

SCGB WEEKLY

ISSUE 1507
FEBRUARY 16, 2015

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY





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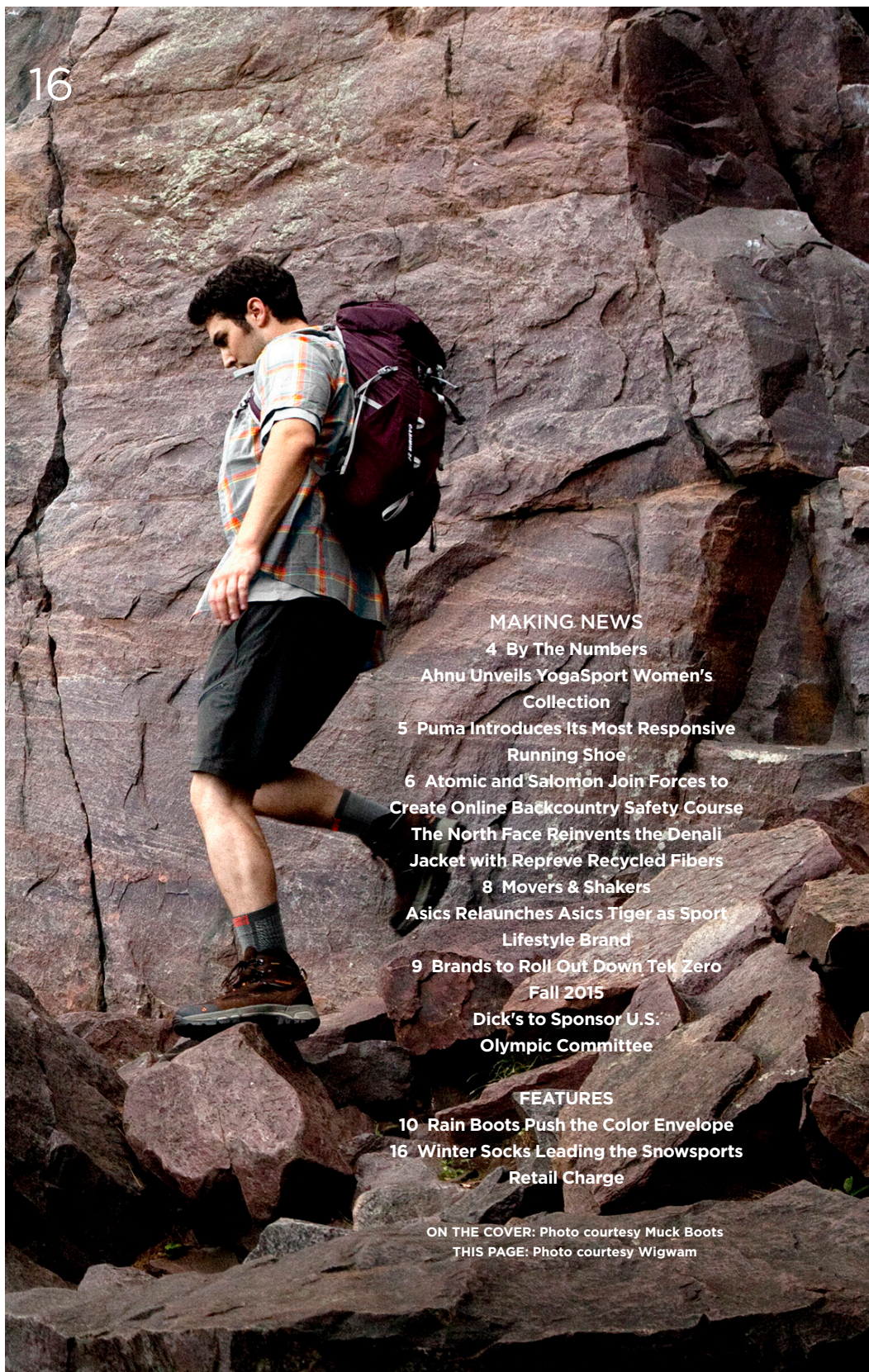
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ON THE COVER: Photo courtesy Muck Boots
THIS PAGE: Photo courtesy Wigwam

BY THE NUMBERS

+0.5%

Jarden Outdoor Solutions, which owns Coleman, Marmot, Rawlings and 24 other outdoor and athletic brands, generated operating earnings of \$11.6 million in the fourth quarter, compared with an operating loss of \$1.9 million a year earlier. Segment sales reached \$621.1 million during the quarter, up 0.5 percent.

-5.5%

Cabela's, Inc. reported total revenue increased 7.2 percent to \$1.3 billion but comparable-store sales decreased 5.5 percent. Fourth-quarter earnings, adjusted for certain items, decreased 16.4 percent. The hook and bullet retailer said greater investments in advertising and promotional spending than originally planned led to a 150-basis point decline in gross margins.

+5.6%

The Thule Group AG reported sales from continuing operations grew 5.6 percent to SEK 976 million (\$131 mm) during the fourth quarter ended December 31, but declined 3.3 percent in currency neutral terms.

