's an "incredibly light and flexible foam protector that has an adjustable harness." A quick-release buckle also

Hockey players are permitted to wear a smooth transparent, or white or metal grill face mask for safety

chambers, and the thumb has rounded fibre inserts. The top tier ranges use rounded HDF, while the lower ones are square.

"The critically acclaimed K-Flex Support patch has been evolved to give players even greater comfort and support as well as being made available throughout the whole range," says Kookaburra of its wicket keepers' gloves. "This application gives greater support to the back of the hand (without compromising on flexibility) when taking the ball, greatly reducing the risk of injury."

Medalist's hockey shinguards, Armour and Armour Pro, each have anatomically-shaped ankle guards for additional lower leg protection, and are molded for the right fit. The Armour Pro offers extra covering compared to Armour. Medalist is distributed by De Wet Sports.

Slazenger's Club hockey shinguards are designed with a hard outer shell for maximum shock absorption, and also have padded inners for comfort.

Additionally, the Slazenger Astro hockey glove keeps fingers safe with a hard shell cover over the knuckles. For ease of use and comfort the palms are padded and the

foam, has been designed so as to maximise the surface saving area, and the face is flat for "true, predictable rebound control".

The kickers, that allow ease of movement when going down or getting up, suit an "aggressive player who kicks with conviction and also likes to log at short corners".

StormForce's shinguards are lightweight, anatomically shaped and are made with a hard plastic, protective shell. It also has vents, which allow airflow to the shin.

Soccer shinguards

Shinguards are compulsory equipment in soccer matches. *These must be made of a suitable material to provide reasonable protection and covered by the socks*, states the International Football Association Board (IFAB) rules.

Medalist offers a variety of soccer shinguards, but they all share two characteristics: a HDPE (high-density polyethylene) printed plate and a soft foam backing — the HDPE protecting the shins from external blows, and the backing creating a more comfortable area against the skin.

The goalies' gloves from Medalist feature protected palms. Both the **Blaze** (new for 2017) and **Impulse** have palms with 3mm latex and 3mm sponge, and backs with 3mm embossed EVA. Blaze is made from PK, while Impulse is PU. Medalist is locally distributed by De Wet Sports. **G-Form's** strapless and lightweight shinguards make use of its Reaction Protection Technology (RPT) technology, which combines Poron XRD with the brand's own proprietary technology to create a product that is soft, flexible and comfortable to wear, yet immediately hardens on impact. The technology is used in the form of pads that are applied to moisture wicking compression fabric, which means they can be used for any sport and don't hinder the player's movement.



Fishing's not for the faint hearted

There are several factors that are having an impact on how well the fishing industry is doing. These range from the changing weather, to the changing economic climate, to the way the world is changing around us. CARIN HARDISTY explored how the industry is impacted by these elements

The Johannesburg SAFTAD* (South African Fishing Tackle Agents and Distributors) fishing tackle trade show is around the corner and the Durban show closed less than a month ago. They are important gathering points on the fishing trade's calendar as they bring together retailers and distributors in one venue.

Not only does this provide them the opportunity to do business, but here they can also network and socialise with other industry members ... and people will inevitably discuss and compare their individual trade experiences and topics affecting their businesses.

Trade shows' number one reason, though, is to gather as many exhibitors and retailers together in one spot to make selling and buying of products as convenient as possible.

"SAFTAD offers a great opportunity to see multiple customers at one time at a much lower cost than each distributor having to go see each customer in turn," SAFTAD president John Pledger points out. "The logistics and time required to see each customer individually would make it prohibitive for most exhibitors."

National trade shows are important to the industry, agrees a tackle supplier wishing to stay anonymous. "Trade shows especially benefit the smaller distributor that wouldn't necessarily be able to see as many retailers.

"The big players don't really need to be at SAFTAD," he adds, "but they pull the visitors, so it benefits all if they exhibit."

Anonymous, however, also argues that road shows have their place. "It's often only the owners and buyers who can attend SAFTAD. Regional road shows, on the other hand, give in-store retail salespeople the chance to also see the ranges as the shows are on their door-

"The industry is sound, although volumes have been affected by the economy and the severe drought conditions. Sales are down, but not as much as some of the other consumer goods industries."

step and they can be away from the shop for a shorter period of time."

Pledger warns, however, that not everyone agrees with these road shows. "In the past, there have been several complaints about the larger distributors doing pre-shows."

But, retailers can easily spend about four hours at each of the big players' stands at SAFTAD, argues anonymous. "This could, hypothetically, leave about two hours across the entire show to see the rest of the exhibitors at SAFTAD. If they see these big brands before the show, it leaves more time to see the smaller exhibitors at the show.

"There are now more people trading in the fishing industry, but the industry stays the same size, so the market shares are getting smaller. The smaller guys are more focused and can do relatively better than the big guys," is the view of anonymous.

No matter how competitive the selling environment, let's face it – post show hours, when the drinks come out, people tend to forget that they're competitors, and the talk turns to other mutual concerns. Topics might include the droughts that are causing problems across large parts of the country. After all, fish need water to survive – and without fresh water,

freshwater fishing becomes a problem.

Can't fish without water

A drought is therefore more of an industry problem than a lack of drinking water for humans. In 2015, South Africa experienced the worst drought in more than a century – and several areas haven't recovered, with strict water restrictions remaining in place.

The Western Cape (suffering from the worst drought in more than a century), Free State, Gauteng, and Northern Cape are all experiencing – or recovering from – drought conditions, with KwaZulu Natal predicting problems if it doesn't get good rainfall soon.

Droughts can affect the fishing industry in two ways:

- Rivers and dams dry up, which translates into no fish to catch and fewer areas to fish in.
- Farmers' crops are damaged and, as a result of less income to farmers, labourers could lose their jobs and farmers spend less. All businesses dependent on the agriculture segment are therefore adversely affected and business owners have less disposable income with which to pay for leisure goods.

In the Western Cape alone, it's possible that more than 1 700 seasonal jobs within the agricultural sector could be lost, premier Helen Zille estimated in May. Last year 200 000 tonnes of wheat was lost in winter, and farmers have already sold 30 000 animals that they couldn't feed anymore, she added.

Freshwater fishermen are also becoming dependent, says anonymous. More and more areas in which they can fish, and the fish they may catch, are being restricted. This makes people think twice about wanting to go fish ing ... and buying new equipment.



Droughts put scenes such as this at risk.

Recession creates uncertainty

South Africa is in a technical recession, and “people are feeling insecure and are unwilling to spend,” says anonymous. “They are also worried about potentially losing their jobs.”

“As South Africans come to terms with the fact that we are in a recession, the majority are forced to think twice before spending their money,” says Patrick Franck of W.E.T. Sports. “This is especially true of fishing consumers. They still want to go fishing, they still want to get away from the daily stresses, but they are more circumspect about how they spend their hard earned cash.

“As much as they would like to be driving a Mercedes Benz, they can only comfortably afford a Hyundai or Tata. If they can afford the top of the range they will buy that, but more often the consumer is buying down, looking for the best value for money item to help their cash go further. The item may not last as long or have all the same features, but it gets the job done.”

“People now rather buy down, or fix their already-purchased items,” agrees anonymous. But, better quality products, that last longer, sell better, he adds.

