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The future's bright, says co-founder Nick Rose



RIDING HIGH
Booming bike sales follow summer of success



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ABC Certification demonstrates a media owner's integrity, in their willingness to be audited and to conform to industry standards.

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Ace Pre-Press. Tel: 01206 797541

Photography:

ClIQq Photography

www.cliaqq.co.uk

Twitter: @ClIQqphoto

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Published by Maze Media (2000) Limited, 21-23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Rd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8JY

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ABC certified circulation: 5,422

(audit period July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012)

UK/ROW subscription:

£25/£42.50 for one year (10 issues)

SPORTS
working with



Please visit the fitness ASSIST in association with Sports Insight Magazine stand and receive a free Body Metrix Ultrasound body composition measurement to determine your body fat percentage free of charge.



Assist's in-store sports science services have the potential to generate significant additional revenue and footfall for retailers.

Using a simple ergometer, exercise bike or treadmill, it's possible to provide a test for Vo2 max and sub maximal Vo2, which can be sold as part of an in-store service.

Using the Cosmed Fitmate Pro, which is available for hire Monday-Friday at a cost of £350 (ex VAT), retailers can generate up to £2,500 (based on testing 10 individuals a day over a five-day period), in addition to in-store revenue from increased footfall.

Additional sports science services such as ultrasound body composition are also available and can provide a complete solution for an athlete or group visiting your store.

A simple strategy would be to contact a local running, triathlon or football club and offer the facility for a nominal charge of £50 for each individual test (one person takes up to 45 minutes to test).

It's not uncommon for these tests to cost more than £150 at local universities and within the health service sector. However, they can be completed by retailers using the Cosmed Fitmate Pro and utilising their current staff.

Both the Cosmed Fitmate Pro and Body Metrix Ultrasound Body Composition monitor will be available to view at the STAG Buying Show, where your requirements to provide in-store services can be discussed in greater detail.



Create your own sporting legacy...



The Business Honours Club is an exclusive group of companies working in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust to help young people be the best they can be through sport and activity. If your company champions innovation, has specific skills or experience, we can provide an attractive opportunity which offers a variety of commercial benefits.

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RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Now that London 2012 is over, it will be fascinating to see what effect adidas' Olympic activities have had on its share of the GB sports market, says **The NPD Group**

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has been acknowledged as a huge success for London and the British Isles. A truly exceptional 65 medals, trailing only perennial Olympic super powers USA and China, and 34 gold medals in the Paralympics ensured that Great Britain was treated to a level of sporting success we have not seen in many years.

The excitement was played out to mostly full crowds, while TV coverage brought in big audience figures for the BBC and Channel 4. What brands wouldn't want to be associated with this type of event?

ASSOCIATION

The Olympic partners had to invest significant sums of money in order to officially use the London Olympic logo and associate themselves with the Games. A huge team of 'brand detectives' were employed to ensure no other companies were taking advantage of this unique time in our country's history. All of these companies are now trying to work out if it was indeed worth the hefty price tag the Olympic Games commands.

One company already seeing a significant jump in performance is official London 2012 sportswear provider and Team GB kit manufacturer adidas. Group CEO Herbert Hainer recently revealed the first half of 2012 had already been a huge success for the brand, saying that before the Games had even started **adidas had sold over £100 million worth of Olympic merchandise.**

Now that the Games is over, it will be fascinating to see what effect adidas' Olympic activities have on its share of the £4.3 billion sports market in Great Britain. While the brand claims to be performing well, it still trails Nike by some distance.

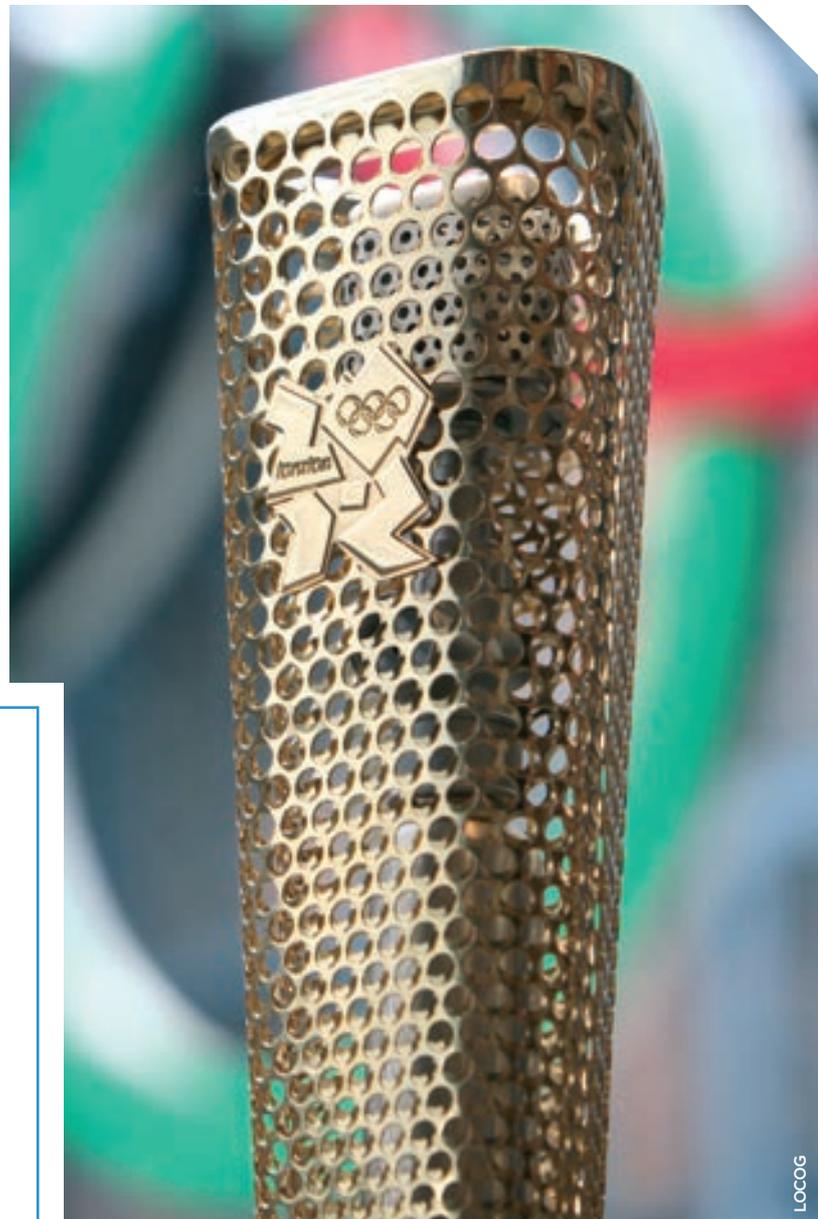
Looking at the total GB sports market, Nike and adidas combined account for more than 38 per cent of the sector. Such is the level of competition between these two brands, many of their nearest competitors are struggling to keep up and are sacrificing market share.

PERFORMANCE

adidas is performing particularly well in the running category, which is worth over £300 million and grew eight per cent during the last 12 months. Strong performance within this category will deliver good results to the bottom line of any company given its rapid growth.

In the leisure category it's a similar story, with both adidas and Nike performing strongly, despite not quite enjoying the dramatic growth levels seen in the running market. Leisure is the category that perhaps stands to benefit the most from adidas' London 2012 involvement, with the majority of official merchandise apparel falling into this category.

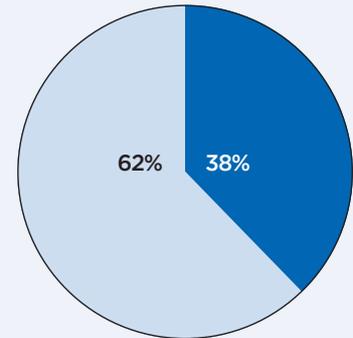
Will adidas be able to realise a significant boost to its market share in this category and challenge Nike for the number one brand position? We eagerly await Q3 2012 financial results to see whether adidas has made any ground on its American rival on the back of its Olympic involvement.



£100 MILLION

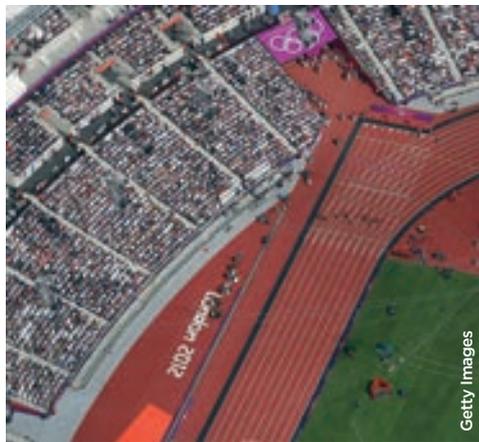


GB BRAND SHARE: FOOTWEAR + APPAREL MARKET (LAST 12 MONTHS)

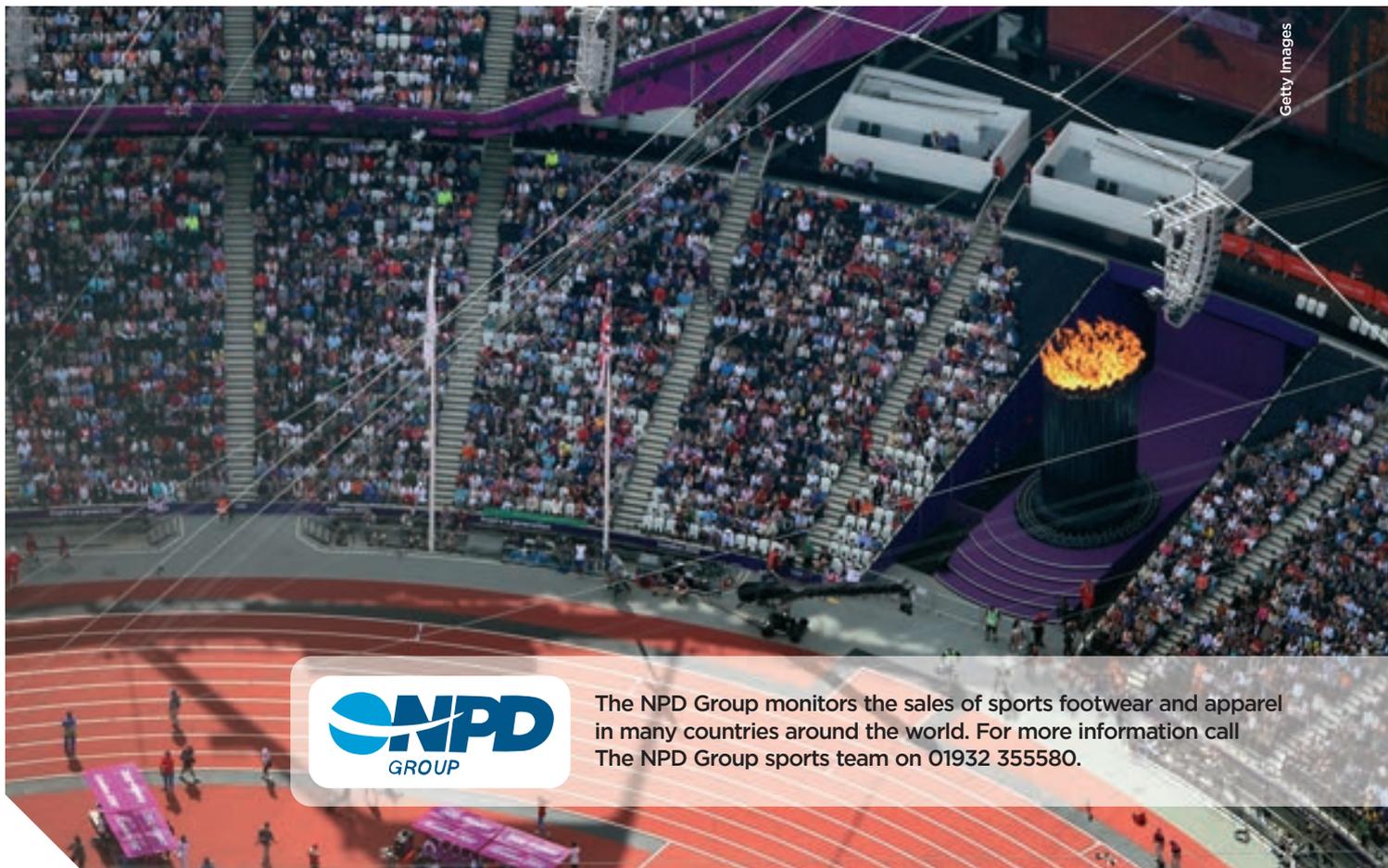


■ Nike and adidas ■ Others

“THE OLYMPIC PARTNERS HAD TO INVEST SIGNIFICANT SUMS OF MONEY IN ORDER TO OFFICIALLY USE THE LONDON OLYMPIC LOGO”



Getty Images



Getty Images



The NPD Group monitors the sales of sports footwear and apparel in many countries around the world. For more information call The NPD Group sports team on 01932 355580.

WHAT'S NEWS

ALL THE VERY LATEST IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY...



David Annand (pictured with Luther Blissett) has pledged to spend 'a season saving men's lives' after being diagnosed with prostate cancer last year. He is walking 500 miles around football grounds across the UK over the course of the year to raise awareness of the disease.

In addition, players, staff and fans of the 72 Football League clubs will undertake a range of activities this season to raise funds to help more men survive prostate cancer and enjoy a better quality of life.

Annand, a Gillingham FC fan, says: "I'm pleased and proud to support Prostate Cancer UK with this fantastic initiative having experienced prostate cancer first hand. The more we all learn and understand about prostate cancer the more we can all do to take the best care of our own health and the health of others.

"By walking around Football League grounds, I want to raise awareness and encourage more men to feel less uncomfortable when discussing prostate cancer issues."

Prostate Cancer UK is hoping to raise funds through a range of activities throughout the season, including dedicated weeks of support from March 2-16 to coincide with Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

More than 65,000 Football League fans, club chief executives and Football League staff chose Prostate Cancer UK as their charity partner for this season from a shortlist of six.