+22.2%

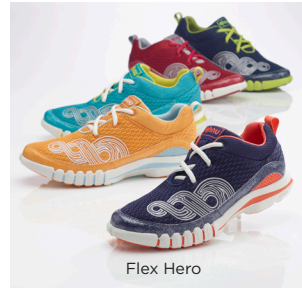
Shimano reported revenues rose 22.2 percent to ¥333.17 billion (\$2.78 bn) in 2014. Sales grew 26.1 percent in its Bicycle Components segment and 10.2 percent in its Fishing Tackle segment. Net income jumped 46 percent to ¥51.2 billion (\$427.3 mm).

+54.7%

Skechers USA reported earnings rose 54.7 percent the fourth quarter to \$21.9 million, or 43 cents a share. Revenues jumped 26.4 percent to \$569.7 million. Double-digit improvements were seen in its domestic and international wholesale and Skechers company-owned retail businesses.



In Studio



Flex Hero



YogaSplit

AHNU

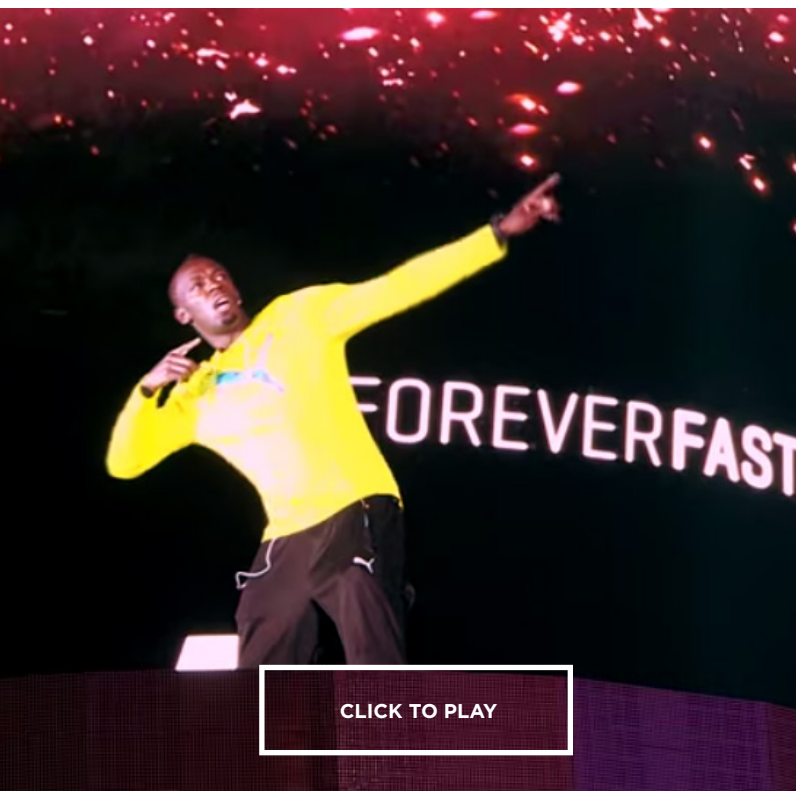
UNVEILS YOGASPORT WOMEN'S COLLECTION

Ahnu Footwear, an incubator brand of Deckers Brands (whose portfolio also includes Ugg, Teva, Sanuk, Tsubo, Mozo and Hoka One One.), unveiled its entry into the "yoga performance footwear category" at Outdoor Retailer Winter Market with the launch of Ahnu YogaSport – a women's line consisting of four styles and 16 SKUs. The company says it wants to be positioned as "a 360-degree yoga fitness lifestyle destination."

"By tapping into our outdoor roots, as well as our yoga-specific brand integrity, we believe we're igniting the true potential of Ahnu and defining an all-new performance-based yoga category," said Jacqueline Van Dine, vice president and co-founder of Ahnu. "We're confident we have the ability to further engage with an intensely dedicated audience base." Ahnu unveiled its first après yoga footwear line in 2012 and quietly introduced a yoga apparel line via Ahnu.com in September 2014.

The Bay Area-based brand, named for the Celtic goddess of the balance between well being and prosperity, said consumers' exercise and adventure routines take them from the trail to the yoga mat to the gym. Therefore Ahnu designed YogaSport specifically for fitness enthusiasts interested in hybrid workouts, "offering stability and flexibility with lightweight comfort, in addition to breathable materials and fashion forward colorways."

Ahnu YogaSport will be available for consumer purchase July 2015 on Ahnu.com, and in select retail stores. "Yoga is the fastest growing activity in the U.S. and for most it is just one element of an active lifestyle. It's a natural fit for consumers to pursue a hybrid fitness regimen that gives them the mental and physical challenge in one package. We developed the first-to-market collection with thoughtful design that incorporates innovative footwear technology for the yoga fusion enthusiast," Van Dine said.



CLICK TO PLAY

PUMA

INTRODUCES ITS MOST RESPONSIVE RUNNING SHOE

Puma introduced Ignite, heralded as Puma's most responsive running shoe and worn by "The World's Fastest Man," Usain Bolt.

Proprietary foam provides responsive cushioning, rebound and comfort. Strategically placed in the heel of the shoe is ForEverFoam, a compound used heavily in the automotive industry. This material creates "long-lasting durability" and is entirely new to the market.

"I start out with a running shoe to warm up before going into a spike, and I need a shoe that is comfortable and keeps my energy up. I love Ignite for that, and can feel it make a real difference. It's a pretty good looking shoe as well," said Bolt.

Puma Ignite will be available in Men's and Women's styles March 2015. Puma plans to eventually expand it further within the running and training categories.