W.E.T. Sports has enjoyed excellent growth in its fishing sales in the last few years by concentrating on sourcing good quality products at reasonable prices, says Franck. “We have never been in the top of the range market, so factors like the weaker Rand, higher prices for fuel and the cost of living have increased the demand for products in the mid-price market.

Fishing consumers still want to go fishing, they still want to get away from the daily stresses, but they are more circumspect about how they spend their hard earned cash.

We hope to continue to provide products in this market that retailers can sell with confidence.”

With the Rand performing unpredictably against the dollar, prices of imported goods remain high. It’s not only the price of products that are affected: “the cost of taking part in competitions is also increasing because of the increase in the cost of fuel and other expenses to get there,” says anonymous.

It’s not all doom-and-gloom though, reminds Pledger. “The industry is sound, although volumes have been affected by the economy and the severe drought conditions. Sales are down, but not as much as some of the other consumer goods industries.”

He also offers a further silver lining: “over many years the trend has been consistent that when the economy improves, the fishing tackle industry recovers quickly.”

Imports see-saw

So what is happening in the fishing industry? It’s difficult to answer this without the much-

needed industry research figures — so I will attempt an analysis based on statistics from the Department of Trade and Industry.

In 2014, fishing imports over all took quite a dip: 32.6% fewer units of fishing tackle were imported at 12.4% less Rand value than in 2013. In 2015 imports recovered: the number of units imported were 45.8% more than in 2014 ... but still 1.7% less than in 2013.

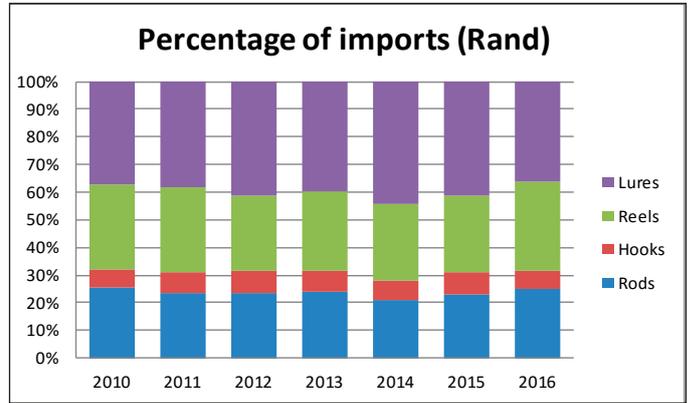
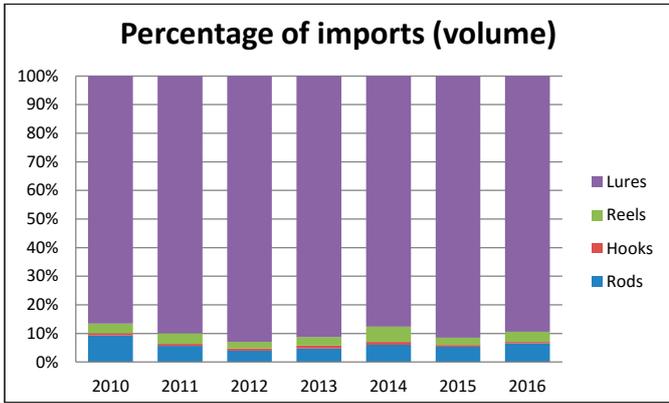
Nenegate in December of 2015, however, ended the currency year at R15.57 to the dollar (2015 started the year at R13.03 to the dollar), which started 2016 off on the wrong foot. By the end of 2016, however, the Rand had recovered to R13.63 to the Dollar.

Last year the fishing tackle units imported were 11.9% less than in 2015, but this is mainly because the third quarter of 2015 was a bumper period in terms of the number of units imported (about 40.6% more than in Q3 2016 and 187% up from 2014’s), which was also the main contributor towards 2015’s recovery over 2014.

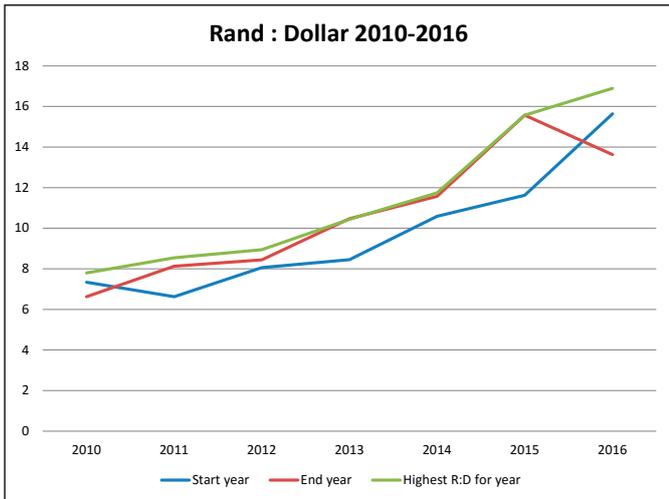
In the fourth quarter in 2016, however, 18% more fishing tackle units were imported than in Q4 2015, which hopefully signifies a continuing increase in volume numbers into 2017.

Cheaper smaller items favoured

But, looking closer at the individual fishing tackle categories, it is clear that the growth in import volumes are at the lower end of the market. The number of imported accessories, like lures, are a lot higher than other, more expensive, fishing items such as **To p52**



Above left and right: the % of the volumes and Rand value for the years' fishing related imports that lures, reels, hooks and rods account for. Below: the starting and ending Rand Dollar exchange rates for the different years, and the highest peak exchange per year.



Fishing industry cont. from p51

rods and reels.

Interestingly, despite being much lower priced, accessories also account for the highest Rand value of imports – on average these items account for about 90% in volume of imports and 40% of the Rand value of fishing-related imports. Last year was not much of an exception, with small items like accessories accounting for 89.4% of all fishing tackle units imported and the Rand values at 36.1% of all fishing imports for the year.

Reels account for the second highest Rand values (32.3% of imports) but the third highest in volume (3.6%). The number of imported rods is the second highest fishing related import, last year accounting for 6.5% of all units. Rods also accounted for 24.8% of the imported Rand value. Hooks were 0.5% of the 2016 year's fishing import volumes, and 6.7% of the value.

On average, between 2010-2016, hooks accounted for 0.8% of volumes and 7.3% of the Rand value of all tackle imports for each year. During this period, rods averaged at 5.9% of volume and 23.7% of Rand value, while reels made up 3.4% of volumes and 29.4% of the value.

Even though there was an overall drop in imported tackle units in 2016, the number of imported rod and reel units went up by 7.4% and 23.8% respectively compared to 2015. The smaller items, hooks and accessories, both had fewer imports (down 28.6% and 13.9% respectively) – and with accessories comprising the bulk of imports, this hit the year's numbers hard. Having started the year at R13.73 to the dollar, and ending the first half of the year on R13.08, 2017 is so far steady. We shall have to see what the rest of the year does, as four of the six years between 2010-2016 peaked at their worst during the last quarter. Perhaps one should invest in duct tape to keep politicians quiet for a while.

* The Johannesburg leg of the SAFTAD trade show takes place 12-13 August at the UNISA Conference Centre in Ormonde. If you haven't yet registered to attend, complete the registration form insert in this issue of Sports Trader.

A host of new items on display

SAFTAD SHOW regular W.E.T. Sports will be attendance once again with a host of new products on display. They have continued to grow their Mustad range of hooks, tools and accessories and look forward to showcasing the best of what's new.