To find out more about David's fundraising and awareness activity visit www.justgiving.com/david500miles

"PEOPLE ARE SAYING IT'S DANGEROUS, WHEN THIS IS THE HEALTHIEST THING HE'S BEEN DOING IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS."

KERRY HAYES, RICKY HATTON'S FORMER CORNERMAN, PUTS A DIFFERENT SLANT ON THE HITMAN'S RING RETURN

MARKETING MANAGER TO SPEND 'A SEASON SAVING MEN'S LIVES'

ZOGGS' UK MARKETING MANAGER HAS HELPED LAUNCH PROSTATE CANCER UK'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE ALONGSIDE FORMER ENGLAND AND AC MILAN STRIKER LUTHER BLISSETT.



Sports Insight is now on Twitter. For the latest industry news, new product information and details of forward features and special advertising opportunities follow us @sportsinsightuk.

DIARY DATES



STAG ALL IRELAND BUYING SHOW 2012

October 21-22
Tullamore Court Hotel
Tullamore, Co Offaly

STAG BUYING SHOW 2012

November 18-19
Four Pillars Hotel
Cotswold Water Park

INTERSPORT Q3 2013 SHOW

January 8-10
Solihull

ISPO MUNICH

February 3-6, New
Munich Trade Fair

ISPO BEIJING

February 27-March 2
China National
Convention Center

SMMEX

March 4
Wembley Stadium



Send your news stories to
the Sports Insight news desk
at siedit@partridgeitd.co.uk
or call 01273 748675

SPORTS DIRECT GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

THE MIKE ASHLEY OWNED RETAIL CHAIN HAS BENEFITED FROM THE UK'S SUMMER OF SPORT, POSTING A 25 PER CENT INCREASE IN GROUP SALES TO £519 MILLION FOR THE 13 WEEKS TO JULY 29. GROSS PROFIT INCREASED 20.4 PER CENT TO £211 MILLION.

"Our retail performance continues to go from strength to strength," says Dave Forsey, chief executive of Sports Direct. "As we outlined earlier this year, our unrivalled depth and breadth of product, combined with the continued investment in lowering prices to our customers, is underpinning this performance.

"Since the end of July, trading has remained equally strong, especially within the UK sports retail division, where sales have also been boosted by the tremendous performance of Team GB at the



CANTERBURY ACQUISITION GIVEN GREEN LIGHT

SHAREHOLDERS APPROVE SALE TO PENTLAND FOR £22.7 MILLION.

Andy Rubin, CEO of Pentland Brands, says: "This is an exciting opportunity to develop the world's original and leading rugby brand. Its technical and lifestyle products are worn by millions of players and rugby fans throughout the world.

"It's an important addition to our portfolio of global brands in sports, outdoor and fashion. We will now work together with the Canterbury team on how to continue to build the brand in the lead up to the 2015 Rugby World Cup and beyond."

Chris Stephenson, Canterbury's CEO, adds: "Pentland is in the business of building global brands and has an impressive international trading network. We will be working closely with the team at Pentland to develop further our brand positioning, product offer and international business opportunities."

Canterbury is the official kit partner to the Springboks and Scotland. It recently secured a long term deal to become the official kit partner to the RFU and launched the new England rugby kit at the Drybrook Rugby Club in Gloucestershire on September 19.

£22.7 million



Q2 2013 INTERSPORT SHOW AND ANNUAL AWARDS 2012

The Q2 Intersport show arrived in style. With a focus on cricket and tennis, supplier partners launched exclusive products and campaigns to members.

Babolat brought along a Speed Serve game and rewarded each day's fastest serves with tickets to the Aegon Championships at Queen's.

Darts brand Winmau had double world champion Ted Hankey on its stand on the second day of the show, so that members could pit their darts skills against him.

The social evening on September 25 was a great night for both members and suppliers alike. Gray-Nicolls brought along special guest Alistair Cook, captain of the English Test and ODI cricket teams. With an insight into his cricket career and a great game of 'Heads and Tails', £760 was raised for his charity of choice, The David Randall Foundation.

This was followed by Intersport's Tom Foley and Cook presenting the supplier and retailer awards, which this year had a fantastic number of votes and some very close results.

SUPPLIER AWARDS. VOTED FOR BY THE MEMBERSHIP:

- Best Footwear Brand - **ASICS.**
- Best Apparel Brand - **UNDER ARMOUR.**
- Best Equipment Brand - **FITNESS MAD.**
- Best Overall Brand - **ADIDAS.**
- Best Sales Person - **CHRIS MITCHELL, ADIDAS.**

RETAILER AWARD. VOTED FOR BY SUPPLIERS. THIS HAD A BIG GROUP OF NOMINATIONS AND A JOINT WINNER:

SIMPLY SPORTS, OXTED AND REIGATE.
CHRISTOPHER HULL, TONBRIDGE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS.



THE NEWS TICKER



1

1. KOOLPAK DEAL

Koolpak will be providing a range of medical products and bags to Wigan Warrior's medical staff throughout the 2013 Super League season as part of a new deal.

2. SMARTPHONE INFLUENCE

Around six per cent of in-store retail sales are being influenced by smartphone use, equivalent to £15.2 billion of sales this year, according to research from Deloitte Digital.

£1m for school sport

Following the UK's sporting success this summer and on the day of the Bupa Great North Run, the world's largest half marathon, Bupa announced a £1 million investment in school sport over the next three years through its partnership with the Youth Sport Trust.

The money will be spent on expanding the Bupa Start to Move programme, which was created in 2010 by Bupa and the Youth Sport Trust to transform how movement is taught to 4-7-year-olds.

Bupa Start to Move has been operating in more than 3,000 schools to date. It equips teachers with the knowledge and confidence to teach the fundamental skills of movement, stability and locomotion - creating the foundations for sport, dancing or any other form of activity.

Teachers receive free training, support and peer mentoring, ensuring children learn the essentials at a crucial stage.

An extensive evaluation of the programme by the University of Roehampton has shown that nearly a quarter of teachers (24 per cent) who took part in Bupa Start to Move have seen improvements in the behaviour of their pupils.

As well as improving

behaviour, six in 10 teachers reported an improvement in learning among pupils, citing more confidence in basic skills and movement and better recall in remembering what they have learnt.

Stuart Fletcher, chief executive of Bupa, says: "Bupa is passionate about inspiring people to get moving and active. We want to develop the Mo Farah, Ellie Simmonds and Jess Ennis of tomorrow and we know that support from teachers during children's formative years is crucial for future sporting success.

"We're very pleased to see the programme showing such positive results. Teachers from more than 3,000 schools have been trained, but we now want to roll out Start to Move to reach over 100,000 children over the next year."

Sue Campbell, chair of the Youth Sport Trust, says: "This investment will help us continue to build a school sport system that can inspire young people following the fantastic summer of sport we have all witnessed."

Bupa Start to Move provides free professional development, starting with a day of training delivered by experienced national trainers. Teachers are then supported to self review their practice and development needs with the support of local educational specialists.

The Start to Move website (www.starttomovezone.com) provides additional free support with video clips of children demonstrating their progression in activities and how they have adopted basic movement skills and developed them into more complex activities.



RUNNING BRAND MARK'S MANUFACTURING MILESTONE

NEW BALANCE RECENTLY CELEBRATED 30 YEARS OF MANUFACTURING IN THE UK WITH A RECEPTION FOR ITS 225 STRONG WORKFORCE AT THE COMPANY'S FACTORY IN FLIMBY.

Jim Davis, New Balance's chairman, joined in the company's celebrations, as did John Wilson, executive vice president of New Balance manufacturing, and Jon Ram, New Balance's UK and Ireland managing director.

"Manufacturing has always been an important part of the New Balance culture," says Jim Davis. "We are proud to invest in our British associates, whose craftsmanship, continuous improvement and excellence has enabled us to withstand economic challenges and remain strong.

"We pay special tribute to their 30 years of hard work and dedication and reaffirm our steadfast commitment to footwear manufacturing in England."

Among the New Balance Flimby associates at the reception was factory manager Andy Okolowicz and Ann Ormond, one of the original members of the manufacturing workforce.

ENTER YOUR WINNING WINDOW IN BROOKS' HALLOWEEN COMPETITION

STOCKISTS HAVE THE CHANCE TO WIN OVER £2,000 WORTH OF RUNNING SHOES IN BROOKS' HALLOWEEN BEST WINDOWS COMPETITION.

Taking place from October 24 until 5 pm on October 31, photos of windows should be emailed to reina.alston@brooksrunning.co.uk or sophia.marks@brooksrunning.co.uk and will be judged by a panel of 12 Brooks staff members.

The prize - two cartons of Ghost 5 shoes - has a retail value of £2,400. The winning window will be unveiled at www.brooksrunning.co.uk around midday on November 1.





3

3. COOL BRAND

Nike was the only sports brand to feature in the top 20 of this year's CoolBrands listing. Ranked 19th, Apple was first, YouTube second and Aston Martin third.

4. REEBOK TARGETS

adidas has cut Reebok's 2015 sales target from €3 billion to €2 billion following the decision not to renew its NFL licence and the group's increased focus on margin and operational efficiency.

5. CUSHE JOINS STAG

Cushe Footwear (pronounced 'Cushy') has joined the buying group as a supplier. "This represents a positive leap in the right direction," says global marketing manager Ciaran Henderson.

Blacks blamed for fall in JD Sports profits

JD SPORTS HAS SAID A PLUNGE IN PRE-TAX PROFITS FOR THE SIX MONTHS TO JULY 28 WAS DUE TO LOSSES INCURRED BY THE RECENTLY ACQUIRED BLACKS CHAIN.

Profits were £2.8 million, compared to £20.1 million for the same period last year. Revenue rose 26.4 per cent to £556 million.

JD said it lost an initial £10 million in the Blacks business because of a lack of stock and an unsustainable cost base.

"I stated in April that the recent expansion activity in

the group, the relocation of distribution facilities and the resolution of the stock and property issues in the Blacks business would impact results in the short term," says Peter Cowgill, JD's executive chairman.

"As expected, this has proven to be the case, but it does provide the group with a very positive platform for future development. I am pleased to report that our primary JD fascia remains robust and we have increased our overseas

presence with the intention of producing long term value for shareholders.

"The robust trading in the sports fascias has continued since the period end, although trading in the fashion fascias has been more difficult. Our outdoor business continues to stabilise and aims to break even in the second half before any restructuring charges.

"As ever, the group result for the full year remains dependent on the sales and

margin performance in December and January. Notwithstanding the economic pressure on margin and the general increase in taxation and other levies across Europe, the board believes the group is well positioned to deliver results that are within the range of current expectations."

Like for like sales for the period in UK and Ireland sports fascia stores rose by 1.2 per cent, while JD opened seven stores in France and three in Spain.

AQUA SPHERE'S AD INVESTMENT HELPS SALES TAKE OFF

A SPECIALLY CREATED ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN FOR RYANAIR'S IN-FLIGHT MAGAZINE AROUND LONDON 2012 HAS HELPED BOOST SALES AT SWIM BRAND AQUA SPHERE.

Ryanair operates more than 1,400 flights a day, connecting 160 destinations across Europe. However, passenger numbers increased during the Olympics, with nearly eight million people choosing Ryanair, presenting Aqua Sphere with a high value audience and exposure to a higher readership than the London Evening Standard, Daily Express, The Guardian, The Independent, The Times and The Telegraph.

"Our continued investment in marketing, coupled with the incredible feelgood factor around the Games this summer, has boosted our UK swim and triathlon sales significantly and we are conservatively predicting a 20 per cent growth year on year," says Martin Newton, Aqua Sphere UK's sales and marketing manager.

"We are committed to getting our brand values of innovation and comfort understood beyond elite swimmers and triathletes, as we firmly believe that everyone, from recreational swimmers to fitness swimmers, can benefit from better design. We look forward to steady, systematic growth into 2013."



Brand Agility posts 'great trading results'

CARIBEE DISTRIBUTOR BRAND AGILITY HAS REPORTED A 20 PER CENT INCREASE IN SALES AHEAD OF A MOVE TO LARGER PREMISES LATER THIS MONTH.

Says Jacquie Sandison of Brand Agility: "Five years ago, when we brought Australian brand Caribee to the UK and Ireland, it was relatively unknown. Since then we have worked tirelessly to create awareness and build the network of retailer partners we work with.

"These are great trading results for us and I'm optimistic growth will continue into 2013 given the success retailers have had with the brand and new product range available.

"Our focus has always been our customers and consistently delivering great products and a good service to them. The new premises will enable us to build the business, reshape it and prepare for the future. The extra working and warehousing space will allow us to employ new talent, offer a fulfilment service for online retailers and launch a high spec showroom."



"WOULD BURNLEY PLAYERS HAVE EVER UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE WANTED IF HE'D TOLD THEM TO 'SOLIDIFICATE'?"

FORMER CEO PAUL FLETCHER REVEALS WHY THE CLUB TURNED ANDRE VILLAS-BOAS DOWN FOR THE MANAGER'S JOB

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To place your order or for more information call the business development team on 01282 418448

or email sales@surridgesport.com. Twitter: @surridgesport

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1



2



PRICE OF BATH

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www.jpricebath.co.uk

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Following on from the success of the Ignis Pro Mouthguard range, the latest product to be launched by Makura is the IRB approved Warrior headguard.

This headguard has an ultra lightweight, flexible and breathable design that provides a fantastic level of comfort and excellent visibility. Hexaguard padding gives all around protection and pivots in multiple directions to mould easily to the shape of the head.

The full range of Makura products can be viewed at makurasport.com. To place an order call 0330 333 8940 or email info@makurasport.com



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With printing and embroidery services available for most products, teams can customise anything from training and leisurewear to sports bags and equipment - put your club badge on a set of custom training balls, water bottles or even bespoke ties. These options can even be customised to individual names or numbers.

For creating unique teamwear, Team Colours provides a range of online designer tools and can mock up visuals on request. To enquire about custom team options go online or call the Team Colours' sales team.

Tel: +44 (0)1920 876 240.