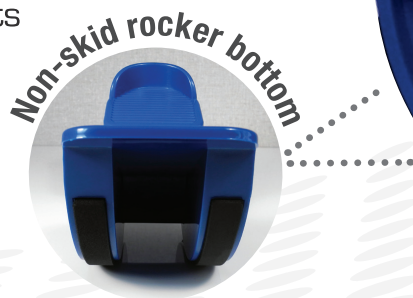
Karin Baust, running training business unit general manager at Puma said, "This shoe has been a long time in the making, we've been working on the foam innovation and tooling for a number of years. It's extremely satisfying to launch Ignite because an advancement in footwear technology like this doesn't come around every day, and we're confident this is going to have a big impact on a wide range of runners around the world."

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ATOMIC AND SALOMON JOIN FORCES TO CREATE ONLINE BACKCOUNTRY SAFETY COURSE

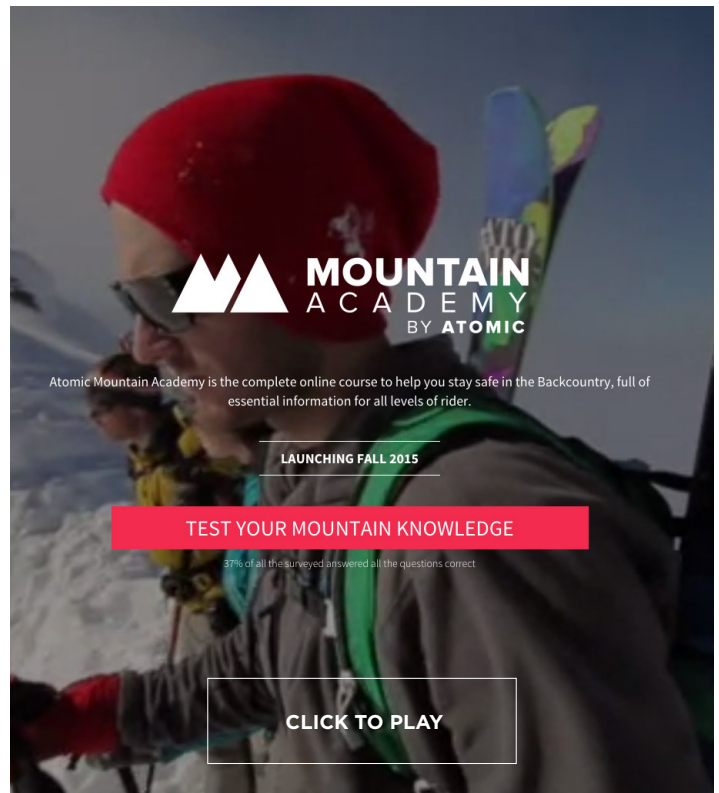
Atomic and Salomon, two of the world's leading ski brands, have partnered to create Mountain Academy, whose goal is to make backcountry education accessible and affordable to everyone. Developed in collaboration with wePowder, Mountain Academy brings together national mountain safety authorities, avalanche centers, guides and athletes to offer in-depth snow safety education online. Mountain Academy is not meant to replace avalanche safety and gear training, but rather supplement it and direct participants to sign up for a course in their area.

Through a series of photos/videos, animations and self-tests, Mountain Academy teaches fundamentals including snow pack, identifying different types of avalanches, and basic information about rescue tools and techniques. The curriculum will be developed through partnerships with experts in avalanche education including AIARE (the foremost avalanche curriculum organization running programs in South America, Europe and the U.S.), UAC, NWAC and CAIC.

The curriculum is accessible via direct online payment (typically less than the cost of a daily lift ticket), and through purchasing qualified Atomic and Salomon product. Next year Mammut is also giving out vouchers for 30 percent off avalanche safety courses with the purchase of qualified products.

"It's a great online service that both Atomic and Salomon will be offering Fall 2015," said Michael Schineis, president of Winter Sports Equipment at Amer (parent of Salomon and Atomic). "The Mountain Academy will help all backcountry enthusiasts to make their skiing days more enjoyable, more fun and most importantly safer."

Mountain Academy is built around two online modules. The first module helps skiers ride safely out of bounds by explaining snow safety, equipment, different dangers and how to avoid them. The second module gives

A promotional graphic for Mountain Academy by Atomic. It features a close-up of a skier wearing a red helmet and goggles, with a mountain peak visible in the background. The text "MOUNTAIN ACADEMY BY ATOMIC" is prominently displayed in the upper right. Below this, a smaller line of text reads: "Atomic Mountain Academy is the complete online course to help you stay safe in the Backcountry, full of essential information for all levels of rider." Further down, a red button with white text says "TEST YOUR MOUNTAIN KNOWLEDGE". Below the button, a small line of text states: "37% of all the surveyed answered all the questions correct". At the bottom, a white button with black text says "CLICK TO PLAY".

MOUNTAIN ACADEMY
BY ATOMIC

Atomic Mountain Academy is the complete online course to help you stay safe in the Backcountry, full of essential information for all levels of rider.

LAUNCHING FALL 2015

TEST YOUR MOUNTAIN KNOWLEDGE

37% of all the surveyed answered all the questions correct

CLICK TO PLAY

information needed to ride deeper in the backcountry. It's a continuation of module one (which is recommended to go through first), and provides more in-depth information on types of snow, avalanche situations, different terrain types and gear users need when participating in backcountry travel.