"From the Pro Hunter and Asari stables you can expect to see old favourites in new colours, as well as the new Reeds Shad Set, the Crazy Bite Jelly Bait and a Tying Thread Kit," says Patrick Franck of W.E.T. Sports. "From REACT you can expect a host of new spinners, a Rietvei Rig and new knives.

"For the underwater enthusiasts there are new masks, snorkels and accessories from SAEKODIVE and EzLIFE, as well as a well-priced aqua shoe. Come visit the W.E.T. team to see what other surprises we have on offer," he says.

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EFTTEX award winners

THERE WERE 50 new exhibitors showing their latest fishing tackle at EFTTEX in Budapest between 29 June and July 1st 2017. This changing face of the international fishing tackle industry was also reflected by the winners of this year's *Best of* awards.

Many of the companies who used to dominate with multiple awards in previous years, only managed to win one or two awards this year. Of the well-known brands available locally, Pure Fishing did the best with two wins for *Fly Reel* (Hardy) and *Multiplier Reel* (Abu Garcia), plus a second place in the *Braided Line* category for Fireline. Rapala VMC won two categories: *Monofilament Line* (Sufix) and their scissors was the *Best Accessory*. Mustad (Boxes, Holders, Bags etc.), Shimano (*Fixed Spool Reel*) and Rio (*Fly Line or Fly Leader*) won one award each. Okuma (*Multiplier Reel*) and Daiwa (*Fixed Spool Reel*) were runners-up in the respective categories.

Next year, EFTTEX will return to Amsterdam from 28 to 30 June 2018, and the following year it will return to Brussels for the third time from June 13 to 15, 2019. In 2014, when the show was last held in Brussels, 247 companies from 41 countries exhibited.

Category	Winner	Runner-up
<i>Fly Reel</i>	Hardy MTX Fly Reel, Pure Fishing	Spectrum Lt, Sage
<i>Fixed Spool Reel</i>	Twin Power XD, Shimano Europe	Daiwa Prorex LT2500D, Daiwa
<i>Multiplier Reel</i>	ABU REVO 4 Premier, Pure Fishing	Tesoro Star Drag reels, Okuma
<i>Fly Line or Fly Leader</i>	Flats Pro Fly Line, RIO Products and Thistle-down?, Snowbee (UK)	Flat Tapered leader, Pioneer Technology
<i>Monofilament Line</i>	Sufix Advance, Rapala VMC Corporation	Fluorocarbon Max, PT Central Sarana Pancing
<i>Braided Line</i>	Gosen Casting 16 Braid, Tsuda Shokai	Duraking 9X, PT Pancajaya Sejati; Fireline Ultra 8, Pure Fishing and Smart PE, Favorite
<i>Accessory</i>	Lakebook – the Deeper Data Manager, Deeper UAB	Liveview 1.0, Water Wolf Svendsen Sport and RCD Precision Line Scissors, Rapala VMC Corporation
<i>Sunglasses, Headlamps and Headwear</i>	WX BOSS with Kryptek, Wiley X EMEA LLC	ZX-R700, FUJI-TOKI / ZEXUS and Reefton, Costa Sunglasses
<i>Boxes, Holders, Bags and Luggage</i>	Mustad Jig Pouch, O Mustad	W3 Street Sling, Westin

Fishing news

Daiwa's latest reel and line

“HERALDING A NEW dawn in reel design, the new Saltiga uses the pedigree of its past with the innovation and technology of the future to deliver anglers a new age in performance, and a new age in excellence,” says Mike Pereira from The Kingfisher, Daiwa’s local distributor. “The Saltiga is the ultimate multiplying reel, built to take the rigors of extreme saltwater use.”



It features the Mag Seal system, which uses magnetized oil to form a seal that prevents dust, water and salt intrusion, the latter of which is the *Achilles heel* of saltwater reels. The Mag Seal ball bearing in the pinion gear also adds increased protection and performance.

The reel also has a one-piece aluminium frame that allows for more cranking power, strength and durability. The large Swept handle brings the balance point closer to the centre of the reel, and also has large, super grip EVA knobs for even more cranking power, balance and control. The handle can be adjusted from 17-85mm, for in- or decreased speed and power.

Daiwa’s yellow J Braid 4 Weave line is “perfectly suited for spinning, multiplying or KP reels. This new, super high visibility J-Braid 4 is ideal for the full spectrum of fishing applications – from light tackle soft plastics through to boat or rock and surf fishing.”



It has a smooth, round profile design that wraps neatly and evenly onto the reel spool. Despite the line being thin, it is strong with breaking strains varying between models from 10-50lb, and “displays ultimate abrasion resistance for your added confidence to fish it in even the heaviest structure.”

“Delivering strength and quality in perfect harmony, Daiwa J-Braid is designed to let you be a strong fighter.”

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The surf's up! Also for SUP



Mikey February catches a good wave at Jeffrey's Bay.
Photo: Van Gysen.

IT IS A windless wintery weekday morning and all the car parks around Surfer's Corner in Muizenberg are full. The bobbing boards in the water account for some occupants, while the owners of the boards on car roofs are catching up on after-surfing coffee or shopping in the strip mall.

There are eight surf schools, more surf shops and almost as many coffee shops along the strip that became synonymous with surfing more than 40 years ago. This sense of community has done much for the steady growth in surfing (see Craig Jarvis' *Surfing into the Olympics* below) and explosive growth of Stand Up Paddling (SUP) (see *Massive growth in SUP* on p66) says Coreban International owner Gary van Rooyen.

He believes that for a sport to grow, there has to be a cohesive social community where people meet and do activities together, while a solo participant's interest could soon wane.

While surfers would still outnumber SUP participants 50:1, there is no doubt that SUP is also growing rapidly

Muizenberg's calm waves has made this a bucket list destination for young international backpackers. "They all want to come here to learn to surf," says Van Rooyen, adding that any beginner can learn to stand on a board after an hour's lesson in the safe bay. The more experienced surfers, on the other hand, would

have Jeffrey's Bay or other local big-wave bays on their bucket lists.

While *surfer* meant a tanned, laid-back beach boy in the 1960's-70's, *surfer* can nowadays describe a whole family (dad, mom and kids), as well as serious athletes. "If there are 100 surfers, there's a good chance 50 women will be out there," says Van Rooyen.

Many family members will be on SUP boards. While surfers would still outnumber SUP participants 50:1, and only a quarter of the Muizenberg strip's surf schools offer SUP lessons, SUP is indeed growing rapidly.

Surfing into the Olympics

Well-known surfing journalist **CRAIG JARVIS** discusses the effect of its new Olympic status on surfing participation

It was a unanimous decision to get surfing accepted as a sport in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. All 90 members of the IOC, voted surfing in, along with skateboarding, baseball, karate, and climbing. Their decision, it seems, has turned surfing around in a full circle.

It is a boring cliché to talk about the hippie and chilled culture of yesteryear, as surfing is nowadays big business and more the science of sport than dope and peace signs. In fact, it is strictly controlled by WADA for performance enhancing substances, with athletes often tested for such.

By becoming an Olympic sport, surfing has indeed entered the main stream sporting arena.

"Things quite simply went into top gear after the announcement [about the Olympics] in August last year," says an enthusiastic Robin De Kock, veteran of the sport and GM of Surfing SA.