Email: trade@team-colours.co.uk

www.team-colours.co.uk



TEAM COLOURS

FORMULA 1 TECHNOLOGY HAS COME TO HOCKEY - FROM BRABO

BRABO HAS TAKEN A FEW STEPS CLOSER TO THE 'HOCKEY HOLY GRAIL' - STICKS THAT ARE LIGHTER AND STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE.

The sticks are based on a technology taken straight out of the high tech labs that support Formula 1 cars. As with most developments, it is these small steps and improvements that change the game and give the top players the game changing results they are looking for.

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2. SURRIDGE SPORT. SALES@SURRIDGESPORT.COM
3. FIRE TUNGSTENS. HARROWS. WWW.HARROWSDARTS.COM

UHLSPORT BASELAYER AND TIGHT SHORTS

A GREAT UNDER LAYER ADDITION TO TEAM KITS, THE UHLSPORT BASELAYER IS IN DEMAND AS THE WINTER APPROACHES.

Made from a very light, tight fitting elastic material with the Uhlsport print on the chest and wording on the sleeve, it's available in eight colours to match team kits in white, black, red, navy, royal, lagoon green, corn yellow and azure blue.

Trade price: £11.85. RRP: £18.99 XXS-XS and £22.99 S-XXXL.

Uhlsport's tight shorts are the matching shorts for the brand's baselayers. Made from the same material, they feature the Uhlsport logo wording on the leg. Available in eight colours to match team kits in white, black, red, navy, royal, lagoon green, corn yellow, and azure blue.

Trade price: £7.75. RRP: £11.99 XXS-XS and £14.99 S-XXL.

Contact: 08448 849861.
 Scotland. Eric Muir: 07940 598779.
 South West and Wales. Michael Morgan: 07973 802986.
 Midlands and North. Daniel Hume: 07960 013475.
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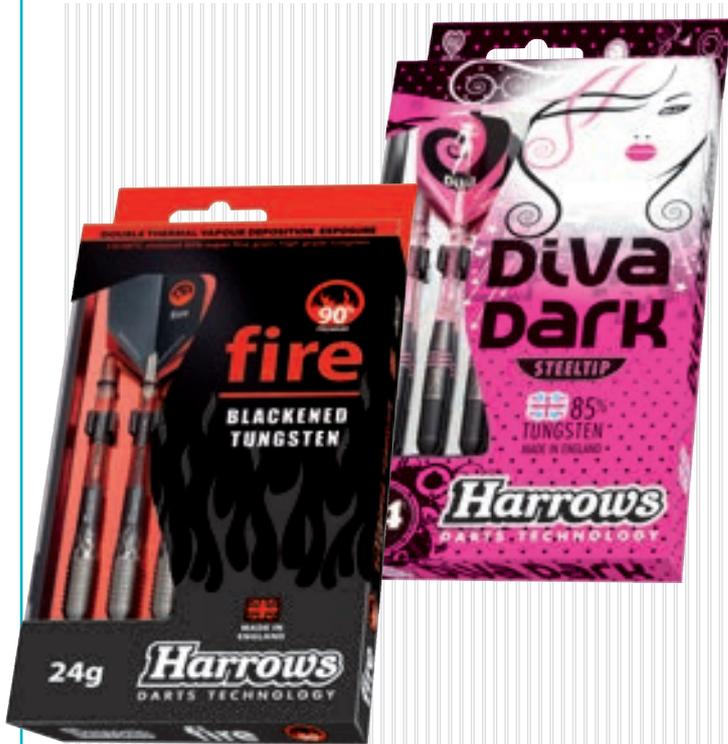
HARROWS DARTS HAS HAD A FANTASTIC REACTION TO ITS 2012 COLLECTION.

Retailers nationwide have given the thumbs up to the company's most technically innovative line up ever. Leading the way are the Fire 90% tungstens, which is the hottest new product on the darts market this year.

Diva Dark 85% tungstens are a striking extension to the Diva concept, which was launched to universal acclaim in 2011.

In addition, the new Pro Matchplay knife wire board joins a wealth of other industry leading products.

For more information call 01992 300300, email sales@harrowsdarts.com or visit www.harrowsdarts.com



DIVA DARK 85% TUNGSTENS ARE A STRIKING EXTENSION TO THE DIVA CONCEPT, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED TO UNIVERSAL ACCLAIM IN 2011

MANTIS LAUNCHES PRO 295 RACQUET

UK TENNIS BRAND MANTIS HAS THIS MONTH LAUNCHED ITS LATEST RACQUET.

The MANTIS Pro 295, the first matt black racquet in the MANTIS range, is a product of a rigorous testing process employed by the UK brand.

The 295 gram racquet, which is made of 100 per cent modulus carbon, has a 98 square inch head and a pallet handle for customisation.

Martin Aldridge, founder and managing director of MANTIS, says: "We are expecting big things from the MANTIS Pro 295. The design is a shift change from our traditional red, white and black and has come about thanks to feedback from our ambassadors and professional stringers.

"All of our testing racquets go out to our ambassadors in matt black and we had an overwhelming response to say they loved it and asked if we would think about releasing it to the market in this format.

"Following our testing process and subsequent market research, we decided matt black was the way to go - and the trade has certainly responded very positively. We are very excited about the feedback received on the playability and look of the Pro 295 and believe it could become our fastest selling racquet so far."

MANTIS recently announced former British number one and US Open finalist Greg Rusedski as brand ambassador and MANTIS is the official racquet and ball partner of the Staitoil Masters Tennis at the Royal Albert Hall.

For more information visit www.mantis-sport.com

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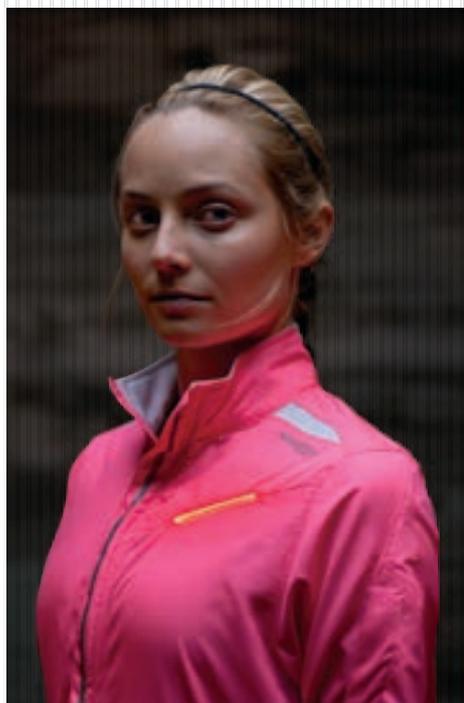
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SAUCONY VIZI-PRO

SAUCONY'S VIZI-PRO APPAREL HAS BEEN A TOP SELLER FOR EACH OF THE LAST THREE WINTER SEASONS. THIS SUCCESS IS DUE NOT JUST TO THE STRENGTH OF THE VIZI COLOURS AND THE PERFORMANCE FABRICS, BUT ALSO TO THE CONSTANT PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT.

For 2012 the focus on visibility has been pushed even further with the introduction of LED piping on the front and rear of the Sonic HDX jacket. The LED strip is powered by Saucony's patented USB rechargeable unit, which is hidden in one of the pockets. A 20-minute charge from your PC or laptop provides enough power for an hour's run, or even longer if you set the unit to flashing rather than constant. The jacket has an RRP of £90 and is available now. **For more information visit www.saucony.co.uk, call 01794 537537 or contact your Saucony representative.**



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For more information about the new collection visit www.dita-hockey.com. Dita can also be followed at www.facebook.com/ditahockeyukltd



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GYMPHLEX
A BRAND FOR COACHES

On the Podium

David Clarke, Samurai's marketing manager, explains why retailers should stock the brand's multisport teamwear range

▶ CAN YOU GIVE US SOME BACKGROUND ON THE BRAND?

The company was born from a passion for great kits. When our managing director Terry Sands set about finding kit for his Samurai International Rugby Sevens teams' debut at the Amsterdam Sevens in 1996, nothing he found matched his expectations, so he designed the kit himself and the Samurai Sportswear brand was born.

Where once the focus was predominantly on rugby, nowadays our range is truly multisport. From our own factory we manufacture high quality teamwear for almost every sport, including rugby shirts, cricket whites, netball dresses, basketball jerseys, football kits and hockey tops, among others. The Samurai logo on these garments guarantees the same standards as it always has done - inspirational kits in eye catching and unique designs with immaculate finishing and styling details worthy of a premium brand.

Today we produce innovative and unique ideas to create a style completely individual to each club and our kits are worn worldwide by clubs, associations, schools, colleges and universities, from grass roots to international level.

▶ WHO IS IT AIMED AT?

Our products and garments are perfectly suited for every level. We believe that every club has the right to unique, personalised performance teamwear. After all, they wouldn't accept second best on the pitch, so why would they settle for template designs and stock colours for their kits?

▶ KEY FEATURES AND BENEFITS

We work closely with our elite performance partners to ensure Samurai kit is tested to its limits, day after day, game after game. Where one fit for all was happily accepted a few years back, individual needs must be catered for today. We have now extended our range of styles and manufacturing options for more choice and extended possibilities.

We offer greater variety than any other teamwear brand, using our own exclusive PerformeX moisture management fabric system along with the design and attention to detail that come as standard with every Samurai garment.

▶ HOW IS IT MARKETED?

We utilise the exposure our elite performance partners give us across a wide range of sports, from the Irish national hockey sides, to Accrington Stanley, to the Welsh netball squads. On live TV the physical battle of Exeter Chiefs and London Welsh in the Aviva Premiership, the fast paced environment of the British Basketball League with

Worcester Wolves and Sheffield Sharks and the more gentele surroundings of Kent County Cricket Club are the perfect ways of demonstrating the capabilities and benefits of our garments.

Online, our new website gives a far wider coverage of the garments we offer and the breadth of our product range, with social media playing a key role in allowing us to communicate our new releases and innovative designs.

▶ WHY DO YOU THINK IT SELLS SO WELL?

Our expertise, product range and resource are second to none. With each new sport we move into we bring all of the experience gained in other markets. This experience means that whether it's American football, polo, rowing, lacrosse or any number of growing markets, clubs are guaranteed outstanding performance and made to order quality.

Our team is passionate about sport and all of our garments are engineered to meet the specific needs of the modern day athlete, with the highest level of functionality, comfort and durability combined with cutting edge designs.

▶ WHAT'S THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY A RETAILER CAN MARKET THE RANGE?

By understanding the infinite range of garments, colour choices and designs and what makes Samurai truly different. Being able to offer clubs something unique, in advanced performance fabrics and in fits and styles specific to their sport is at the heart of the Samurai proposition.

There is online and offline marketing support to enable retailers to make the most of their relationships with clubs and there is the trust and peace of mind that comes with teamwear and leisurewear developed by our own in-house product team, designed by our staff and manufactured by our own factory. Samurai is more than just a teamwear brand - it's an identity and an opportunity for clubs to stand out from their competitors and be proud of being unique.

"ALL OF OUR GARMENTS ARE ENGINEERED TO MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF THE MODERN DAY ATHLETE"

For further information visit www.samurai-sports.com or become part of the Samurai family on Twitter @samurai_sports. For sales enquiries email sales@samurai-sports.com.



Front Runners

Wayne Eddy, founder of inov-8

WHEN DID YOU GET INTO THE SPORTS TRADE AND WHY?

I came into the sports trade from the outdoor industry. I'd been consulting for Brasher, Musto and some other brands, but I could see no one was offering really good off-road running products and I was sure my team could deliver real innovation in the category. That's how inov-8 started.

WHO'S BEEN THE BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON YOUR CAREER?

A guy you'll never have heard of from back home in Zimbabwe called Alan Feigenbaum. Alan gave me my first real break when I was 26 years old, making me product director of his business. Together we grew the company threefold in as many years and at its peak we were turning over \$60 million with 2,000 staff and the Puma license for the region.

Alan is a true entrepreneur. Trusting his gut, trusting his team and backing their decisions with fast action and resources, he taught me not to be corporate. He's just founded a new company at the age of 84.

INOV-8 WAS FOUNDED IN 2003 AND NOW SELLS IN OVER 60 COUNTRIES. WHAT'S THE SECRET OF THE BRAND'S SUCCESS?

Innovation, speed to market and sweat. We are always looking at ways to improve our products for the committed athletes we serve, which usually means stripping out weight and improving grip with the latest compounds. We have an incredibly quick product development team that brings new innovations into our products sometimes quarterly, and lastly we work really hard. Until we reached 32 countries, I was managing all our distribution channels as well as the factories.

HOW HAVE YOU MANAGED TO EXPAND INTERNATIONALLY IN SUCH A SHORT SPACE OF TIME?

The international growth has come pretty organically. The gap in the market for technical off-road running seemed to be global and once inov-8 was adopted by the hardcore fitness market in the USA and beyond, the growth became turbocharged.

and beyond, the growth became turbocharged.

IN WHAT WAYS HAS THE RECENT INVESTMENT FROM ISIS EQUITY PARTNERS ENABLED THE BUSINESS TO GROW?

The most obvious thing the ISIS deal brought was resource. When you're doubling and tripling the size of the business every year, cash flow

management is essential and ISIS resources will ensure we can maintain that phenomenal growth rate globally.

HOW HAS ISIS' MARK ADVANI AND ADAM HOLLOWAY'S APPOINTMENT TO THE INOV-8 BOARD BENEFITED THE BRAND?

That's the other resource ISIS has added to the business - talent. As we grow, the strategic decisions we are taking become

"WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING AT WAYS TO IMPROVE OUR PRODUCTS FOR THE COMMITTED ATHLETES WE SERVE"



bigger and more complex. Mark and Adam are some of the finest minds I have worked with and they are also helping us add world class talent to the management team to support the long term expansion.

WHAT WILL BE THE FASTEST GROWING AREA OF YOUR BUSINESS THIS YEAR?

Paradoxically, off-road will grow fastest in the USA, which is where our core fitness business is, while in EMEA the boom in cross-fit across Northern Europe has seen our sales in the fitness category rocket in what were our core off-road markets.