"It's great to see Atomic and Salomon come together to create this one-of-a-kind program," said Mike Adams, Amer Sports Americas vice president of winter sports equipment. "Pairing education with top products like this is an industry first and we're excited to lead the charge."



THE NORTH FACE REINVENTS THE DENALI JACKET WITH REPREVE RECYCLED FIBERS

The EPA said an estimated 12 million tons of textile waste ends up in U.S. landfills each year. And while weaving synthetic fibers from recycled plastic bottles isn't new, it is making a well deserved come back. Most are familiar with Patagonia's initial efforts at creating fleece from recycled plastic bottles in the 90s, and now The North Face is taking the torch as part of its commitment to create a more sustainable product chain.

Working with Unifi, Inc.'s brand of recycled fibers, Repreve, The North Face has integrated three "environmentally friendly" materials into its Denali fleece jackets, including Repreve recycled yarn, Repreve WaterWise yarn with color technology, and Repreve Textile Takeback yarn made from fabric scraps and recycled bottles. By using this high performance yarn made from recycled plastic bottles, the company said more than 30 million bottles are saved from landfills and turned into Denali jackets each year. Also, WaterWise yarn uses 50 percent less water, 50 percent less chemicals and 25 percent less energy in the fabric dyeing and finishing process.

Furthermore, cut fabric waste from Denali jacket production is collected and sent to Unifi's Repreve Recycling Center in North Carolina where it is recycled into Repreve Takeback yarn. This yarn, along with yarn made from recycled plastic bottles, is then knit into new fabric for Denali jackets. According to Unifi, about 15 percent of fabric used in garment production is typically cut out and discarded in the process. This program creates a loop of material reprocessing. For every 10 Denali jackets produced, enough fabric scrap is created to produce another four.

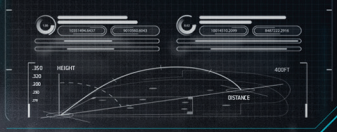
Repreve Takeback fiber is traceable and certified through the use of FiberPrint technology. With the help of The North Face and other brands on a quest to improve their sustainability, the Textile Takeback program recently surpassed three million pounds in "takeback" fabric. In addition to apparel, the program has expanded into other categories including contract furnishings, automotive, healthcare and hospitality.

CUTTERS®



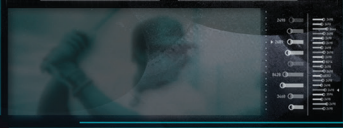
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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Brown Shoe Company elected **Lori Greeley** to its board of directors. Greeley was most recently Chief Executive Officer for Victoria's Secret Stores.

ExOfficio appointed **Johanna Rundquist** as its new Design Materials Manager where she will manage global sourcing for technical fabrics and innovations within ExOfficio's design and product development team.

The **NFL** appointed **Dr. Elizabeth G. Nabel** as its first Chief Health and Medical Advisor.

OrderMyGear hired **Dave Hanson** as Chief Strategy Officer. As CSO, Hanson will be responsible for helping OrderMyGear scale its operations and expand the reach of its platform into new sectors of team sports.

Performance Sports Group, Ltd. appointed **Joan Dea** to the company's board of directors where she will take a seat opened by the resignation of Kohlberg & Company Partner Chris Anderson.

Sport Chek, the official sports store of the Toronto Raptors, announced a new two-year endorsement deal with Toronto Raptors All-Star **Kyle Lowry**.

The Finish Line, Inc. hired **Imran Jooma** as Chief Omni-Channel Officer and Executive VP. He most recently served as Executive VP and President of Online, Marketing, Pricing and Financial services at Sears Holdings Corporation.

Under Armour added snowboarder **John Jackson** to its #UAMTN team. Jackson joins the Under Armour team with a multi-year partnership alongside veterans and snowboarding icons Bjorn Leines, Kyle Clancy, as well as multi-slope mavers Chas Guldemon, Dustin Craven, and Tyler Nicholson.

VF Corporation added **Mark S. Hoplamazian**, CEO of Hyatt Hotels Corporation, as a Director.



ASICS RELAUNCHES ASICS TIGER AS SPORT LIFESTYLE BRAND

What was referred as "Asics Archive" for the last several years will now operate under the new name "Asics Tiger." Asics will relaunch the Asics Tiger brand - originally designed as competitive sports shoes during the 1980s and early 90s - for the sport lifestyle market, and the current line of street style shoes will feature casual designs for everyday wear. The brand will also see new marketing initiatives to support consumer demand.

"For years, the retro styles of Asics have been sought after like hidden gems in the sneaker world, and we couldn't be more excited to take this iconic collection of shoes to the next level," said Mike Jensen, director of lifestyle, Asics America. "We want consumers to know that Asics Tiger will always stand for rare quality, rare style, rare craftsmanship, and a rare era in Japan's history."

Asics Tiger draws its creative inspiration from Japan's early 1990's "Power Age," infusing classic footwear silhouettes with contemporary colors and materials from the world's top footwear designs.

But at the core of the Asics Tiger brand is Japanese technology.