"Existing sponsors and new sponsors have helped the growth of surfing since the announcement, and 2017 has seen the largest number of contests on the South African calendar in over a decade. All of the contests have

Things quite simply went into top gear after the Olympics announcement last year

attracted an additional 20% of competitors than previous years. The Olympics is a big deal and surfing as an Olympic sport is a bigger deal."

The new sponsors are encouraging. While always been supported by the dedicated surf brands – Billabong Quiksilver, Hurley and fairly fresh brand Vans among others – surfing is now attracting corporate sponsors. This year will see Corona sponsoring the biggest event, the Championship Tour at JBay, Cell C is sponsoring the Goodwave event, with the biggest domestic prize money (R100 000 first prize), Volkswagen is sponsoring the SA Open of Surfing, while Sea Harvest, that used to sponsor a massive event in Cape Town two decades ago, has come back to the sport and is sponsoring junior events. Our top pro surfer, Jordy Smith, sponsors the Jordy Smith Cape Town Surf Pro.

There is a very clear line between competi-

tive surfers and free [recreational] surfers however, and the competitive surfers are in the minority when looking at the bigger picture of the sport.

Whether this mainstream sports status might encourage more people to actually start surfing, remains to be seen. People fall in love with riding waves before they fall in love with winning competitions.

Do we [South Africa] have any hope in the medal-winning department?

"I think we have a very good chance of a medal at the Olympics," says De Kock. "Some of our current top performing surfers, such as Jordy Smith, Bianca Buitendag and Mikey February are at the right age to challenge for medals in Tokyo.

"When 2020 comes around, there will only be 20 men and 20 women surfers, and South Africa still has to qualify as a nation, but we are not only ranked in the top ten in the world, but also are the top ranked country in Africa."

The sport has become stagnant globally over the last decade with regards to participation numbers, and the alarming rise in shark incidents have kept many people from **To p57**

Massive growth in SUP

Words & photo: TRUDI DU TOIT

Coreban's weekday morning SUP class for beginner women attract more than 40 participants, with newcomers joining almost on a weekly basis, renting boards from their Muizenberg store until they become converts and buy their own boards.



From time-to-time various sports claim to be the fastest-growing in the world ... but with 30-fold growth in board sales in only eight years, Stand Up Paddle (SUP) could be a strong contender for the South African title.

For a sport that didn't exist competitively more than a decade ago, the growth has certainly been fast and furious.

In 2013 SUP was the outdoor activity with the highest number of first time participants in America, the *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report* of that year concluded.

The first SUP World Series Championship race was held five years ago (in 2012) with 49 participants. It was won by Kai Lenny, who is still dominating SUP racing.

Last year the International Surfing Association (ISA) SUP and Paddleboard World Championship in Fiji attracted SUP surfing and racing teams from 26 countries, including South Africa.

Canoe Federation taking over?

True, as *World SUP Mag* pointed out in a 2010 article by Corran Addison on the history of the sport, standing up while paddling are concepts that are centuries old – it is believed that Peruvian fisherman thousands of years ago surfed the waves on rafts propelled by bamboo poles, and that African warriors and Hawaiian fishermen centuries ago steered their rafts or flat boats with poles.

And actually, are the mokoro polers in the Delta and Venetian gondoliers not also doing stand up paddling?

The International Canoe Federation (ICF) will certainly agree, because they claimed to be the Olympic-level governing body for SUP when they challenged ISA's right to campaign for the sport to be included in the 2018 Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires. Even though all the SUP events have so far been organised by ISA and usually include SUP racing as well as surf-

In South Africa there was 30-fold growth in SUP board sales and in the US there was a whopping 40% growth in participation

ing disciplines.

ISA, on the other hand would trace the sport's roots to the Hawaiian surf instructors of the 1940's, dubbed the *Beach Boys*, who stood up on their surfboards, which they steered with paddles, to get a better view of their surfing charges and the swells.

The *World SUP Mag* article also records that the first *Beach Boy Surfing* contest was held as part of the *Buffalo Big Board Contest* in 2003. To the delight of many of the *proper* surfers, many who eagerly adopted this new format. Photographs taken of the event, created interest across the world.

The following year Rick Thomas introduced a SUP board into California ... and the sport's boom began. Ten years later 2.8-m Americans participated in SUP, according to the *Outdoor Foundation's 2015 Special Report into Paddle-sports*. That was 800 000 more participants than the previous year – a whopping 40% growth between 2013 and 2014.

After Hawaii and the US, SUP found favour in Australia, New Zealand and Europe. South Africans adopted it towards the end of the 2000s.

"South Africa was slow out of the blocks compared to America and Australia," says Gary van Rooyen, owner of the Coreban International SUP brand. When he bought the South African Coreban rights in 2009 and opened a small shop for his daughter in Muizenberg, they would sell about one board a month. The sport was new, the brand unknown and they had to set up gazebos close to rivers where they would test demo boards to try and inter-

est people in the sport.

Nowadays, their XOTB store sells on average a SUP board a day and in the peak December season often as many as two boards per day. Most of the big international brands like Starboard, Naish, Coreban, Mistral, F1 are on sale locally, as well as numerous other brands.

Van Rooyen estimates that the big international SUP brands sell about 1 400 to 1 500 new boards a year in South Africa. The second-hand market is much bigger, but it is very difficult to judge the size, he says.

While South Africa is still a small market compared to some overseas countries, it nevertheless represents significant growth in a relatively short time.

Accessible to all

This growth is in part because the barrier to entry is so low: SUP as a recreational activity on a river or a calm bay, is safe and easy to master. It is also an activity enjoyed by whole families – from kids to mom and dad. SUP boards are, for example, popular purchases for holiday homes or as gifts for spouses.

Although they initially targeted surfers, tri-athletes and other watersport enthusiasts, most of their sales are now to *Joe Public* who has never surfed, but now wants to try a new sport, says Van Rooyen.

More recently, the prices of SUP boards have also come down – making the sport accessible to more people.

Initially, the top surf brands like Starboard, Naish, Coreban, Bic, Mistral, F1 and Red (inflatable) had their boards made in Thailand at the Cobra International factory, because it had the best technologies and know-how, Van Rooyen explains.

But, when the demand for top boards declined in Hawaii, Australia and the US, Cobra retrenched about 300 people. Many of them went to China, where they set up their own

smaller SUP factories. These factories started making boards at a much lower price, many of them for retail stores.

"In the past a store would stock 25 top branded boards out of 30, and 5 no name cheaper boards," says Van Rooyen. "Now it's all reversed – a store will have five boards that are top class for people who want to spend money, and 25 for *Joe Public*. The dynamic has changed."

Many of the top brands therefore also shifted production of some ranges to China, which would sell for R10-15 000, instead of the R17 000 to R35 000 a top range board would cost.

No-name brands, especially some inflatables, can retail for as low as R3 000.

While the prices are good, the quality could be suspect, warns Van Rooyen.

The cheaper boards can be sold in any retail store by assistants without any technical know-how, he adds, but you need someone with SUP credibility and know-how to sell a R35 000 board.

Women & kids on board

There are also various initiatives to get women and children on boards – like a class of about 45 women who meet on Thursday mornings to learn the basics of SUP from XOTB instructors on the calm Zandvlei estuary – many first-timers on rented boards.

Or the workshops conducted for mainly women and kids by Roxy Davis of Surf Emporium, seven-times South African Surfing champ and a strong international SUP competitor.