We're starting to see a balancing of our product mix globally, with inov-8 becoming the brand of choice for the committed athlete, whatever their activity. We're gaining traction with our road offerings and at the moment the brand is seeing so much success the real challenge is figuring out which opportunities we simply don't have time to execute well.

For more information call 01388 744900 or email info@inov-8.com.



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FSPA FOCUS

THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE FEDERATION OF SPORTS AND PLAY ASSOCIATIONS

ISPO MUNICH is the largest sporting goods trade fair in Europe and is seen as the springboard into Europe and beyond. Last year the show had close to 80,000 visiting industry professionals from more than 100 countries. Visitors previewed the latest trends presented by 2,344 exhibitors from 51 countries. The international status of the show was reflected by 65 per cent of visitors and 83 per cent of exhibitors attending from foreign countries.

The Federation of Sports and Play Associations, the lead trade body for the UK sports and play industries, attends ISPO MUNICH each year in order to support UK companies within an FSPA fronted UK exhibitor pavilion, providing group marketing and ongoing support before, during and after the show.

The FSPA also operates as an Accredited Trade Organiser (ATO), working closely with UK

Trade & Investment to assist UK businesses in gaining £1,000 TAP export grants to assist with exhibitor costs.

For 2013 the UK exhibitor pavilion will be based in a central position in Hall B4 and will be supporting over 20 UK companies at the show. Returning companies include 1000 Mile, Harrows, Primo Play, Samba and Unicorn, along with a host of new exhibitors, including Kay Metzeler.

In addition and new for 2013, the FSPA will be providing a free business lounge facility for UK exhibitors and visitors to utilise for meetings, along with WiFi access and increased marketing and promotion to boost visitor footfall to the area.

UKTI grants are still available for ISPO MUNICH, so if you're exhibiting in any part of the show call Jane Montgomery on 02476 414999 or email jane@sportsandplay.com for further information.



BGIA ATTENDS PGA SHOW 2013

After the success of the last two years, the FSPA's British Golf Industry Association, the lead UK golf trade body representing the products and services industry, is pleased to announce its presence at the PGA Merchandise Show 2013.

The association will once again be fronting a dedicated UK exhibitor pavilion in the 'products and services' section of the event. UK exhibitors and BGIA member visitors will also have access to a larger and better equipped BGIA business lounge facility - plans include provision of free WiFi, a drinks reception and significantly increased advertising and promotion to attract greater visitor footfall to the area.

The BGIA is again working closely with UK Trade & Investment to provide £1,400 TAP export grants to assist with exhibition costs. If your company is interested in exhibiting at the show within the dedicated UK pavilion and/or applying for a TAP export grant contact Milly Durrant at the BGIA. Tel: 02476 414 999 x207. Email: info@bgia.org.uk. Web: www.bgia.org.uk.



MEMBERS URGED TO SUPPORT GROW GOLF FUND

With rounds played down by 19 per cent in June* and the poor weather not helping UK participation figures during the remaining summer months, golf's leading bodies are continuing to look at ways to combat this decline and get people back playing the sport.

As a result, the British Golf Industry Association is urging member golf brands to support the Grow Golf Fund, its successful industry initiative launched in 2007.

The fund was set up by Acushnet, Callaway, PING and Taylor Made/adidas Golf, who joined forces in an unprecedented move to help grow the game. The initiative aims to stimulate golf participation across all age groups, geographic regions and social backgrounds in the UK by supporting companies able to deliver on these targets.

Since 2007 the Grow Golf Fund - including the founder trustees and Motocaddy Ltd - has donated £200,000 to organisations such as the Golf Foundation and its HSBC Golf Roots grassroots programme, and 6060 Golf, a new concept based in driving ranges that's designed to attract non-golfers to the game.

BGIA member companies are being asked to contribute as part of their CSR policy to what is the industry's collective fund that's committed to 'giving back' to the game. Contributions are based on company turnover and the wider golf industry is also being encouraged to give back to the game, while enhancing their CSR policy and obtaining use of the Grow Golf Partner logo - highlighting their commitment to growing the game to customers, clients and competitors. For more information call the BGIA on 02476 414 999 x207 or email info@bgia.org.uk.

*Source: Sports Marketing Surveys Inc.

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SURRIDGE

Cricket 2012-13

The Insider

Nick Rivett's lifelong dream came true when he opened Nick Rivett Sport in Hove, East Sussex in 2010

HOW AND WHY DID YOU GET INTO SPORTS RETAILING?

Even as a kid I wanted to set up a shop - my family worked in retail so I suppose it's in my DNA. I worked first though as an accountant for a top end department store, then saw a gap in the market when an independent sports retailer in Brighton closed down. I set the shop up with my wife six months later. We are now entering our third year.

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU STOCK?

At first we tried to minimise risk by representing as many sports as we could within the shop, but it quickly became clear it was in our interest to specialise. We now focus on tennis, rugby, running and barefoot running. We do stock other sports, but give them limited floor space. As a team, we take part in most of the sports we cater for, so put the products through their paces before we buy them. In getting to know our customers, we know exactly what they want, which helps focus our buying decisions and allows us to better merchandise our stock.

HOW HAS TRADE BEEN SINCE YOU LAUNCHED?

Great, even though it's been tough out there. We opened up at the lowest point in the financial markets, believing people would invest more into sport because they couldn't afford other luxuries - and I think we've been right. People aren't afraid to buy quality products that will last long enough to not only suit their needs now, but also as they develop in their chosen sport.

DOES THE FUTURE LOOK BRIGHT?

The Olympics has increased awareness of sport and made sports people household names - and now people want to get fitter. We find that people want to research products online, then come in to talk to an experienced member of staff who can help them buy the right product. I see the future as a move back to customer service and product knowledge led demand.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT BESTSELLING PRODUCTS/BRANDS?

Now that would be telling, wouldn't it? Let's just say we have a great product and sales mix between the brands you would expect to see in our specialist sport and some niche brands we have backed and helped to establish locally.

WHO ARE YOUR COMPETITORS? HOW DO YOU COMPETE?

Everybody competes against the internet and it's naive to think we don't. We're also up against a JJB, a Sports Direct and other traditional sports shops locally. In addition, there is also a running specialist and a Newbery Cricket factory shop - independent shops that we

love. We work at building relationships together to combat the retail chains.

ARE THERE ANY CURRENT OR FUTURE MARKETING STRATEGIES YOU CAN TALK ABOUT?

I think expanding our customer loyalty scheme is high on the list, but in the main our aim is to improve the systems and procedures we have in place.

HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT NEW PRODUCTS?

We travel to New York a lot to visit my brother and look for new products and concepts to bring back here. Customers often tip us off too and if we haven't heard of what they're talking about we're straight on Twitter. We aren't afraid to back new products and we love to try them out. We are also part of Intersport, which continues to get better and better.

DO YOU HAVE AN ONLINE PRESENCE? IF SO, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOUR BUSINESS?

We have a good looking, simple, non-transactional website. We do intend to sell products through it, but only if it can reflect the experience our customers get in the shop. Currently our website acts as a shop window for us - we have people who travel miles to see some of our more niche products.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST AND LEAST ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS?

I get to work with my wife every day and we make a great team. The people we work with are also brilliant. I laugh every day, I love the customers - almost all of them! - and get to talk about sport. The freedom of being my own boss is also great, but the sheer number of decisions I have to make on a day to day basis and the lack of office hours is tiring.

The worst part though, apart from the phone calls, which I find really distracting, is the administration and attention to detail that's needed to keep the ship afloat. The systems have to work and if they don't and I let a customer down, it hurts for ages. But I love my job and wouldn't change it for the world - we work hard and consider ourselves very fortunate.

"WE AREN'T AFRAID TO BACK NEW PRODUCTS AND WE LOVE TO TRY THEM OUT"



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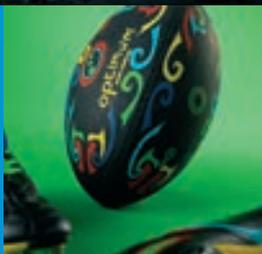
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A GENERATION INSPIRED

Now we need to turn inspiration into perspiration and get the tills ringing, says **Paul Clapham**

London 2012 was only half through when the media began to fill up with comment about how best to exploit the success of the Games - how to create the Olympic legacy. Much of this has taken the form of comment about sport in schools. Certainly, that is important, but there is far more to it than that.

The retail trade sits very close to the Olympic ideal - it's the taking part, not the winning that counts. You wouldn't last long if you only sold to winners. No less an icon than Jessica Ennis is on record saying that sport should be available to all, but shouldn't be competitive too early. Football has proved this neatly by turning plenty of keen six-year-olds into disillusioned ten-year-olds.

LIFEBLOOD

Andy Reed, chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, said in *The Times* that the 150,000 community sports clubs were "the lifeblood of Team GB", adding that the talented sports person "makes the transition between playground and podium thanks to these clubs". That link between school and club is vital, but it's not consistently achieved. Sir Matthew Pinsent has called for government funding to help create it, although some might say that's a good way to invest in administrators, rather than future sports stars.

By contrast, Robert Lea, *The Times'* business correspondent, says that as there is no available central money, asking politicians means we're asking the wrong people. His solution? Ask big business - people who do have the money. He makes an important point: "Many business leaders are mad about sport and would be gagging to get involved."

The downside is that they need tax incentives to do so or shareholders are inclined to take a dim view of the CEO's personal passion finding its way onto the balance sheet. But create appropriate allowances and money can go direct to sports or sportsmen without the dead hand of the Treasury being involved.

But, I hear you cry, I'm a local retailer, I have no megabucks to fund the next star or sport that gets medals left and right. True. But you have something else similarly important - a local focus. That is of huge significance, because the comment from sporting bodies, former Olympians and politicians has a distinctly national flavour. Meanwhile, from the age of five upwards children become involved in sport locally at their school or a club. That is where the passion is learned and where they start to become your



customers. So that's what's in it for you - new customers, and potentially lots of them. A generation has been inspired; now we need to change inspiration into perspiration and turn it into ringing tills.

With my marketing hat on, I'd say this is definitely about a hunt for future Olympians. The dreams of youth will be about gold medals. And why not? At some stage 99.9 per cent of them will learn they won't grace the podium, but that's a good lesson learnt and they will still be active sportsmen and women, not to mention customers. There were, incidentally, 541 members of Team GB, which is more than play Premier League football, Premier League rugby or county cricket.

A lot of the enthusiasm - the inspiration - is inclined to drain away and quickly if the information isn't available. So I would recommend that every retailer makes a point of

being a resource in their area and publicising it in-store, on your website and in advertising. The parent with a mustard keen son or daughter who doesn't know how to go about fulfilling the dream would love a local, enthusiastic, knowledgeable resource. What's more, they ought to be coming to you for your expertise.

A key growth area has to be girls and young women. Every coach and PE teacher - not to mention retailer - must have loved the message that kept coming through from the female medallists in various forms: "It takes hard work, but if I can do it anyone can."

Cycling has been our big success story for several years now. Okay, it has its own specialist retail sector, but the opportunity is there to sell apparel and potentially expand into cycling. The industry is conscious of the opportunity from sports retailers. Have a look at www.britishcycling.org.uk. The Sky Ride programme and Go-Ride, which is aimed at children and links clubs and schools,



are a template for other associations. Cycling has also embraced physiological testing to find non-cyclists who are best suited to the sport.

BRAND OWNERS

What do the brand owners offer? Brooks focuses on its quality message, backed with staff training. It sees the Olympics as part of the growth in enthusiasm for running over the past few years. The company expects London 2012 to boost that further, but it's too early to predict how much. That said, Brooks sees sales of track spikes rising faster than the general market.

The past two years have seen Brooks running a 'track nights' programme, where the brand teams up with a retailer and goes to a track or club night. The company puts on a fun competition and offers prizes, goodies and plenty of opportunities to

try. Its shout is get out there, talk to the clubs and find out what they need.

London 2012 has given more awareness to disability than a £1 billion worldwide advertising budget could have achieved. The statement 'it's not what they can't do, it's what they can do' has been proven daily by the Paralympians. Is that a retail business opportunity? Yes, if you think so. 14 per cent of the British population are registered disabled, which equates to the prime 15-24 age group.

Ben Thompson says the Precision Boxing and Running ranges saw a substantial boost pre-Olympics and that the event has lifted demand. Early signs

are very positive for growth after the Games. Says Thompson: "There's no doubt that grass roots participants benefit from high profile winners."

The company is in the process of signing some high profile deals in the football market that target schools and youth teams to help provide support to Precision's retail partners and assist them to engage with that sector of the market. Thompson says that the three key pillars retailers should aim for when developing links with clubs are knowledge, trust and availability. Be able to deliver enhanced knowledge of the market and what a club needs. That enhances the relationship and adds value for customers.

Graham Richards, brand director - sales and marketing at Hilly, says a key benefit of the Olympics is the success of Team GB across so many sports. Consequently, both specialist and generalist sports stand to benefit. So promote the success of our sports men and women and, in the process, tempt people to try different sports - arrange open evenings and promos in-store.

We've already heard that local clubs have seen an upsurge of interest, thanks to London 2012. Therefore it's essential for clubs and retailers to make contact and turn that into business benefits for both parties. This is a real opportunity, not a supplier's wish - a TV commentator said children were coming into a friend's club as a result of our national success.

Richards also quotes specialist stores seeing 'new' runners coming in.

Will London 2012 generate serious growth? Richards' take is that previous success - the Rugby World Cup win and the England cricket



team's top status - will generate results, and he's optimistic on that front. Equally, those high profile winners who have said they are not special and 'anyone can do it' are giving a really strong message. >>>>

'WILL IT, WON'T IT'

Paul Sherratt of Solutions for Sport says that pre-Olympics there was a 'will it, won't it' attitude to the potential of the event, which hopefully is now positive. Among the sports the company is involved in, handball had excellent coverage - a first class example of where growth can happen. It showed itself as accessible, interesting and different. Similarly, basketball did well and the NBA is

coming to London, which will catch the momentum.