Asics Tiger will develop a new product line in addition to the re-launch models with GEL-Lyte III, GEL-Lyte V, and GEL-Sage. Asics Tiger will be positioned as the third brand in the overall Asics portfolio - along with Asics performance sports shoes and Onitsuka Tiger, retro lifestyle shoes from the 50s, 60s and 70s.

The Asics Tiger branding features the corporate logo used at the time of the company's founding, which represents "the flight and strength of athletics while also reflecting human warmth."

GEL-Lyte III is the basic running shoe taking center stage celebrating its 25th anniversary. The tongue was made of sponge, and its main characteristic was the original, laterally 'split-tongue' construction that cradled the arch of the foot. The unique design created a comfortable fit as the tongue did not shift during movement. A limited edition version of the shoe will be introduced every month this year in collaboration with popular specialty shops in the U.S. and abroad. The first item in the collaboration is with Mita Sneakers, one of the most renowned sneaker shops in Tokyo. Mita has collaborated on five GEL-Lyte III's and now introduces the Torico pack, combining the best of the materials and details used on the first five collaborations.

A new global brand campaign will debut this month titled "Wild Rare." Developed by agency of record VITRO, "Wild Rare" features street-inspired lifestyle photography infused with technology and photo treatments harkening back to the 90s.



BRANDS TO ROLL OUT DOWN TEK ZERO FALL 2015

Introduced this summer and now being adopted into manufacturing for Fall 2015 lines, **DownTek Zero** is a PFC-free water repellent down that uses a “nature inspired” approach to achieve water repellency. To date, industry testing has agreed that PFCs (perfluorocarbons) provided the best DWR (durable water repellency) performance for down. DownTek Zero uses lipids, the idea derived from nature, to coat the down and render it highly water-resistant.

Other PFC-free water repellent treatments have been based on paraffin, stearic-acid-melamine, or silicone chemistries. DownTek is presenting the first successful new combination of natural triglycerides and fatty acids to achieve DWR in down, the company said. Down Decor is the U.S.-based supplier that created DownTek Water Repellent Down. Partner brands include Big Agnes, Eddie Bauer, L.L. Bean, Jottnar, NEMO, Stio, Mountain Hardwear and more.

“In nature, the fats and oils found on geese and ducks is what keeps them dry. Those fats and oils are almost entirely removed during the washing process. For DownTek Zero, we’re using triglycerides similar to those same fats and oils to reintroduce water resistance back to the down,” said Down Decor principal Andy Payne.

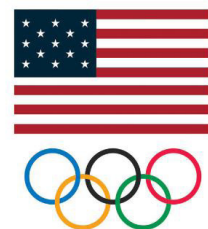
The procedure uses the natural lipids from ducks and geese (slaughtered for meat, with their down as a by-product used in apparel and bedding) in a closed-loop type process aimed at reducing the garments’ carbon footprint. SGB learned that some brands would also be utilizing carbon-free fabrics in some pieces as well, to create even more sustainable items in their lines.

Of note, Payne said that in production testing, DownTek Zero is not as thoroughly water-repellent as original DownTek. “While it is true that fluorocarbons perform better than a natural solution, DownTek Zero has been shown in independent testing to outperform untreated down by a factor of ten times,” he said.

Regular DownTek will still be a staple of the company’s product offerings but DownTek Zero is expected to fulfill the needs of partner brands, especially those in Europe, that are seeking to eliminate PFCs in their garments. Down Decor principal Daniel Guigui said, “Europe is leading the movement away from PFCs in DWR treatments. We expect to see our European brand partners have a great deal of enthusiasm towards DownTek Zero.”

Another touted environmental benefit is that DownTek Zero, like its predecessor DownTek, is not a “bath” process, but rather a “nano-level (one billionth of a meter) proprietary vapor process” – which the company said produces almost no effluent or by-product washed into water-recovery systems.

According to the company, DownTek is being manufactured in Europe in accordance with Oeko-Tex Standard 100 (Edition 01/2014) and it is not classified as dangerous per EC Directives (67/548/EEC or 1999/45/EC, as amended).



Official Sponsor of the U.S. Olympic Committee

DICK'S TO SPONSOR U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

Dick's Sporting Goods and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) announced a sponsorship agreement in which the retailer will serve as the Official Sporting Goods Retail Sponsor to the USOC and Team USA. The first-in-kind partnership for Dick's will focus on supporting U.S. Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls as they strive to represent the U.S. at the Rio 2016 Games.


The partnership will include an in-store employment program and sporting goods equipment donations to the U.S. Olympic Training Centers. Dick's will offer sponsorships and equipment from their stores to several Team USA athletes.

The in-store employment opportunities, under Dick's Team USA Store Ambassador Program, will provide U.S. Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls with flexible work in Dick's stores to accommodate training schedules. These athletes will be able to share their passion and in-depth knowledge of their sport with Dick's customers.

“We are thrilled to welcome Dick's Sporting Goods to our great family of USOC partners,” said Lisa Baird, USOC chief marketing officer. “Dick's support of Team USA athletes, including opportunities for employment in the communities where they live and train, opens up new pathways for America's elite athletes to achieve their dream of competing on the biggest stage in sport.”

Three-time U.S. Olympic gold medalist Kerri Walsh Jennings, four-time U.S. Olympic medalist Summer Sanders, and U.S. Paralympic world record holder Lex Gillette were on-hand at the retailer's corporate headquarters for the partnership announcement.