But, when it comes to competition, this calm and composed picture explodes with furious paddling in races, or skilful manoeuvring over waves. There are two legs to international competitions: SUP racing and SUP surfing.

South African competitive SUP racers face some unique challenges: the cost of participating in international events is beyond the reach of many, with the result that South Africans compete in fewer events, which affects their World Rankings.

Participating in the ISA SUP and Paddleboard World Championship in Denmark later this year will, for example, cost each team member R40 000. Last year it cost R60 000 to participate in the event in Fiji.

In addition, the fastest South

African racers are isolated across the country: our top racer, Dylan Frick, for example, lives in Somerset West. His closest competition are in Gauteng and Durban. They are therefore all racing against people who are much slower than themselves.

Stronger competition

The growing popularity of SUP across the world has resulted in a strong competitive global field entering a growing number of competitions. Apart from the known top performers from Hawaii and Australia, competitors from countries like Tahiti and Japan are also making their mark in international events – the majority not attended by South Africans due to the distance and cost.

With the result that Frick, who used to be #10 in the world, is now down to #47, says Van Rooyen.

South African women, however, fare better. In 2014 (Roxy) Davis came fourth in the 2014 La Torche Pro Stand Up Paddle Board event in France, while the current SA women's champion SUP racer as well as #1 long board surfer, Tarryn King, was fourth in Fiji last year.

Her husband, Thomas King, who is a triple South African champion in Open and Masters surfing, as well as SUP surfing, came fourth in the 2016 SUP surfing championship in Fiji.

An interesting development in SUP is that the average age of participants is dropping by a decade or two. "Initially all the top guys were in their thirties," says Van Rooyen who twice accompanied the South African team to the World Championships as coach/manager – this year, at age 59, he will be participating!

"Now, the 13 and 15 year olds are coming in. They used to want to become top surfers ... but they now realise that to be another Kelly Slater, they would have to be 1 out of 500-m. To be another Kai Lenny (SUP hero) you just have to be 1 in 500 to get a chance to make it to the top."

Social media has done a lot to popularise SUP, he believes. "One search on the internet and you get pummelled by surf or SUP videos." People are now able to watch SUP events like Chris Bertish crossing the Atlantic or the World Championship from the comfort of their homes, even at 4am in the morning.

Olympic surfing cont. from p55

entering the sport.

Yet, a direct result of the Olympics announcement was that 47 countries competed in the 2017 ISA (International Surfing Association) World Games this year, 15 more countries than in 2016. These countries included marginal surfing nations like Greece, Turkey, China, Russia and South Korea, to name but a few.

The surfing contest site for the 2020 Games will be Shidashita Beach, or "Shida," a fun and consistent beach break, located about 40 miles outside of Tokyo in Chiba. The surfing part of the Olympic Games has a 16-day waiting period, and will take 2 days of surfing to complete. There will be 20 men and 20 women competing.

There has also been much talk about surfing in the Olympics going to the wave pools for conformity, and to take away the noted luck factor of catching a good wave when surfing in the ocean. With a wave pool as competitive venue, every surfer would be able to catch identical waves, and their performances would be on a relatively level playing field, so to speak – as opposed to having to contend with the inconsistencies and vagaries of the ocean.

This theory was nullified when Shida was announced as the venue, but wave pools are still popping up all over the world, and High Performance Surf Centres around the world are looking at wave pools as part of Olympic training programmes. There is still persistent talk that for 2024 and beyond, the Olympics will retain a wave pool as a contest venue for surfing, as technology will increase so much for the wave pools to perfectly emulate ocean waves. If that were to be the case, there would be a larger divide between competitive surfers and purists, with that divide being between saltwater and chlorine.

In the meantime though, surf schools continue to thrive, and participation numbers continue to grow. It will take some time for the effect of surfing entering the Olympics to filter all the way down to your quiet local beaches, but for now it all looks positive.



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Outdoor news

Ledlenser rewarded for its branding initiatives

LEDLENSER PARENT company Zweibrüder Optoelectronics GmbH has earned the Digital Brand of the Year award, which falls within the Excellence in Branding category, in the German Brand Awards. This is the second year that Zweibrüder Optoelectronics has won the Digital Brand of the Year award. It is also the second time that the German Design Council has held such an award.

The German Brand Award is a joint effort with the German Brand Institute and its purpose is "to award successful brands, consistent brand management and sustainable brand communication," explains the press release. "Outstanding brand management across all sectors is distinguished in the Excellence in Branding category in the form of eight different titles."

"These days, brands have to create a consistent, high-end brand experience at all levels, from its employees' expert knowledge of the product to the communication at each touchpoint," says André Hartmann, brand manager at Ledlenser. "You will only have long-term success if you know how to steer the entire process towards a coherent, global awareness of the brand."

One of the ways that Ledlenser is creating awareness is by partnering with events such as the Simola Phantom Night Run, held during the Knysna Oyster Festival, which this year brought some relief to the affected communities after the devastating fire (see below).



André Hartmann (middle), brand manager at Ledlenser, receives the Digital Brand of the Year award for Ledlenser.

The full-moon run featured almost 400 trail runners and walkers who donned their headlamps for a 6km or 12km trail in the Simola forests to meet the Phantom, which took on the form of the local Knysna Afro-quartez Quartet, who performed live opera from a variety of composers.

John Collins from Magnetic South, who designed the course, chose a combination of the area's most enticing trails on which even some of the locals were left in the dark and were grateful for the reflective marking that led the way back to the warmth and the cosy luxury of the Simola Hotel, reads the press release.

The blankets and clothes that kept runners warm at the start of the Knysna marathons were collected and donated to those in need.



New initiatives rise from Knysna fires

KNYSNA and Plet residents were grateful for the support shown by visitors to the Pick n Pay Knysna Oyster Festival, and participants in events like this year's Momentum Knysna Forest Marathon, and Simola Phantom Night Run, which brought much-needed tourism spend to the region devastated by the fires.

Among the industry members who will always relate to life before and life after the fires are the members of the Merrell Adventure Addicts team, Mel Hansel of Bellingham & Smith, personalised t-shirt printing company SilentK and events organiser Magnetic South, whose plea for support from runners to help rebuild the tourism industry by supporting the festival bore fruit.

Merrell Metal Addicts

Even though the fire forced the Merrell Adventure Addicts to withdraw from the 2017 Adventure Race World Championships in Wyoming in August, team captain Graham Bird retains his sense of humour. He suggests that they should in future be known as the Merrell Metal Addicts because "the hardest/tough-

est/finest steel is forged in the hottest fire".

The Knysna team members — Bird and Hanno Smit — not only lost all their personal property, but the fires also destroyed their business property and the pine plantations that was Smit's livelihood. Instead of competing in the World Championships, they will use the time to develop adventure racing as a sport in South Africa by hosting training camps across the country. Bird will also stage an epic old school expedition race in the Western Cape later this year. This *Vasbyt* adventure event has already generated plenty of excitement amongst old and new adventure racers. And the Merrell Adventure Addicts will be back in full force to show their metal at the 2018 Godzone event in NZ in February, which is on every adventure racer's bucket list.

SilentK arises

Another Knysna business that was burnt to the ground, the SilentK Clothing Co., has vowed to rise up and soon start hand-printing its own *lekker local* as well **To p61**

Leatherman brings Tool Tales to life

LEATHERMAN'S NEW Tool Tale campaign showcases real-life situations in which consumers have used the brand's wide range of tools to get themselves out of sticky, hilarious and even deadly situations.