Sherratt recommends picking up on children's enthusiasm, so create starter packs - multiple sales are good marketing anyway. Sherratt believes that demand has to be driven by the clubs and that they need to 'join the dots' between club, school, retailer and parent.

One issue that Sherratt highlights is that so many sports don't have one

national governing body - there's the England, Scotland and Wales subdivisions to address. Each of these has their own objectives, motivations and plans. If the government wants to do something serious to develop the Olympic legacy, here is the opportunity. Bang some heads together and make it practical for brand owners to be involved in a consistent national programme.



Jonathan Quint, marketing manager at Saucony, bewails the dearth of data available to everyone in the business, saying it holds people back from new activity. Sales are definitely up, though. Saucony's sales have risen 27 per cent in the last year, which must represent growth of the market as a whole. The company's distribution has increased on the back of greater interest in all sports, which Quint expects to continue post-Olympics. The brand has a strong following among women - good news given the success of British women. The company's main focus is on clubs and it sponsors the National Cross Country Championships. Events attract up to 5,000 runners.

UPBEAT

Graham Dicken, EMEA marketing manager at New Balance, has an upbeat take on London 2012: "I think it inspired a nation, not just a generation." The run-up provided a huge lift, with 2011 a record year and 2012 promising to be better. Dicken says that, looking long term, all brands should be beneficiaries.

New Balance manufactures in the UK and its experience is that there is an increasing worldwide view that 'British is best', which our national performance at a superbly run Olympics can only enhance. What better legacy could you ask for than a boost to our exports? The world is impressed by us and winning is a habit, not just on the track, but as a country.

As well as clubs and schools and the links between them, Dicken stresses the importance of parents, coaches and volunteers in developing youthful sporting enthusiasms. That's a pretty big constituency, but I'm sure he's right. Let me

recommend Matthew Syed's book, Bounce.

Syed was a British table tennis number one. He attributes his success to going - by postcode chance - to a primary school where the head was keen on sport and nuts about table tennis, then to his parents buying a table, then to having a club to develop in. It wasn't just Syed, but an impressive number of other pupils who became top table tennis players. I predict that picture is repeated all over the country. Find that teacher!

Martin Newton, Aqua Sphere's UK sales and marketing manager, says the triathlon world will have benefited from the Brownlee brothers' huge effort. The Hyde Park background would have contributed significantly too - watching something special on TV will have created an enthusiasm to take part in multisport events.

Our swimmers didn't produce the planned medal tally, but the Games overall showcased the sport. Newton says that increasing sports participation is a tough challenge, one that will require both funding and belief in the benefit from government, as well as sustained action across many channels. General fitness swimming should see an increase over the next few years due to better facilities and the pre-Games commitment to regional 50 metre pools.

"THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT GRASS ROOTS PARTICIPANTS BENEFIT FROM HIGH PROFILE WINNERS"

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From **27th February – 2nd March 2013**, the focus moves to China, where **ISPO BEIJING** is paving the way to sports business success. It is no longer about "Made in China, the aspirations of the young wealthy Asian consumer are all about made FOR China. Quality and authenticity are a reflection of their

increasing focus on lifestyle statements.

An interest in action sports and outdoor as well as core sports has resulted in a vibrant and vital show for Asia. ISPO BEIJING is not just setting the trends with product innovations on display, but setting the trends by becoming the ultimate resource.

Exhibiting at ISPO BEIJING creates attention for any UK brand, as the market has a passion for all authentic branded goods and a post Olympic legacy of engaging with "cool culture". Stand building prices and turn around are second to none and exhibitors are able to think outside the booth with an exciting and informative programme of additional activities such as retail and cultural tours and networking evenings.

It's the proven route for networking to find distribution. For those who already work with China, the show provides a perfect platform for business engagement, with existing connections, or new ideas and introductions.

BEIJING TO BRAZIL

Brazil is one of the fastest growing consumer goods markets in the world and is the next stop in the global sports calendar with the FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games in preparation already! We are already seeing the positive impact London 2012 made on Brazil, as British construction firms head there to start preparing the infrastructure for the next Games and football championships. Through ISPO that sporting interest can ultimately develop into sporting business.

On **November 20-25th** ISPO is hosting an information and matchmaking

trip to Sao Paulo to get a close up on the industry potential there. The trip provides first-hand information from local sports, retail & business experts, and pre-scheduled meetings with local wholesalers, distributors and decision makers.

Need more time and a closer to home perspective?... The FSPA have started a communications programme in conjunction with ISPO right here in the UK and intend to take a delegation in 2013 in association with UKTI.

In sport there are no boundaries. Individual teams or efforts of course, but together, it's all about one shared passion. Sport. In the same way sports business thrives on a mutual desire to discover and develop the very best in sporting product and commercial innovations. Regardless of where a brand or a retailer are from, ISPO brings them together and enables them to connect and communicate.

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DITA



Change can be a good thing, especially when it brings fresh ideas, passion and drive to a top brand such as **Dita**. From the 1st September, 2012 Dita Hockey UK is the new face of the innovative Dutch hockey brand Dita International BV in the UK & Ireland.



The new company, Dita Hockey UK Ltd, is owned and run by Rob Davies and David Mayer, both experienced hockey players and coaches. They bring a hockey passion and a wealth of knowledge about hockey and the equipment needed to play it. This experience fits perfectly with one of the brand's philosophies: 'designed by hockey players for hockey players'.

Rob learnt his hockey at The Kings School in Macclesfield and Alderley Edge hockey club. He also played at national league standard for Neston and Doncaster during the early 1990s, before joining Cannock in 1995. Rob is a level 2 coach and worked together with David as part of Cannock's most successful coaching team at national and European level. He currently plays his hockey with a development side at Cannock.

In his professional career, Rob worked in the polymer industry for over 20 years in various sales and technical roles, with the last 5 years as a business development manager.

David has played all of his hockey from the age of 10 for Cannock. He

captained their national league side and in more recent times, after qualifying as a level 3 coach, became the 1st Team head coach, during which time the team won an incredible nine national titles and claimed three European medals. More recently he has been coaching at Leicester Ladies HC.

David qualified from university as a quantity surveyor and worked for his family business, before moving on to become a contracts manager in the interiors sector. He has strong interpersonal skills and a wealth of knowledge in relationship building and knows what it means to deliver on time.

Dita has a history of innovation, quality and style; they pride themselves on the technological advancements it has made in its 62 years. "I used Dita as a young player and have always seen the brand as a quality one," says Davies.

This is a view endorsed by current Olympic silver medallist Sander De Wijn, who explains: "I choose materials and products that meet my high performance requirements. If you want to play hockey at the highest level, you need to trust your equipment. Then I can focus on my own game and performance."

Dita were one of the first brands offering synthetic reinforcement on wooden sticks, as well as changing the length and shape of the stick to meet players' demands. Does anyone remember the aluminium stick with the interchangeable head? Today Nano-resin technology (NRT) allows for an

ultra lightweight yet very stiff stick, giving greater power on impact and greater manoeuvrability in the dribble. Our grooved head face encourages water displacement between the ball and the stick, giving greater accuracy and a cleaner contact.

Footwear has also played a massive part in the game's history, especially with the introduction of synthetic pitches. Dita, a leader in shoes designed specifically for hockey players of all ages, provide the combination of grip, support and protection, therefore offering a reduction in the risk of turned ankles and ball impact injuries whilst still keeping up with today's fashion trends.

"Although fashion and big names may well dictate our buying habits at the moment, I believe that a strong hockey shoe designed by hockey players will always have a solid place in the market," adds Davies.

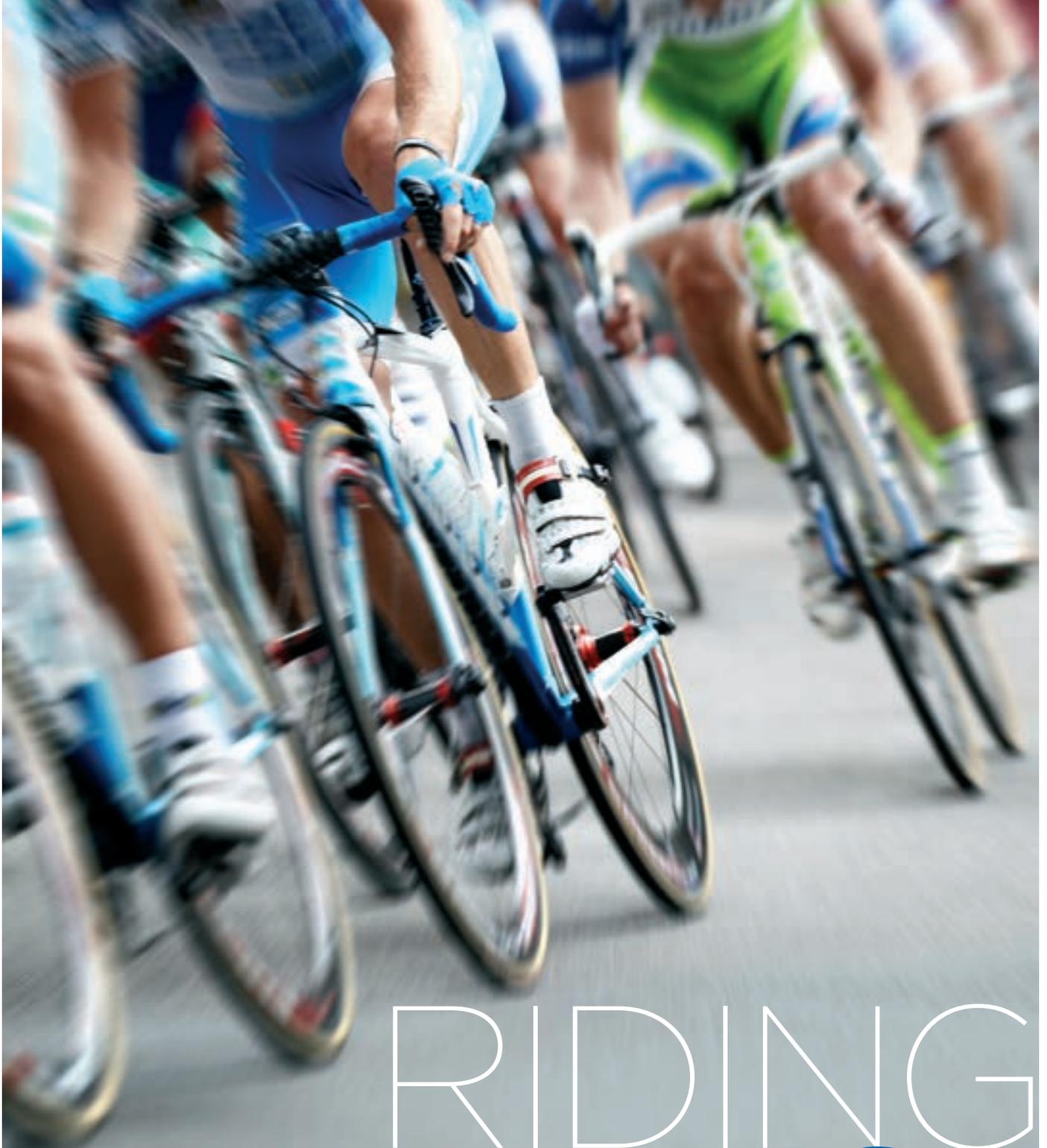
"We will be bringing Dita's global collection to the UK & Ireland," says Dita Hockey UK's David Mayer. "The new shoes, clothing and sticks from Dita show that quality and innovation go well together with beautiful design. We will also hope to bring a new level of customer support in order to help the retailer understand the technologies, in turn helping them sell the Dita branded products with confidence and enthusiasm."

In the new hockey season both international and club hockey players can benefit from the quality materials and products from Dita.



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RIDING HIGH

Evidence suggests there is every possibility of a bike sales bounce following a summer of cycling success, says **Adrian Hill**

There's no doubt which nation sits at the summit of the cycling world after a stupendously successful summer for Britain, which included Bradley Wiggins becoming the first man from his country to win the Tour de France, followed by the Olympic Time Trial title, seven more golds in the London 2012 velodrome and a further eight in the Paralympics.

It all flowed on from when Mark Cavendish won the top sprinter honour at the Tour de France, claimed the World

Road Race Championship (the first Briton to do so for 46 years) and was named as the BBC Sports Personality of the Year. Chris Hoy received that accolade in 2008 following his triple gold haul at the Beijing Olympics.

AMAZING FEATS

The big question for sports retailers and manufacturers is, will a significant number of people be inspired to return to, or take up, cycling by such amazing feats? The factual evidence suggests there is every possibility of a bike sales bounce.

43 per cent of Britons polled said they had been inspired by the success of Wiggins, Hoy, Laura Trott, Sarah Storey and other British riders to get on a bike. The research, carried out for Halfords, Britain's largest cycling retailer, found that 64 per cent of people were following cycling on TV, while 24 per cent said they were thinking of upgrading either their own old model or that of a family member. Some 77 per cent said they expected British success in the cycling medals table would encourage more people to start cycling.

Halfords says sales of Boardman road bikes were up 12 per cent on last month and demand for the Carrera TDF road bike has risen by 18 per cent in the afterglow of Olympic success. Demand for cycle clothing is also up.

"No doubt many of these consumers have been inspired by the success of Wiggins and all the other racers," says Paul McClenaghan, Halfords' commercial director. "There has definitely been a bounce and we expect there to be even more interest as a result of the Olympics. Cycling is the sport everyone is talking about and whether as a sport or leisure activity it has never been more popular."

Serious cyclists are generally in the 25 to 45 age bracket, a group that accounts for about 30 per cent of cyclist numbers, but some 70 per cent of the spending in the £1.5 billion a year market. Most of these enthusiasts would cycle even if Britain was an also-ran in the Olympic velodrome.

The change in the market has been driven by soaring petrol prices persuading commuters that travelling on two wheels makes financial sense. Last year membership of British Cycling, the national governing body, broke through 40,000 - double its 2007 figure - and the organisation now hopes to have 100,000 members by 2013.