“I was a U.S. Olympic hopeful at one point,” said Jennings. “A lot of people helped me on my quest to make Team USA, and Dick's will be a huge help to these athletes.”



Rain Boots Push the Color Envelope

An expanded play on colors, prints, and other frills promises to boost the rain boot category in 2015.

By Thomas J. Ryan

Helped by a host of splashes of color, rubber boots have seen a surge in popularity, primarily as a fashion item, in recent years.

Loris Spadaccini, general manager of Tretorn North America, believes rubber boots have become a staple in everyone's wardrobe. "For that matter one of our most successful boots is a lace up style that resembles a chukka boot," said Spadaccini. "We believe consumers will be looking more closely into quality and style. Colors will also be very important. For example we are getting a lot of interest in our rubber boots that fit this year's Pantone Color of the Year - Marsala."

Spadaccini said that as a brand, Tretorn is interested in making products that will help its consumers "enjoy every day outside (in style)." With that in mind, the upcoming season will see Tretorn introduce a new collection of rubber boots specifically designed for city use. Highlights include the Eva Lag, \$90; and Emma, \$100.

"Ankle heights are predominant in our collection this season because a full-shafted boot isn't exactly necessary in cities and ankle height offers an ease of use," said Spadaccini. "We are also experimenting with different heel heights. This season introduces a one-inch wedge. Lastly, we are expanding most of our boots to have a winter lining as it's something that our consumers seem to enjoy."

Annie St-Denis, Kamik's product manager, described the Canadian brand's women's fans as "an urban woman looking for fashion which is functional and has a lasting value; she's looking to get true bang for the buck out of her purchase." But Kamik over recent years has cemented its reputation for brightly colored rain boots, most importantly its magnificent-clear injected prints.

"Consistent trend and runway research inspires our print collection seasonally," said St-Denis. "An Autumn/Winter 2015 important trend to highlight is the 'Colorful Overlapping, Oversized Houndstooth,' giving the effect of one oversized houndstooth print superimposed over another houndstooth print – simulating a papier-mâché effect. We've utilized this trendy print in our Dynamic Rain Boot for women, which will be available in three different colors this upcoming fall." The Dynamic, \$65, also features a removable comfort insole and decorative side buckle.

Another important print for Fall 2015 is 'Marbling,' bringing kitchen counter marble effects to a stone-washed look printed on garments and now also available in footwear and accessories.

"Marbling is a fresh and important print this season at Kamik," added St-Denis. "We've joined in a partnership with Polartec utilizing one of their fabrics, which not only acts as an insulator (extremely important in those not so warm fall and winter months) but is also visually pleasing (which every woman can enjoy) called Thermal

Pro. We selected a print which had an on-trend marbling effect in a beautiful array of colors. We've proudly named this pattern the Marble rain boot."

The Marble, \$80, also features a removable comfort insole.

Offering the ultimate in protection and style, the Slimboot, \$180, is from Sorel's most innovative fall collection to date. The upper is waterproof full-grain leather with a webbed strap in back and a textile knit lining. The footbed is molded EVA with arch support and a textile knit top cover. The outsole is handcrafted vulcanized rubber with a herringbone design and a leather wrapped heel.

The Medina III, \$225, is back again this year with a utility sport-inspired twist. The upper is waterproof vulcanized rubber with a neoprene bootie. The footbed is molded EVA with arch support and a pigskin leather top cover. The outsole is handcrafted rubber with herringbone design.

Erin Sander, global product director at Sorel, said Sorel remains best known for its cold-weather performance product but continues to evolve by adding new styles and collections as a response to the demand for more all-weather/every season styles from both its retail partners and consumers.

"Our extended fall line features styles that speak to trends we see in the market, including a variety of materials, boot heights, and hardware details," said Sander. "Our fall styles are lightweight, lightly or non-insulated, and have a sleek outsole to move effortlessly from daytime to evening to weekend in every season."

For fall 2015, Muck Boots will introduce the sleekly styled Arctic Excursion Lace, \$160, in what's expected to be another strong year for tall, full rubber boots as well as ankle slip-ons. The men's boot features full rubber coverage, a fleece lining and rugged outsole. The 5mm of neoprene insulation provides comfort, 100 percent waterproof protection and a temperature rating of -40 degrees. With consumers also looking for customization, the Arctic Excursion Lace features non-functional laces that will come in two color choices."



Tretorn Eva Lag



Tretorn Emma



Sorel Slimboot



Sorel Medina III



Muck Boots Arctic Excursion Lace

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Muck Boots
Arctic Sport II

Arctic Sport II, \$160, is a rugged outdoor boot for women, featuring a sleek, stylish silhouette.

"Above all else, the consumer is looking for a boot that is lightweight, comfortable, and can be worn throughout the day," said Sean O'Brien, director of footwear for Muck Boots. "Muck's signature neoprene material makes it one of the lightest and most comfortable boots on the market."

XTRATUF, a sister-brand of Muck Boots, is known as "the sneaker of Alaska" with its original "Legacy" boot developed in the 1960's for fishermen on the West Coast of the U.S. and still worn for commercial and recreational fishing, outdoor activities, and as a fashion and trend statement in Alaska. The new XTRATUF Performance Deck Boot, \$100, takes the iconic slip resistant technology and neoprene foam bootie found in the Legacy boot and offers IT in a lighter weight package for more of a recreational sport fishing use.