Over the years the company has received over 4 000 unique stories and experiences via emails, letters and phone calls detailing how its multi-tools have played a role in helping Leatherman tool owners. Leatherman is now sharing these tales in a video series.

The stories range from a Leatherman tool saving a couple's life after they find themselves in icy water, to helping a traveller save a ferry stuck in pirate infested waters, to helping a tourist fix the guitar of a member of a rock band performing for an audience.

More videos will be added throughout the year and the company encourages fans to submit their unique stories. On their site visitors can create custom stories with photos or videos, which they can then share on their social media profiles. All submissions will also stand a chance to feature on Leatherman's social media channels and selected fans will receive a Leatherman tool.

The company is also known for their policy of repairing or replacing any damaged Leatherman tools, which attracts crowds of patiently waiting owners to the shows where they have booths. According to the brand's founder, Tim Leatherman, they offer this service because the word of mouth praise from one satisfied customer is worth much more than the seven customers who relate a bad experience.

Leatherman is locally distributed by Awesome Tools.



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Weight: 42.5 g



LEATHERMAN

SKELETOOL® KB

2 

TOOLS

420HC Knife
BottleClip

FEATURES

Primary Blade Length : 6.6 cm
Closed Length: 8.9 cm
Weight: 42.5 g



LEATHERMAN

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Firearms Act ruling does not scrap gun owner legislation

There is no change to the Firearms Act following the SAPS appeal against the recent High Court ruling

THE RECENT ruling that two sections of the Firearms Control Act are unconstitutional, does not mean that gunowners should not abide by the existing gun laws, warn the SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SA Hunters). The association cautioned the public to abide by existing firearm laws until the current legal challenge on the constitutionality of Section 24 and 28 of the Firearms Control Act has been concluded in the Constitutional Court.

Judge Ronel Tolmay recently agreed with the application by SA Hunters to the Northern Gauteng High Court that the sections relating to renewal of firearms licences should be revised. The two sections deal with the procedures and regulations for license renewal and the surrendering of firearms when a license had not been renewed in time.

The sections of the Act currently makes no provision for the late renewal of a license, and instead declares the owner to be in possession of an illegal firearm. In February, former acting commissioner of police, Khomotso Phahlane, issued a directive that owners who applied for renewals after expiry of their licences had to surrender their firearms to the police for destruction.

This formed the basis of the court applica-

tion by SA Hunters. Judge Tolmay declared the sections unconstitutional and criticised the Act in her June ruling for not listing the procedures that gunowners have to follow once a license had expired in order to get "back within the parameters of the law".

Parliament now has 18 months to amend the Firearms Act to make it compliant with the constitution and remove any confusion about the proper procedure firearms owners should follow when they renew licenses, the judge said.

Appeal means no change to law

SAPS, however, gave notice to appeal against this Gauteng North High Court judgement on 4 July. This means the law has not changed, cautions SA CEO Fred Camphor.

"This [appeal] suspends the High Court ruling. We are waiting for a clarification from the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court on the legal process following SAPS' notice of appeal."

Misleading and incorrect advice about the status of firearm licences and the renewal process has therefore alarmed SA Hunters. This ranges from *you do not need to apply for re-licensing your firearm any longer to ask your firearm back from the police station where you handed it in.*

He therefore advises firearms owners and dealers to be patient and to act within the constraints of the Act and the legal process.

Advice for owners

"Civil disobedience is not a remedy for a complex problem. We request all firearm owners to act responsibly." SA Hunters advises firearm owners as follows:

- If your firearm licence is due to lapse, apply in good time for the renewal of that licence. Complete the application, attach the required documents and submit it to the designated firearms officer at your local police station as required by law.
- If you already handed in a firearm to the police, retain the proof thereof very carefully. Do not ask the police to give you back your firearm. They will not do it.
- If you are in possession of a firearm of which the licence lapsed, keep it locked away in your safe and preferably do not use it.

SAPS issued a press statement promising that they would not prosecute any person for being in possession of a firearm of which the licence had lapsed, and they would not destroy any firearms already handed in to the SAPS prior to the Constitutional Court decision being received.



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Black Diamond athletes share loves and challenges

BLACK DIAMOND's South African athletes and brand ambassadors are on a mission: Team Tane wants to show off the vibrant African continent that is our home, and Gosia Lipinska explains how she consolidated her love of climbing with being pregnant. Additionally, Toit Honniball travelled to France in search of new ice climbing spots and techniques.

Lipinska (right) has been a climber for the past 14 years, and through the sport she has gained much on a personal level, she says. "Life-long lessons and relationships are born out of time spent on tiny ledges far above the valley floor, trudging up an interminable scree slope or sharing elation on a successfully climbed route," she explains.

When she decided to have a child, she had to re-evaluate how she'll safely be able to continue her love affair with climbing while pregnant. With the lack of research around climbing and pregnancy, and some that was misleading, she had to make her own decisions on practicalities. For example, to stop lead climbing: "while our ancient ancestors may have quite reasonably had to run while pregnant and evolution probably made sure that running did not reliably result in miscarriage, falling and being caught by climbing ropes seemed beyond the scope of our ancestral legacy".

Instead she has taken to the climbing wall in her gym, which is in a safer environment. She has also found that a full body harness doesn't work so well (yet, is recommended by most blogs) — instead she uses an ordinary harness.

Showcasing Africa

Lipinska may have taken her regime indoors, but Team Tane (Tarryn and Shane Quinnell, right bottom) are taking their adventure to Africa.



To showcase the "vibrant, alive and incredible side of the real Africa", Team Tane will be

setting out on their Africa Sky High (ASH) expedition.

The journey will take them from South Africa to Kenya and back, crossing through another ten countries on the way. They will also be attempting to climb Africa's Big High Five mountains, and will share their journey via their social media channels.

Climbing ice

Even further afield, Honniball (bottom left) attended the UIAA Youth Camp for ice climbing in Guillestre, France. He and fellow camp attendees were able to hone their ice climbing skills on climbs at Aiguilles, Ceillac, Les Orres, Crevoux and Cervieres. The camp also helped camp attendees become more efficient in advanced ice techniques ranging from making a solid ice belay, to efficiently placing screws to creating an abalakov (v-thread) anchor.

Black Diamond is distributed in South Africa by Ram Mountaineering.

Knysna fires cont. from p58

as business and sporting event branded t-shirts. "We will be roaring back to life with new stock and design before you know it!" promises owner Andrew Jones. His first design was for a t-shirt line to raise funds on behalf of the firefighters and charities who supported victims.

Their home, printing machines and remaining stock were all lost in the fire, which destroyed everything except a Buddha in the garden, says his wife Tessa. But, fortunately, this time of the year the t-shirt stock was quite low.

Another industry member who lost nearly all is Mel Hansel of Bellingham & Smith, who lost his home with 32 years' memories. Fortunately, the cricket bat factory was spared — the fire was stopped just short of reaching it.

The Momentum Knysna Forest Marathon and half marathon helped support the Knysna relief efforts with 2 000 blankets donated by Momentum. The runners also have a long-standing tradition of leaving the warm clothes they wear to the start behind to be collected and donated to those in need. Truck-loads of warm blankets and clothes were distributed to local communities.