The London School of Economics calculated that cycling provided a near £3 billion boost to the UK economy in 2010, with 3.7 million bikes sold. It is estimated that 13 million Britons are now cyclists and the health benefits are said to mean that regular cyclists take one sick day less per year, which saves the UK economy £128 million annually.

A string of initiatives are promoting pedal power. The Cycle To Work scheme, which offers companies a tax discount that allows employees to buy bikes at over 40 per cent discount, has seen a nine per cent increase. Sky Ride aims to get a million more people cycling regularly by next year, while weekend races, called 'Sportives', have mushroomed from around 30 a year to

more than 300 in the last decade.

But those who follow the ebb and flow of marketing trends think there is much more to it than simply trying to emulate heroes. According to Transport for London, the number of trips made by bicycle in the capital has risen by 150 per cent since 2000. The congestion charge

and 2005 bombings persuaded many commuters to jettison the car and tube and go by bike - a routine that in many cases has continued ever since. The TfL Barclays Cycle Hire scheme

provides the means for around 20,000 journeys on an average weekday.

SOCIAL TRENDS

However, cyclists complain they are not given enough protection on the roads, particularly at busy junctions, which can be intimidating for novices and experienced wheelers alike. "There has been a groundswell of interest in cycling brought on by compelling social trends - health, well being, the environment, congestion and parking charges," says Jack Gordon of Silver Hammer PR, which represents a number of sports brands. "The Barclays Bikes scheme is an impulse purchase. It's a very dramatic and pervasive advertisement for cycling and has made cycling so much easier and accessible.

"The more people that go out, the more will be encouraged to join them. Retailers must make those who buy their bikes understand the rules of the road. Bike sales must go hand in hand with cycling being made as safe as it can be."

In an era of government cutbacks, a redesign of road systems to incorporate more cycle lanes is unlikely to be achieved anytime soon.

"AFTER TEAM GB'S SUCCESS AT THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS, TESCO REPORTED A 130 PER CENT RISE IN BICYCLE SALES"

Pashley, which has been making bikes for almost 90 years, wants the post-Olympic boom to provide a boost to British made products. "The success of Team GB in cycling was very heartening and we feel proud as a bicycle manufacturer that our own home team has put in such a remarkable performance,"

says a spokesman. "Interest in cycling in the UK will no doubt get a boost as people are inspired to reignite their cycling passion or get on a cycle for the first time.

"The nature of our products and the demographic of our customers does not directly relate to

the competitive world of the British cycling team - it is highly unlikely you will find a Pashley rider in Lycra. However, we will benefit in a small way as the cycle trade grows as a whole, with these newly inspired UK customers entering the market.

"As an exporter, we are pleased the British cycling team and the Olympics as a whole have created a positive feeling towards all things British and British made. As one of the last remaining cycle manufacturers in Great Britain - Brompton and Moulton being the other two - this will undoubtedly help the sale of our products overseas."

"Cycling is healthy, good for your well being, convenient and it's now cool," says Jack Gordon. To be cool you must have a presence on social media, and cycling is no different. Bike apps offer the ability to keep a track of minute details of any trip on two wheels - from maps to calories burned, as well as linking results to social networking sites.

After Team GB's success at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Tesco reported a 130 per cent rise in bicycle sales. Time will tell whether the London 2012 effect will dwarf that. The initial signs indicate that it will.

GENDER DIFFERENTIAL

While men may be inspired to opt for racing models, most women look at more relaxed leisure ranges. Halfords says Olympic gold medallist Victoria Pendleton's collection of traditional looking cycles are selling strongly and Pendleton has hinted that she is looking at a new career in bike design after retiring from competitive racing. Demand has increased month on month since the launch in April.

Furthermore, Halfords reports sales of vintage style wicker baskets to fit on the front of Pendleton cycles are up over 55 per cent, along with increased

demand for safety gear and other cycling accessories. Miranda Hart, Kelly Brook, Elle McPherson, Angelina Jolie and Gwyneth Paltrow have all been photographed cycling.

"We would be delighted to work more with Victoria and are looking to discuss future plans and get some ideas on the drawing board in the coming weeks," reveals Paul McClenaghan, Halfords' commercial director. "She certainly has the golden touch, both in the velodrome and out of it, and is inspiring more women to ride.

"She has captured the elegance of the traditional lines of a classic bike and helped those looking for a more relaxed everyday style of cycling."

National cycle network Sustrans is campaigning to encourage more women to get back on two wheels, after research showed that 79 per cent of women don't cycle.

Currently over three times more men than women cycle regularly, according to British Cycling, but the tide may be turning as the success of the women at the Olympics makes cycling fashionable.



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ZINC

Following the successful sponsorship agreement with extreme sports display specialists **Team Extreme** and already established as being one of the fastest growing boys' brands in the wheeled industry, currently being the number 1 scooter brand in the UK!

Zinc is aiming to build on its brand awareness and reputation through this exclusive partnership.

Zinc is continuing the success with the launch of our very own Pro Scooter Team - Team Zinc! We are excited to introduce our pro rider Jack Bryan, and our amateur team riders Ben Jones, Brad Sheldon, Callum Bingham and brothers Darren and Jay Simpson. The team will be touring skateparks October through to December to promote the brand.

According to Ying, "This not only represents a great way to engage with the fans, but it is also a wonderful opportunity for kids to become part of the action. It's something they can realistically aspire to, and we're hoping to unearth these exciting new riders who will go on to become long-term members of Team Zinc."

The Zinc range now covers the whole of the wheeled market with targeted ranges that supports the breadth of its customer base. Zinc's success is also attributed to listening to the market and developing product that customers want not what manufacturers think they want. Our brand and marketing focus has been targeted at listening to our customers and building ranges that reflect and mirror attitudes and trends in the market. We have also carried this through into our trade and end user marketing delivering what customers wants yet still managing to surprise and amaze, lifting expectations of what now can be done.

The Zinc Team Series Pro range was born and engineered in Great Britain and is designed to take on the skateparks! The range includes TS Frenzy, TS Ripper, TS FTW, TS Division and TS Dave, ranging from entry level stunt scooters through to our monocoque neck designed pro scooters. The 360 degree

handlebars and deck on all models, allows for as many moves as your imagination will allow. Sleek graphics combined with awesome colour coded parts simply adds to the dynamic effects created when you're riding circles around the others.

Zinc scooters are the optimum of what can only be described as a sick piece of equipment! Our scooters are tested to withstand 1 TONNE of weight on its deck and handlebars, now that's impressive! (On models released after Dec 2011)

The range is designed specifically for the independent sports retailers and is available now! Set yourself apart from the pack and get in touch.

A wide range of accessories are also available, range includes clamps, wheels, stunt pegs, interlock able grips and fully customised accessory sets! Also look out for our most innovative accessorise range yet that will be launched Spring Summer 2013.

2012 also sees the exciting launch of our electric scooter range. Volt, Twisted and Team Series Stolen! Volt features a proportional speed control twist grip with speeds up to 12kph, a silent belt driven motor which requires minimal maintenance, rear disc brake offering optimum performance in both wet and dry conditions. With up to 60mins run time from a single charge!

Team Series Stolen, travels up to 15mph with a super fast recharge time of only 5hours! With a push start, high performance chain driven drive and twist grip throttle for instant power! With a run time of up to 45mins from a single charge.



CONTACT:

For more information of our Zinc Team Series range please contact us!
 Contact: Miss Ying To Email: ying@hy-pro.co.uk

Nick Rose

The double Olympian and sports retail chain co-founder still has the running bug. Tony James went to meet him

Nick Rose is still super quick. He celebrated his 60th birthday by running 3,000 metres in a tad over 10 minutes to beat a 17-year veteran's record.

No surprises there. The double Olympian and co-founder of the Up & Running chain still holds the all-time UK 10k road record of 27 minutes 34 seconds, which is 10 seconds faster than Mo Farah.

LEGENDARY

A highly successful running career included a bronze at the World Cross Country Championships, silver at the Commonwealth Games and racing against the legendary Steve Prefontaine while at college in the US.

Nowadays, Rose can still be seen doing his daily six miles or so around the Bristol Downs. His prolific hair is maybe a little whiter now, but mentally and physically he's ageless.

"Perhaps there are a few more aches and pains," he admits. "But running has been a way of life for so long that I'd be lost without it. You just adapt and keep going and I've certainly no plans for retirement."

Rose has however stopped teaching full-time at a local primary school, where countless youngsters were inspired to take up athletics by

his enthusiasm and charisma.

"I'll miss it," he says. "But I'm hopeful I can do a few more races now I've stopped teaching and have more time to train."

But Up & Running, now claimed to be the UK's largest independent specialist running retailer, which Rose founded with fellow athlete Rick Wallis, is his main preoccupation.

Today it has over 30 branches and an ecommerce arm that stocks over 1,500 products.

"Rick and I were both coaching and we came to the conclusion there was a need in Bristol for a retail outlet to cater for athletes, and particularly runners," Rose remembers. "We got chatting about the possibility of opening a business together and things just went from there."

Up & Running opened its 31st shop this summer - in Chester - which follows the already established and proven formula. A nationwide chain with a local slant, Up & Running provides expert customer service from well trained staff, as well as gait analysis, free training programmes and advice about running locally.

The retailer specialises in running shoes, apparel and accessories and stocks brands such as Brooks, ASICS, Mizuno, New Balance, inov-8, Sub-4 and Ronhill. It has also teamed up with Oxfam's running events and will be fundraising for the charity throughout its chain of shops.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

From the start, the formula for success has been simple and effective - be better than your competition. And the company tells would-be sports shop owners: "You can try and do it by yourself, running the gauntlet

of ordering products and learning as you go along. On the other hand, our franchise system offers you security and protection in the early days and the freedom to take your store forward with confidence."

Rose adds: "Obviously, times have been easier in retailing, but we've got some great customers and we're

thoroughly enjoying it.

The Olympics and Paralympics were such an enormous success that everyone's hoping there will be a spin-off into participating in sport rather than just watching it. The future is looking good. If London 2012 doesn't inspire people, what will?"

Rose ran the 5,000 and 10,000 metres at the 1980 and 1984 Olympics in

Moscow and Los Angeles. "The atmosphere in those huge stadiums was great, but nothing like London," he says. "I would love to have competed in a home Olympics. I was lucky enough to be at London 2012 and was absolutely taken aback by the spirit of the Games, which was unbelievable. Athletes from other countries told me they had never come across such an atmosphere in their lives."

Rose was no stranger to big time athletics. Still the current record holder of the European 10k road race and 4x1 mile relay, he set a half marathon world record and his personal best is the second fastest UK time after Steve Jones. Turning professional, he ran the fastest indoor 3,000 metre time of any athlete in 1978 and was national 10,000 metre champion in 1980. He took the 5,000 metre silver medal at the 1982 Commonwealth Games, coming second to great rival Dave Moorcroft.

A sports scholarship to an American university found Rose competing against Steve Prefontaine, who once held seven US records and died in a car

"TIMES HAVE BEEN EASIER IN RETAILING, BUT WE'VE GOT SOME GREAT CUSTOMERS AND WE'RE THOROUGHLY ENJOYING IT"



HALCYON DAYS

Looking back, how do today's stars compare with the legends of the halcyon days of UK athletics?

"Despite the wonderful performances in the Olympics and the revolutions in diet, fitness and technology, the fact is the standard of long and middle distance running hasn't improved as much as it might have done," says Nick Rose (pictured below).

"There were guys in my era doing 28 minutes in the 10,000 metres who never even got a British vest, but they would today. I've heard it said that the club standard has in some cases gone down and the fact my record hasn't been broken in nearly 30 years might be said to be proof of that.

"I do worry that youngsters have so much available to them, including a vast variety of sports, and athletics is perhaps not getting the intake it once did. It's a lot to do with lifestyle. Some clubs are having to amalgamate just to survive. I think that's really sad. But these things come in cycles and in a few years we may well see an upsurge in UK middle and long distance running. Let's hope so."



crash at the age of just 24. Few runners beat Prefontaine, but Rose almost did.

In the 1978 NCAA six-mile cross country championship he built up an impressive lead with three miles to go. Prefontaine caught up during the last mile and won with only yards to go. He said later that Rose had given him one of his toughest races.

INTENSIVE TRAINING

Rose's strict training was legendary. "It's got to be if you're going to compete at the top level," he says. "You need a routine and structure that never varies. I never took time off unless I was ill. In winter I'd run 13-15 miles a day and 10-12 miles in summer. Usually I'd run twice a day, but sometimes it would be three times. I wasn't exceptional. Some athletes would train twice on Christmas Day.

"Really intensive training is vital. I didn't believe that massage, diet or weights were that important, but the big advantage I had was luck and to have the likes of Steve Jones, Brendan Foster, Dave Black and Dave Moorcroft around me. With people like that, you had to be pretty fast to make the team."

Rose says that once the running bug bites, it rarely lets go. "People like Seb Coe and Brendan Foster still run regularly when they can," he says. "In Bristol we have a very popular running group of men and women of all ages who come along once a week and love it. Some might want to race, others just want to get fit, but what they really come for is the enjoyment and camaraderie.

"We make sure they run correctly and stay within their capabilities. That's the important thing. Nowadays I'm just happy to get out there, appreciate the scenery and come back knowing I've enjoyed my morning run - and hopefully will be doing another one tomorrow."

TOUGH TIMES

Cricket has taken a hit as the recession and bad weather have combined to dampen sales. **Louise Ramsay** reports

Cricket has never been an easy sell. The laws set down by the Marylebone Cricket Club say a bat must be made of wood - and while many kinds have been tried, willow has been found to be the best. A willow tree takes 25 years to grow, which means that bats will never come cheap, making the sport particularly vulnerable during a recession. So how are cricket brands doing?

Family-run Kippax Cricket Bats has been hand-making bats since 1976. "We make all our bats from trees that we have planted, looked after and felled," says managing director Chris Kippax. "We have three in-house brands - Kippax Legend, Wavex and Stallion bats. We also carry a full range of cricket apparel, as well as a wide choice of junior cricket equipment.