Muck Boots
XTRATUF
Performance
Deck Boot

The Kettering, \$80, for women is a new program from Bogs with a plan to expand into kids in the future. The handle is actually in the back of the boot as opposed to two on the sides like the traditional Bogs boot. The construction also uses less rubber to reduce the weight of the boot as well as help bring down the cost. Other features include Max-Wick lining to absorb and evaporate moisture, Rebound technology in the outsole for lasting comfort, and a molded EVA insole with DuraFresh and Bogs Max-Wick.



Bogs
Kettering

For men, Bogs is introducing the Bend, low, \$150, or tall, \$155, crafted with waterproof





Bogs Bend

nubuck leather and breathable mesh as well as 2mm EverDry and Bogs Max-Wick lining to keep feet dry. It also features a technical lug out-side built with BioGrip anti-slip, DuraFresh bio-technology to combat odor, Rebound technology in the outsole, and an electrical-shock resistant sole and heel.

For women, Baffin's colorful Packables Series, \$70, are designed specifically to roll up, pop up, and still retain their original shape. It includes a removable insole as well as a small waterproof storage bag.



Baffin Marsh Series (below) and Meltwater (left)

Baffin Packables Series

The multi-sex Marsh Series, \$70, represents a tri-season approach to footwear for muddy, wet or slushy weather. With an all-premium rubber base, it features 7mm of neoprene insulation. A tall-boot, pull-on version is the Meltwater, \$110, with heel pulltab for an easier on and off.

Sperry Top-Sider has been in the rubber rain boot business for decades as they, like all of its products, were born from the necessity of keeping feet dry and warm while at sea.

"We work to keep our rain boots on-trend regarding color and detailing every season, all while retaining their functional integrity as a waterproof boot with our wave-siped outsole for superior traction on wet and slippery boat



decks," said David Mesicek, director of marketing.

Highlights from Sperry include the Walker Haze, \$110, a tall waterproof boot with leather strap and buckle, and non-marking rubber outsole with wave-siping for wet/dry traction.

The Walker Fog, \$100, is a moto-inspired waterproof boot with leather straps and non-marking rubber outsole with wave-siping. The Walker Mist is a stylish mid-height option.

"People have realized that you do not need to sacrifice comfort in order to look good," said Mesicek. "In fact, we have seen a major shift in the practicality consumers apply toward their product purchase behavior. Our mothers should be proud!" ■



Sperry Top-Sider Walker Haze (top), Walker Fog (right) and Walker Mist (bottom)

Headlamps Designed For Runners.



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A woman with short blonde hair is hiking up a rocky trail in a forest. She is wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt, olive green cargo pants, and pink and blue striped socks. She is holding two black trekking poles, one in each hand. The background is a dense forest with large tree roots and green foliage.

Winter Socks Leading the Snowsports Retail Charge

Manufacturers
showcase new snow
and winter sports
technologies

By Aaron H. Bible

What's a best-selling item with great brand stories, continually updating performance features, lots of variety in style and color, good margin, and lots of turnover that every body needs? You guessed it, socks. Such a simple item yet so important to all of our respective businesses – and our fun outdoors. Over the years this simple item has claimed some of our best industry innovations and continues to be one of the only apparel products still commonly made in the U.S.

Here's a look at what a few manufacturers are stepping out with for next season.

LORPEN

New T2 Thermocool Sock Collection

Lorpen is expanding what it calls blended yarn technology for its Fall 2015 collection, specifically with the addition of Thermocool to ski and hiking socks. Combining synthetic (polyester) Thermocool with Merino wool, the new blended socks are designed to regulate foot temperature and control moisture management in both cold and warm conditions.



Lorpen T2 Ski Light Womens and T2 Ski Midweight Mens

Can they achieve the best of both worlds? According to Lorpen, Thermocool fiber is designed to work with the body's natural thermal capabilities through smart fiber cross-sections, in a process called Duoregulation. Thermocool fiber is designed to provide: additional evaporative surface, outstanding moisture transport, and enhanced air circulation. It also is purported to prevent post-exercise chill.

"Lorpen has been using blended yarn technology for more than seven years with the constant goal of improving sock technology for athletes and outdoor enthusiasts," said Bruce Barrows, VP of sales and marketing at Lorpen North America. "Merino is a terrific natural

fiber but we all know it has its limitations. Thermocool takes a fiber like Merino and makes it better. This is a perfect example of how Lorpen is consistently pushing the sock technology envelope by offering combinations of fibers that make outdoor enthusiasts' feet comfortable so they can concentrate on their outdoor pursuits."

Founded in 1985, Lorpen is based in Etxalar, Spain, and has been selling in the U.S. since 2004 and Canada since 2001, now available in 59 different countries worldwide.

DISSENT LABS

Genuflex Compression Socks with Polygiene

From Vancouver, Canada comes the new SkiGFX Compression Hybrid Project, \$47, that is turning heads, but not noses, due to its use of permanent Polygiene anti-odor treatment.



Dissent Labs SkiGFX Compression Hybrid Project

Available in small through extra large, Dissent socks feature a specific boot fit, warmth-to-weight, and are optimized for backcountry touring with padding zones and direct graduated compression. Technical yarns and knits provide moisture management and shape retention. The seamless toe and other features are achieved using high-tech, high needle-count machines for a true extreme, backcountry touring/ski sock.