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HuntEx a buzz

The close to 40 000 HuntEx visitors show exhibitors what outdoor and hunting gear will be popular sellers

WITH CLOSE TO 400 exhibitors showing every type of product imaginable across 26 000m² of the Gallagher Convention Centre, the annual HuntEx show in Johannesburg has become one of the prime shopping areas for hunting and outdoor gear.

This year there was an extra (fifth) day, which resulted in the 386 exhibitors and 38 202 visitors enjoying a much more relaxed show than previous years, report the organisers. This year the show was held from 28 April to 1 May, with an extra day for 4 000 invited VIP guests on 27 April.

"The timing of this year's event to coincide with two public holidays allowed for a more laid-back visitor experience," says Adriaan Woudstra, owner and organiser of HuntEx. The extra day took the pressure off exhibitors and gave them more time to serve and interact with visitors about new products and services at their stands, he says.

"Overall the feedback from exhibitors was

The many stands showing and selling general outdoor equipment and clothing indicate that HuntEx also attracts many other outdoor enthusiasts

positive. Those selling products at the show, recorded an increase in sales. South Africans are inherently impatient and do not want to queue for service."

As the name implies, the HuntEx Show attracts hunters who come to view new ranges from about 40 local firearms distributors as well as numerous retailers.

Firearms present a huge market for retailers. It is estimated that there are about 100 000 members of organised hunting and sport shooting organisations. Add to this the thousands – if not millions – of private citizens who own firearms and it is easy to understand why the firearms retail trade bounced back so vigorously after the scares of the mid-2000s when the Firearms Control Act was being implemented.

Outdoor products popular

But, the many stands showing and selling general outdoor equipment and clothing is a good indication that HuntEx also attracts many other outdoor enthusiasts looking for show specials. The many general outdoor retailers who had stands are a good indication that there are many hunting-related items that non-arms traders can stock.

Some retailers also used the opportunity to

Left: Lynton Picker and Lara Slotsky of Footwear Trading on their stand where they displayed the latest Jeep footwear models.

Above right: The Calibre range of camo clothing from Musgrave Agencies is a hunting favourite.



offer special services to customers, like repairing tools (e.g. Leatherman) and sharpening knives.

Although firearms are still the biggest attractions at the expo, exhibitors of outdoor equipment clothing, footwear and accessories also attracted a lot of attention from keen visitors.

Archery, knives, optics and camping gear were as popular as firearms and hunting-specific products. Visitors crowded the stands of exhibitors of products that can be stocked by any general retailer, confirming that this show is not confined to hunters.

Equipment for hunting alternatives – like paintball, archery and bow hunting – which can be stocked by general outdoor retailers and purchased without a firearms license, featured prominently.

Apart from four dedicated archery suppliers, several other retailers and suppliers also offered archery products on their stands.

Booths offering optics – from binoculars to rifle scopes and night vision – were also well supported by visitors seeking advice and comparing the latest ranges offered by different brands.

The popularity of a good hunting or camping knife was demonstrated by the show within a





Opposite page: People were keen to see what arms options Blades and Triggers (left) had on the stand. Leatherman (right) drew the crowds by offering repairs on their multi-tools.

This page: Visitors were eager to view the products on Trappers Trading's stand (above). Top right: The Wildebees range (distributed by Crown Footwear) showed off their camo options. Right: The range of outdoor furniture by Kaufmann (distributed by Agrinet) drew visitors onto the stand.

show of knife manufacturers. Apart from the dedicated knife manufacturers who were grouped together, several other knife suppliers received many visitors.

Camouflage and boots HuntEx hits

Whether buying for fashion or function, there was no doubt that camouflage clothing was a consumer hit at this year's Johannesburg HuntEx show. Stands offering camouflage clothing were swamped by young and old customers trying on the latest offerings – and that was on the pre-show VIP day that was supposed to be quiet.

Boots were next on the list. They were again bought for fashion – especially by ladies – and comfort, not necessarily just by hunters.

Camouflage is not only worn by hunters or the military. Globally, it has been identified as one of the big fashion trends for this year, and this will also have an impact locally. Trendy youngsters are sure to create an even bigger demand for the look than the current outdoor enthusiasts.

Several stands featured camouflage clothing: for example, Wildebees, locally distributed by Crown Footwear, had a huge stand at the entrance to Hall 3, which was crowded shortly after the doors opened. Others like Calibre, locally distributed by Musgrave Agencies, Tag Safari Clothing, Boerboel, etc. also did a brisk trade in camo clothing.

A retailer like Parktown Stores showed that camouflage prints need not be limited to clothing – bags, caps and other camo print accessories



were also attracting plenty of attention.

Footwear brands like Jeep and Rogue got a pretty good indication what boot styles will be popular at retail this coming season. Men especially liked the Namib Sand, Serengeti Camo and Legend styles in Jeep boots, explained Lynton Picker from local distributor Footwear Trading. He was especially pleased by the reception of their new Jeep footwear ladies range – especially the fleece lined boots and colourful ankle boots.

His range of leather shoes and canvas hats and bags drew numbers of returning and new customers to the Rogue Outdoor Gear stand, where Trevor Selke wondered on the first morning whether his stock would last until the end of the show. After all, Mpumalanga, where he is based, is not exactly round the corner and brand fans enjoyed the opportunity to talk directly to the manufacturer in a central location.



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OutDoor trends on show

TOPICS OF concern to the outdoor industry were discussed by a panel of experts during a press conference held on the opening day of the 2017 OutDoor trade show in Friedrichshafen, where more than 21 000 trade visitors from 90 countries registered to see 965 exhibitors.

The fact that health and wellness has become such a priority for so many people as well as outdoor being defined more broadly to include lifestyle and fashion, has opened many new opportunities for the industry, which was also seen at the trade show, where the four new specialist areas — Lifestyle Collection, HangOut, Water Sports and Running Centre — were popular, said Stefan Reissinger, head of OutDoor and Eurobike organised by Messe Friedrichshafen.

In the Running Centre they catered for trail as well as road runners, because “manufacturers and athletes alike have increasingly been suggesting that we extend the trail running section to cover the wider concept of running,” he explains. “Never before have so many new running gilets and running packs been presented as at OutDoor 2017.”

While these dedicated areas were designed to, for example, spark an interest in urban lifestyle, there is still a clear border between fashion and outdoor. “We don’t compete with fashion shows,” Reissinger added.

“The outdoor market has to adjust,” said European OutDoor Group (EOG) President John Jansen. “We don’t want to be seen as true fashion; on the other hand fashion lifestyle brands are competing in our area.”

While there is room for urban lifestyle products, the average outdoor retail customer is not interested in fashion, commented Olaf Wittayer, MD of the specialist outdoor retailer buying group Outdoor-Profis. For retailers there is a big difference between the margins, cycles and sustainability of stocking outdoor clothing and footwear when compared to fashion.

Consumer is changing

The consumer, who will continue to define outdoor, is changing — the new generation travels more, and has more money, Jansen pointed out. Packs with wheels therefore continue to be popular among this growing market.

The urban trend currently influencing outdoor footwear and clothing is also visible in

There is a vast discrepancy between the hard core adventures the marketing departments of brands want to sell, and what is actually sold at retail.

outdoor equipment. Lightweight and flexible are the names-of-the-game, as seen from several exhibitors at this year’s OutDoor show.