"The market in the last year has been affected firstly by the recession and then the weather. But we've managed to keep our sales on target by offering customers a bat trade-in for a discount on a new bat and we've also aggressively undercut the competition on pricing.

"As a smaller brand, we're always at a massive disadvantage when it comes to marketing. Only the big companies can afford high profile players, but to offset that they have to charge high prices for their bats, which is unsustainable in today's market conditions.

CONTROL

Chris Kippax adds: "The benefits of

growing our own willow is that we can control the volume according to demand. We fell 30-40 trees at a time, which creates 2,000 bats for our own brand, and we release the rest to market. It significantly cuts costs.

"If we just sold bats it would be hard to keep going. Cricket doesn't make money - the big brands are part of bigger brands, which fund the less well achieving cricket products. Half our business is cricket equipment, including bats, and half is willow and cleft production.

"Because we grow our own willow and sell clefts, we stay in profit. Today 90 per cent of bats are made in Asia, so we export clefts overseas. The majority of people buy a bat from Sports Direct or JJB Sports, but we sell through word of mouth to the discerning buyer.

"Every year the majors rebrand, the products in-store become redundant and the retailer has to sell them off at rock bottom prices. I think there will be a crisis for the major brands in the next year to 18 months when there will be too many products left on the shelves."

Kippax's best selling product this year has been its Stallion bespoke bats. With their large bow and huge edges, they're designed to mimic an Asian look. Says Chris Kippax: "We underestimated how well our softwear would sell this year by having pads and gloves all white in colour - we sold out in July. That worked well for us though because we are rebranding in 2013 using the original retro label my dad launched the

company under in the 1970s.

"We are also relaunching our Wavex range of bats in 2013. We have a 'version 3' handle with more waves turned into the cane that will further reduce vibration and hence increase energy at the impact area of the bat. It's a very simple concept that has huge benefits to the batter. Wavex also fully conforms to MCC Law 6, is unique to Kippax, fully patented and trade marked."

ENCOURAGING

Nottingham-based Gunn & Moore has been producing bats since 1885. "Our pre-season orders showed a very encouraging increase on 2011," says marketing director David Broughton. "Then it started raining. We saw a dramatic fall off in demand as repeat orders dried up and any significant changes in terms of trends were effectively masked.

"We see the year ahead as a period of recovery and consolidation as dealers and manufacturers attempt to move carried over stock and clear the supply pipelines. But in terms of what's sold best, it's been top-end English-made willow bats and the trend in bats towards thicker edges and lighter weights seems to be continuing.

"This is reflected in our new range of F2 bats for 2013, which have been designed to have a flatter face and therefore thicker edges without a significant weight penalty. F2 stands for a two degree edge radius, as opposed to the seven degree radius on our standard faces."

TRICKY YEAR

Nick Wilton is brand manager at Gray-Nicolls. "It's been another tricky year for the specialist retailer," he explains. "We've tried to be conscious of this as we move into 2013 with limited changes to a range that was received well last year, though we have added some niche products to complement the core range.

"This includes the reintroduction of one of our most iconic bats, the Dynadrive, which has already generated a huge amount of interest. Still using the unique double grooving, the balance and pick up combined with a huge edge profile makes the Dynadrive stand out. The Maverick is also introduced as our third family and has recently been

showcased on the international stage by Andrew Strauss and Chris Woakes. A rounded back profile ensures maximum power from the blade's impressive sweet spot."

Retro products have been received well and the GN100 has been successful for Gray-Nicolls in complementing its Legend bat. Says Wilton: "The importance of key price points will never go away, yet we have focused this year on improving the product technically.

"Most importantly, cricket will experience a big 12 months with the T20 World Cup and changing England side, leading into a double Ashes series that's set to generate a lot of interest."

A full-page photograph of a batsman in white cricket attire swinging a bat on a field at sunset. The batsman is in the foreground, captured mid-swing, with his bat raised high. The background shows a large stadium filled with spectators under a dramatic, orange-hued sky. A large, out-of-focus red ball is visible in the upper right corner.

"OUR PRE-SEASON ORDERS SHOWED A VERY ENCOURAGING INCREASE ON 2011. THEN IT STARTED RAINING"



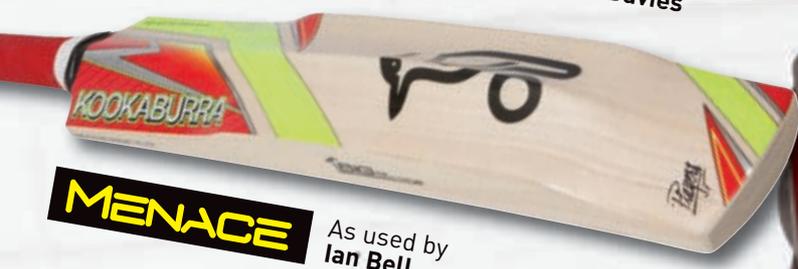
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DIFFERING

Louise Ramsay reports on the indoor sports market and the emergence of some unusual pastimes



Table tennis is on the up, but perhaps not for the reasons we might imagine. While professional players prepare for major tournaments in November, swarms of fun loving individuals across the land are hitting the tables purely for reasons of entertainment.

Ping pong is the name of the game - a non-standard variation of table tennis - and upmarket bars and nightclubs are where it's being played. The take up has meant table tennis was one of only four sports to show growth in the latest Sport England survey.

INTEREST

Alan Ransome, managing director of Ransome Sporting Goods and chairman of the English Table Tennis Association, says there are lots of reasons for the surge of interest in the game: "10 years ago the Greenhouse Schools Project, a charity that supports disadvantaged children in London through sporting and performing arts training, put full-time table tennis coaches into schools. Those children are now adults and it's had a big effect in London."

The first bars to host table tennis began to spring up in 2007, not just in London, but also in New York and

Berlin, and now there are bars and clubs all over the UK where table tennis can be played.

"We're supplying all of the 18 tables for a new ping pong superclub called Bounce that's opening this month in Holborn," says Ransome.

Another reason for the upsurge in table tennis participation is down to the Ping! England initiative. Supported by Sport England, it's been installing table tennis tables in locations as diverse as Kings Cross station and Bristol Zoo - there are currently 549 tables now available to play on for free in outdoor sites across England.

"The Olympics brought table tennis into the spotlight, but around the same time we saw lots of high profile figures like President Obama, Kate and Wills, and Boris Johnson in the papers playing table tennis for fun," says Ransome. "It all helps to make table tennis seem like a cool sport, which filters down into the more serious aspects of the game. There was an uplift in sales before the Olympics because more people are playing table tennis. But the last three or four months have been really good. Sales will continue to steadily increase over the coming year."

"All our products have done well, but our rollaway tables have done particularly well. Our new products for 2013 include two new mini tables. They're two feet long, so can be used to play on anywhere, even on a desk at work. We've produced them for 10 years, but now we've got them in unusual

♞ CHESS BOXING

Brains and brawn - that's the real test of a man, or indeed a woman, when it comes to this game. Consisting of six rounds of chess alternated with five round of boxing, it first came to light in 1978 when two brothers, Stewart and James Robinson, chess boxed at the Samuel Montagu Boys Club in London, but really got off the ground in 1993 when the first official chess boxing championship was held. The World Chess Boxing Organisation was formed the same year and since then the sport has held events across Europe, including London.

♞ TOE WRESTLING

You've heard of arm wrestling, but toe wrestling? Not only does it exist, but there's a world championship too. Invented by Staffordshire pub landlord George Burgess in 1976, to win participants link big toes in an attempt to force their opponent's large phalanx to the floor and hold it there for three seconds. The Toe Wrestling World Championship is held at the Bentley Brook Inn in Derbyshire in June, so there's plenty of time to bring it to your customers' attention, alongside a promotion on foot deodorant sport spray.

FORTUNES

colours and shapes. One is round, another is in a figure of eight - they look fun. Prices range from £30 to £50, so they make great Christmas presents, and because they're small they're also easy for retailers to stock."

SNOOKER

At the start of the 1990s there were 400 professional snooker players on the UK circuit. Much of the sport's success was down to promoter Barry Hearn, with interest in the sport continuing, if at a reduced rate, until the mid noughties, when a ban on sponsorship by tobacco companies dealt the game a serious blow.

At grass roots level snooker hasn't had the best of luck either. Along with its sister game pool, it's traditionally played in pubs, working men's clubs and snooker halls - and according to the Lost Pubs Project, pubs are closing at a rate of 1,800 a year. Then there's the recession.

But riding out the market has been fcsnooker, a company launched in 2000 by managing director Duncan Webb. "I can't say the recession hasn't had an affect, because it has," says Webb. "But we got through it and in the last 12 months I've started to see signs of recovery. I think the downturn made people wary, but some people haven't been affected by it and now they're starting to spend money again."

fcsnooker's main business has always been providing specialist services to private homes - the top end of the market - though it has also worked with pubs and clubs. "I didn't want an increasing share of a decreasing marketplace," says Webb.

What does the future hold for snooker? Explains Webb: "Barry Hearn came back into snooker promotion in 2010, as I think he thought it had got so bad the only way was up. There were only six professional competitions in the UK when he started,

now there are 27. Snooker is even back on TV more than ever. It's a major positive shift, though where it will lead who knows."

DARTS

Another indoor sport that's performing well is darts. According to Robert Pringle, Harrows Darts' sales and marketing manager, sales have been strong, with plenty of growth on all fronts. He puts a lot of the success down to excellent TV exposure

"If that continues, there's no reason to suppose this strong demand will not continue," says Pringle.

An emerging trend he's spotted is that more people are playing at home, so complete home darts combos are becoming increasingly popular - another tip for the Christmas season.

Best-selling products have been Harrows' new Fire and Diva Dark tungstens. "Sales of these have been exceptional," says Pringle. "We expect those sales figures to continue alongside mid-price tungstens, which always do well. Sets that retail around £15 to £25 generate the most volume."

Harrows' darts are always well presented, making them ideal for retailer promotion. "Window displays around the time of major TV competitions are always a good way to increase sales," says Pringle. "Christmas also offers loads of retail opportunities - a strong in-store display based around our modular merchandise is really attractive to customers."



TIDDLYWINKS

It's a simple children's game, right? Think again. A contest based around flicking coloured discs into a central pot, the game was indeed invented for youngsters in Victorian times, but in 1955 Cambridge University got in on the act and the modern 'adult' game was born, along with a complex set of rules, a range of tournament standard equipment and the International Federation of Tiddlywinks Associations. The next national singles championship takes place between October 27-28, so prepare ahead and stock up on a few tiddlywinks sets to cash in, if not on the contest, then at least during the run-up to Christmas.

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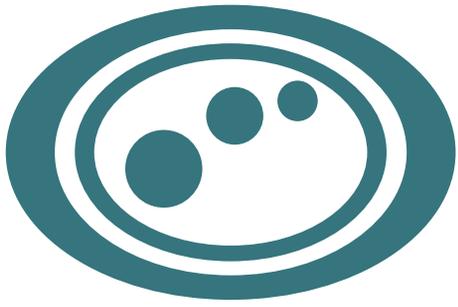
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MISSION STATEMENT



On's founders (from left): David Allemann, Caspar Coppetti and Olivier Bernhard. credit: Braschler/Fischer

On co-founder **David Allemann** explains how the brand's innovative technology has won the support of athletes and running enthusiasts across the globe

On AG is a young Swiss company whose aim is to turn running into a fun sport.

It has already earned the prestigious ISPO BRANDNEW award and continues to win technology and design prizes all over the world. Its CloudTec technology has received worldwide patents and, 18 months after launch, On running shoes are available in 500-plus running specialists in 18 countries across Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America.

SPORTS INSIGHT: LAUNCHING A NEW COMPANY IN THE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE RUNNING SECTOR IS A BRAVE MOVE. WHAT CONVINCED YOU THAT ON HAD A PRODUCT THAT COULD COMPETE?

DAVID ALLEMANN: we always felt the success of the company was built on our unique technology, which combines a cushioned landing and a barefoot take off for the first time in one shoe. This creates a new running sensation and can be felt

immediately by the runner.

The technology is built on the experience of another of the company's co-founders, Olivier Bernhard, a six-time Ironman winner, and his exchange with other athletes, coaches and everyday runners. The feedback we got was phenomenal, right from the ordinary runner who stepped into the shoe for the first time to elite athletes. So from that feedback we knew we had something special. But of course, in the end we had to make an entrepreneurial leap of faith.

WHAT DETERMINED THE TIMING OF THE SHOE'S LAUNCH?

I think we got very lucky in terms of timing. What is happening now is that new technology is emerging and breaking the traditional running shoe paradigm.

If you look at the barefoot running market, it's clear there's a demand for something different. What we saw was that the traditional idea of a guidance shoe that tries to control the movement of your foot is broken and new concepts are catching on. And we see a great opportunity between the old

comfortable yet passive shoe and the extreme natural running concepts, which seem to forget streets were invented very late in the evolution of the human foot. That is why we combine the comfort of a traditional shoe with the natural movement and speed of minimal concepts.

SOCIAL MEDIA SEEMS TO BE FAVOURING NICHE BRANDS AND BESPOKE PRODUCTS. HAS THIS CONSUMER ATTITUDE BEEN AN ADVANTAGE FOR ON?

I think the power of word of mouth multiplied by social media is an incredible force, which we see every day with our company. We have an active fan base and for them the running shoe is a high involvement topic they want to talk about. They love to discuss the benefits of the new models and recommend these to other people who are perhaps new to our brand. So this leads to a very active social media community for On.

WHO IS ON'S CORE CUSTOMER?

We are always amazed at the breadth of our customer base, which goes from the casual runner right up to the elite athletes who use our shoes. We think this is because our patented CloudTec outsole brings together two benefits - upon landing we offer superior cushioning that provides comfort, like in a training shoe, then the outsole becomes firm to provide a natural transition and a powerful push off, like in a competition shoe.