Everyone has to eat at some point ... even outdoor adventurers. Companies are developing new, easier ways of making food in the outdoors, for example mini grills that can fit in a backpack, a solar oven that can generate 280°C in mere minutes, or a wood burning, yet smokeless, camp stove that also turns heat into electricity (useful to charge a smartphone or LED lamp while cooking!).

Henry Ford said before he invented the motor car consumers just wanted faster horses — the outdoor industry must find a balance between introducing consumers to new concepts and giving them what they ask for, was the consumer-perspective introduced by author Alastair Humphreys, who champions the concept of micro-adventures, i.e. ordinary people embarking on local, cheap adventures like camping in their own back yards or on a hill outside the town.

More ordinary outdoor activities

“People are moving away from a hard core outdoor approach, the trend is now just to hang out in the outdoors and have a nice, relaxed day, enjoy being outdoors, perhaps to cook there,” added Reissinger. “Extreme sport is no longer at the centre.”

Hammocks, for example, are enjoying a revival, showed companies who exhibited lightweight hammocks with insect protection, ones that are extra durable, a hammock that doubles as a parka, and a seated-version.

There is a vast discrepancy between the hard core adventures the marketing departments of brands want to sell, and what is actually sold at retail, Wittayer agreed. “We sell to dog walkers, those are our AAA customers. The base camp adventurers are not our outdoor retail customers, because they have sponsors.”

These views resonate with the new initiative by the EOG under the banner of “#ItsGreatOut-There,” added Jansen. The aim of this campaign is to get more people out of their houses and into the outdoor environment.

But, too many revolutionary ideas can cause turmoil in the industry, cautioned Wittayer. Every two to three years there are new faces at large outdoor companies who want to introduce new ideas — and when they leave, the



All photos courtesy of Messe Friedrichshafen.

next sales managers again come with their own new ideas.

On the other hand, many of the specialised retailers are family-owned companies who have passed on their experience from generation to generation and have business units that work. The successful retailers act as consultants for outdoor adventurers by recommending gear and asking their customers for feedback when they return — which they can again pass on to other customers.

Industry growth on track

While over-supply of outdoor goods had been viewed as a problem for many years, “steady developments and concentration on quality will help us form partnerships that will help grow the industry, instead of focusing on brands that just go *poof*,” he added.

The good news is that growth is back on track in the European outdoor industry, Jansen reported. Last year, the 6.9-m extra units sold into European outdoor retailers were 3.4% more than in 2015, when only 0.8% growth was reported, according to the 2016 *State of Trade* annual report prepared by EOG. Wholesale value grew 3% to €5.47-bn, and the estimated retail value was €11.5-bn.

Apparel, which constituted more than half of the wholesale sales value, grew 4.2% in value to €2.8-bn, and 6.3% in volume. The second biggest contributor, footwear, dropped 1% in sales value to €1.5-bn, which is a once-off adjustment after several buoyant years, believes Jansen, who is also the EMEA head of Keen footwear.

The third biggest category, backpacks and luggage, grew 5.3% in value to €390-m and 2.6% in volume. Accessories grew 3.5% in value to €382-m, 3.1% in volume, and climbing equipment grew 4.4% in value to €127-m, 3.5% in volume. Sales of tents (€168-m) and sleeping bags (€106-m) have, however, slowed down.

Internet sales constrained growth for retailers in the industry, Wittayer believes. “The double-digit growth figures of the early 2000’s is a thing of the past — online retailers have taken that away from us.” Retailers therefore need a dual approach because “we have digital natives who live online and on their phones.”

Brick and mortar stores, however, remain essential to outdoor, said Jansen. “Our (brands’) responsibility is to create excitement in brick and mortar stores.”

While most outdoor brands believe they have a strong presence on social media, consumers find most of them quite boring because what they do is so similar, is the view of Humphreys. “There is too much emphasis on selling stuff.” Instead, brands should concentrate on ordinary people telling their own, authentic, stories. “What I enjoy on the internet is real people talking about doing real things.”



Trade show news

SAFTAD coming up

REMEMBER TO add the Johannesburg SAFTAD (SA Fishing Tackle Agents and Distributors) show to your diary for 12 and 13 August. It takes place at the UNISA Conference Centre in Ormonde. If you haven't yet registered to attend, see the registration form insert in this issue of Sports Trader.



Source Africa connects the world to Africa

THE SOURCE AFRICA trade show annually attracts visitors and exhibitors from all over the world, offering them networking and purchasing opportunities, while also informing visitors of trends and developments through presentations.

The two day show, which this year took place 24-25 May at the CTICC, featured 128 exhibitors from 17 countries: apart from South Africa another eight African countries were represented (Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Swaziland, Uganda), as well exhibitors from further abroad (Germany, Hong Kong, India, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, UAE, and the US).

In addition to being able to visit a broad range of exhibiting companies, visitors could also attend several presentations. Among these were presentations by trend forecasting company WGSN, which predicted fashion trends for spring/summer 2018.

Among the manufacturers and distributors that showcased their wares and services to buyers was Bolton Footwear (above), which highlighted its Grasshoppers and Bronx footwear on the stand.

Exhibitors ranged from showing items for fashion to safety; from Africa-inspired clothing and designs to Western ones.

Cycling innovations showcased at Interbike

NEW PRODUCT SHOWCASE and crowd-funding areas are just some of the new initiatives at the trade-only 2017 Interbike Expo that will be held in Las Vegas in September.

Exhibitors will be able to featuring one innovative product in the Product Showcase area in the front of the hall. The object will be to encourage visitors to get more information and see other products, apart from the featured product, on the exhibitor's stand.

The latest cycling-related inventions will be seen in The Incubator area on crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter. Visitors will be able to touch and feel the innovative new products and talk to the

inventors of the products on display in this affordable show section. "While funding is the primary goal for these creators, no other bike event in North America can get these entrepreneurs exposure to 15K+ industry experts," says Justin Gottlieb, PR & Communications Director for Interbike.

These will be in addition to the more than 1 200 brands that can annually be seen by about 20 000 visitors to the largest cycling trade event in the US. There will also be the usual seminars, awards gala and events like the OutDoor Demo that attract trade visitors.

ISPO serves growing Chinese market

CHINA'S SPORT MARKET is showing growth, and the continued success of ISPO's two trade shows in the country (Shanghai and Beijing) serve as testimony.

China used to be associated with copies. Not so anymore say Messe München, trade show organisers that until a few years ago used to focus only on trade shows within Germany. "The phase of merely copying in China is definitely over. Obviously the so-called *copy cats* will never quite disappear, but Chinese companies have created a new self-awareness."

This year's ISPO Shanghai partnered with the Sports Tech Asia show to bring visitors the *full package*: ISPO Shanghai showed visitors the latest products ready for the market and Sports Tech Asia the sports manufacturing with a focus on machinery and manufacturing technology — a look into the "future of manufacturing," say the organisers.

Sports Tech Asia covered 2 000m² exhibition space, and admission was included in the ISPO Shanghai ticket.

This year's ISPO Shanghai trade show features more than 300 exhibitors and brands. Last year the show attracted 14 593 visitors.

Both took place 6-8 July at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre.

ISPO's other show in China, ISPO Beijing, will take place again next year (24-27 January). The 2017 show received more than 40 000 visitors and featured 502 exhibitors.

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