So we combine the best of both worlds - you have a cushioned landing and a barefoot take off. This speaks to two distinct audiences. The shoe's cushioning properties are ideal for the everyday runner who wants comfort, while its speed and excellent impact absorption are perfect for the competitive runner. We simply let people try our shoes instead of using lots of marketing speak and invariably they come back and tell us we have something different and special.

HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE RETAILERS TO COMMUNICATE THE SHOE'S DESIGN CONCEPTS AND ITS BENEFITS TO CUSTOMERS?

Firstly, we choose the retailers we work with very carefully. The speciality retailers we target are themselves looking for new



concepts. We found they were eager to embrace the new innovations we had to offer them and, more importantly, they were also eager to explain the new technology in our shoes to their customers.

We also made sure the design of our shoes was unique. With so many shoes now displayed on the wall of the average store, we made sure our design stood out by getting rid of the predominant running shoe 'bling'. And of course, as the technology we have in our shoes is visible from the outside, it's something retailers are able to highlight in order to grab the interest of their customers. Once on their feet, seven out of 10 customers who try the On buy the On.

“WE COMBINE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS - YOU HAVE A CUSHIONED LANDING AND A BAREFOOT TAKE OFF”



HOW CLOUDTEC WORKS

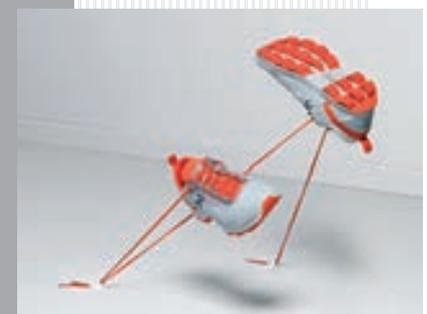
The On sole features a number of three-dimensional elements - or 'Clouds' - made of highly flexible tubular pieces of rubber. This radical new design allows it to absorb both vertical and horizontal forces, thus ensuring a soft landing.



Once the foot touches the ground, the Clouds lock firm, providing a solid foundation for a powerful push off. The On shoe thus combines what conventional running shoes have so far failed to unite - a cushioned landing and a barefoot take off. It's like stepping down on sand and pushing off on a running track.

On wearers experience a light and fast run and enjoy all the positives of natural running without any compromise in comfort and speed. The Clouds act like small stability balls, responding to every movement of the foot and activating the postural muscles, which reduces the risk of injury and shortens recovery times.

Independent studies by the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology have shown that On's sole technology significantly reduces athletes' heart rate and lactic acid levels.



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Sticky sites

Dave Howell explains a number of ways to successfully reduce high website bounce rates



One of the most important online metrics to keep track of is your website's bounce rate. This can be easily calculated using free service Google Analytics.

A 'bounce' occurs when a visitor leaves your website after viewing a single page. A high bounce rate could be symptomatic of a website that is slow loading, contains broken images or, more worryingly, has weak calls to action.

WASTED RESOURCES

Low bounce rates are vital, especially on pages that link from your marketing activity. You don't want to waste resources creating a new email campaign, for instance, that links to a page on your website that is immediately clicked away from. Similarly, pages that link to any AdWords campaigns you are running also need to be highly attractive and engage visitors.

The key to reducing page bounce is to understand the core goals of every page on your site. For instance, pages that are linked to advertising campaigns should contain clear and concise calls to action. After all, your visitors have already seen your business' adverts and want more information about the goods or services mentioned.

In addition, the landing pages for these adverts should motivate visitors to move forward with their enquiries or orders. Web pages that are confusing for visitors are doomed to fail.

To give an impression of integration, your landing page should use the same headings, page design and colours as your adverts. Ensure headings include the main call to action and encapsulate your business' core offerings. Perhaps these are new product lines, discounted goods or other promotional activities. Make this crystal clear right at the top of the page.

The great thing about a platform like Google Analytics is that your business can test a number of landing pages to find the design that brings the most conversions. This can be achieved by using Google's Website Optimizer, which gives you all the tools necessary to carry out testing on every type of landing page.

Often referred to as A/B testing, this simply means you design two or more pages for a campaign and

test them side by side to see which one performs best. This is relatively straightforward to set up with Google Analytics.

Testing is essential. It can cost very little and you need to attract just 500 visitors to your pages to get meaningful statistics. If you want to see if a specific page element is working, heat maps like those from Crazy Egg (www.crazyegg.com) can be very helpful.

VIDEO CONTENT

Using video content on your landing pages could be an effective means of reducing bounce rates. The video must, of course, support the value proposition your landing page is trying to communicate.

Video content must communicate its message concisely. Videos of over a minute could see your visitors reaching for their mouse to click away. And don't make your video 'auto start', as this often annoys visitors. Let them click the play button.

Content must be convincing, honest, offer exclusivity and support the marketing messages you have used to attract consumers to your landing pages. Get this right and you will see your bounce rates fall. An average of 30 per cent is generally acceptable for bounce rates today.

Customer expectation can also affect bounce rates. Often businesses develop promotional campaigns with a focus on keyword acquisition and don't consider how they relate to the landing pages their adverts link a customer to. If you're advertising a new product, don't link to your general catalogue page. This frustrates potential customers, which is to be avoided at all costs.

The design of your landing pages must be engaging, but also accessible to all. There are regulations to be aware of, but they should be able to be accessed by anyone. The new kid on the design block is responsive design. Ensuring your landing pages, and even your entire site, can be viewed at its optimal performance whether it's viewed on a desktop PC, tablet or phone is now vital, as consumers use multiple devices as touch points with your business.

Reducing the bounce rate of any given page isn't as complex as it seems. Often simply understanding who your core customers are and delivering content on landing pages that effectively call them to action is all you need to do to reduce any high bounce rates you have on your site.

With free tools available, testing is cost-effective. Once you have a page that is working, duplicating it becomes child's play.

SPEED IS OF THE ESSENCE



Fast page loading times are essential if bounce rates are to be reduced. A study by research specialist Forrester shows that two seconds is the maximum time consumers will wait for an ecommerce page to load. At the moment, smartphone users are a little more patient, with research by web analytics company Kissmetrics finding a third of respondents would wait up to 10 seconds for a page to load on their phones. You can test your page load times with services like Pingdom (<http://tools.pingdom.com/fpt/>).

Monitor how many third party adverts are included on your pages, as they can slow page loading times. Indeed, your main landing pages should be free from these types of adverts; instead, focus purely on the marketing message your business wants to communicate.

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UHLSPORT EXPANDS INTO IRELAND



UhlSport, the leading global goalkeeping and teamwear brand, is to begin servicing the Republic of Ireland through its existing UhlSport UK operation from October 2012.

Paul Sherratt, Country Manager UK & Ireland, talks about the strategy behind this.

WHY THE DIRECT MOVE INTO IRELAND?

In 2008 we set up UhlSport UK so that the brand could be represented directly in the marketplace. The principal is that we can offer the entire global product range of goalkeeping product, teamwear, shinguards, footballs, bags and accessories without dilution of the range or the brand message.

The result is that we have seen phenomenal growth since that time in the UK and are able to communicate a clear sales and marketing strategy.

As our business has grown, with buying groups in particular, it has become increasingly frustrating for both parties that the deals we offer in the UK could not be taken up by Irish members due to UhlSport having a distribution partner in Ireland. With these factors in mind and the background of a challenging economic environment, it became clear that taking the brand direct to the market, rather than through a distributor, will give retailers a wider choice and improved opportunities.

WHAT WILL BE THE BENEFITS TO IRISH CUSTOMERS?

First and foremost, the Irish customer will have access to our entire global product range, giving them a much wider product choice.

Secondly, they will be able to take advantage of buying group deals with STAG and Intersport.

As a brand servicing the market directly, we will be able to be much more aggressive if and when required regarding discounts and terms, as well as being able to offer cooperative marketing

support and a more integrated overall sales and marketing strategy.

HOW WILL YOU SERVICE CUSTOMERS?

Our newly opened office and showroom in Oxfordshire will process orders and take care of customer care and credit control. Orders can be faxed, emailed or called through.

Brian Hutchinson, our sales agent for Northern Ireland, will also cover Ireland. Orders will be despatched from our central German warehouse and take 5-7 working days to reach Irish customers.

WHAT CAN IRISH RETAILERS EXPECT FROM UHLSPORT?

Our goalkeeping product offer continues to expand and we now offer one of the most comprehensive 'head to toe' product ranges for keepers. The category is not just

about gloves any more, it's about apparel, boots, shinguards and accessories, and UhlSport has the heritage and expertise to be able to offer a wide product range with heritage and credibility.

Our teamwear business goes from strength to strength and, as in Northern Ireland, we anticipate this offer will appeal to both football and gaelic clubs with a range of shirts, shorts, socks and trainingwear.

Finally, UhlSport has a strong history in gaelic gloves and will invest further in this marketplace, allowing the brand to take gloves and team product into the sport and widening the appeal for multi-sport retailers.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE BRAND?

It's exciting times. Our growth has been steady and consistent and, by applying the same philosophy and business approach to the Irish market, we believe the long term development potential with the UK & Ireland together is strong.



Brian brings 4 years of experience in the sports trade and over 30 years of experience in the football arena. A former Northern Ireland junior international goalkeeper, he continues to be goalkeeping coach for Derry City and Dungannon Swifts alongside his work with UhlSport.

Brian played professionally in the IFA Premiership for clubs such as Ballymena United, Glenavon, Cliftonville FC and Crusaders FC. He has enjoyed a successful career and now works to provide good goalkeeping products as a way to give back to his sport. Brian has a great relationship with the UhlSport sponsored goalkeepers and has formed partnerships with local retailers to provide great marketing opportunities. Based in Magherafelt, he has easy access to Ireland.

BRIAN HUTCHINSON PROFILE



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Under the Counter

A sideways look at the world of independent retailing

“That blonde girl in outward invoicing has been going tenpin bowling with a married man she met while ordering a fridge freezer in Argos,” my wife said, as she gave me a second helping of lasagne. “No good will come of it.”

“I don’t know, Argos fridge freezers are reckoned to be pretty good,” I said as I surreptitiously took off the burned bits and slipped them to the dog. But I knew what she was getting at.

“The man who has been deputising for Mr Webber in sales has apparently done community service for attacking his neighbour with a garden leaf blower,” my wife said as she put custard on the stewed prunes. “You wouldn’t think he had it in him.”

RITUAL

This supper time ritual was becoming increasingly familiar since my wife recently returned to work as a part-time personnel consultant. She passes on minor titbits of office scandal and I silently munch away, totally unable to contribute.

The other evening she finally noticed. “It’s a pity you never have any gossip,” she said. “Sitting in that shop all day surrounded by moisture wicking fabrics must be pretty boring.”

“I wouldn’t say that,” I replied, but secretly I had to admit she had a point.

Anyone who leaves a busy store to work largely on their own as an independent trader will know what I mean.

The gossip, tittle-tattle and unashamed porkies that fly around big shops will probably be what they miss most. I once had a colleague in a big sports department who used to say: “If

you haven’t got anything nice to say about anyone, come and sit by me!”.

Even a rumour without a leg to stand on managed to get around some other way and there’s nothing like a bit of unfounded slander to brighten the day.

It’s not that my assistant Norman doesn’t bring in some tasty titbits of information from time to time. Only yesterday he mentioned that he thought he had the beginnings of an ingrowing toenail and today he said he probably hadn’t. I can

hardly wait to find out what’s going to happen tomorrow.

Apparently there’s more to gossip than you might think. Research carried out by the British Psychological Society has come to the conclusion that workplace gossip can not only relieve tension and anxiety, but positively boost morale.

Bosses are even being urged to provide ‘gossip areas’, with comfortable chairs, where workers can meet to dish the dirt about bosses and colleagues as a means of expressing and managing their emotions. Gossip has even been classified as destructive and constructive.

Constructive gossip seems to be about revising sales targets or improving the car park, and who on earth wants to hear about that? Destructive gossip - now you’re talking. This, according to the boffins, is

stuff you’re not prepared to talk about openly, so the chances are it’s probably really worth hearing.

Nothing more was said about either sort of gossip after the second helping of prunes, but I sensed that wasn’t the end of the matter. Later, while stacking the dishwasher (we bought it years ago when we could afford

things like appliances), it occurred to me that gossip, like germs and flu bugs, lurked everywhere unseen and it was just a matter of seeking it out.

The following evening, over a nice bit of cod and parsley sauce, and after my wife had revealed the woman in complaints was thinking of becoming a professional bungee jumper, I thought it was time I showed her that gossip is not the sole prerogative of people who work for someone else.



SUGGESTIVE

“Here’s something that might interest you,” I said. “Norman was apprehended by the police today as he was buying Speedway World for his granny. Apparently a woman said he’d been following her through the breakfast cereal department of Asda and had made suggestive remarks next to the Rice Krispies.

“Then she admitted she hadn’t got her contact lenses in and the stalker turned out to be her former brother-in-law’s cousin who was just trying to be friendly, so they let Norman go.”

My wife gave me the look usually reserved for times when I’m inadvertently walking about in public with my flies unzipped.

“That’s not gossip,” she said. “That’s just lies and I’m not remotely impressed. You’re just being silly. And don’t speak with your mouth full. I think in future you’d better read the paper over supper.”

So when the local weekly newspaper arrives on Friday, that’s what I’ll do - making sure I leave it open at the page containing the headline ‘Sports goods aide cleared in cereal pest probe’, or something like that.

I’m now finally convinced that the pundits have got it right - gossip can be a great morale booster. And when it makes the exploits of the blonde in outward invoicing seem pretty boring, take my word that it gets even better.

“WORKPLACE GOSSIP CAN NOT ONLY RELIEVE TENSION AND ANXIETY, BUT POSITIVELY BOOST MORALE”

EXPERT ADVICE



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Sheena Kerr

Past All-Ireland Running Champion

Sheena Kerr

Store manager, Intersport Armagh

Like all of our store managers, Sheena is a sports enthusiast. As a teenager she regularly ran at national level and still finds time to compete in local runs now. And that's the difference at Intersport - our people have real life experience which means they can provide expert advice.

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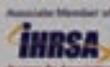


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