SMARTWOOL

Builds on Run Success, Adds Women's Fit to PhD Ski Sock Line

Building on its 20-year history in Merino socks, SmartWool is introducing women's specific fits in its Fall 2015 collection of ski socks. The women's PhD collection utilizes a lower volume silhouette and narrower heel pocket than its men's counterpart.

In addition to improved fit, female-friendly ventilation manages heat and moisture through strategically placed mesh and elasticity. Body mapping was used for cushion placement, which in turn helps regulate the internal climate of the

boot and minimizes friction and impact. The Women's PhD Ski Sock will be available in seven styles with Ultra Light, Light or Medium cushioning.

"Whether pushing the limits of the sport or tackling groomers on an annual vacation, women need a ski sock designed to keep them comfortable, warm and blister-free," said SmartWool women's performance product line manager Sara Yoder. "We're delivering that in the new PhD collection." Like all SmartWool PhD socks, the women's ski line features the 4 Degree Elite fit system, which uses "targeted elastics" to improve stretch and recovery, and patented "ReliaWool technology" to improve durability.

SmartWool is also expanding its sock collection inspired by the work of modernist American artist Charley Harper, icon for naturalists and national parks enthusiasts. In addition to a new sweater line and holiday stockings, Harper's art is gracing a range of lifestyle socks, each featuring a supportive arch brace and virtually seamless toe. Made in the USA, all \$25, styles include Once Upon a Pond, Isle Royale National Park, Corn Snake Pulling Off Its Old Skin, Wrented, and Cool Cardinal Crew. SmartWool offers a 100-percent satisfaction guarantee.



SmartWool Women's PhD Ski Sock



SmartWool Snake Pulling Off Its Old Skin



SmartWool Cool Cardinal Crew

DARN TOUGH VERMONT

Introduces RFL Vertical Line Sock

Darn Tough Vermont, maker of "one of the fastest growing collections" of outdoor performance socks, will debut one of the industry's lightest vertical socks, the "Really F#\$%£% Light" (RFL) Over-the-Calf Ultralight for Fall 2015.



Darn Tough Vermont
RFL Over-the-Calf sock

“Serious skiers and riders want the least amount of fabric between their foot and boot, which is why we created the RFL sock for our Vertical line” said Ric Cabot, president and CEO of Darn Tough Vermont. “For us, the name says it all: this is a Really F#*\$@£! Light Sock.”

Darn Tough Vermont’s new RFL Over-the-Calf sock, \$24, is constructed of 17.2 Micron fine gauge Merino wool. Providing seamless fusion between boot and foot, the RFL delivers “the ultimate performance fit with legendary toughness.” Each sock is designed, manufactured and tested in Northfield, VT.

Made with fine-gauge Merino wool and True-Seamless knitting technology to create a “virtually undetectable” toe seam, Darn Tough Vermont socks wick moisture to keep feet dry and temperature regulated with natural anti-microbial properties. At 1,441 stitches per square inch, the knitting is the highest density in the industry, according to the company, and ensures a fit that “reduces blisters, slipping and bunching.” Founded in 2004 by Ric Cabot, a third-generation sock maker, Darn Tough Vermont operates out of Cabot Hosiery Mills.

Its specialty line offers footwear in six Active Wear categories including Ski/Ride, Hike/Trek, Run/Bike, Lifestyle, Hunt and Kid’s styles – all of which carry “the industry’s only unconditional lifetime guarantee.” Darn Tough is distinguished by 100-percent U.S. manufacturing; small-needle knitting; exceptional durability and cushioning; True-Seamless technology; and exclusive blends of either Coolmax or Merino wool.



Fox River
5990 VVS
UL Pro Ski
Sock

FOX RIVER

Introduces VVS Pro Anatomical Fit Merino-Silk Ski Socks

Fox River Socks, “America’s Oldest Sock Brand,” is introducing for Fall 2015 the new VVS Pro Anatomical Fit Merino-Silk Ski Socks, new Thermolite Ski Socks, new Merino Ski and Snowboard Socks, and updates to other popular outdoor-category products. The new 5990 VVS

UL Pro Ski Sock, \$22, (available in Black/Silver, Navy/Blue and Black/Red) is designed for skiers in that it’s anatomically knit for a better fit and constructed to contour to the shape of each foot individually. Made from a unique blend of Merino wool and silk, resulting in a luxurious soft feel, this boot-fitting sock is engineered for the rigors of professional skiing by incorporating nylon-reinforced zones. Finally, memory-knit construction helps keep shape retention wash after wash, and the company said a smooth, flat comfort toe seam promises long-lasting comfort.

POINT6

Expands Ski and Snowboard Styles Designed for Uphill

Point6 introduces new snowsports category offerings for Fall 2015, staying on point with the meteoric growth in backcountry skiing and snowboarding. The company said high-intensity, stop-and-go activities such as ski touring are perfect for its blend of merino wool and nylon reinforcement. New offerings feature ultralight cushioning to prevent moisture build-up,



Photo courtesy Point6



From L-R:
Point6 Colorado
Sky High - Ski
Ultra Light, Ski
Pro Light Parallel
and Snowboard
Powerhouse

complemented by an anatomical fit. All Point6 socks are made from Merino wool using 100-percent compact spun yarns on state-of-the-art knitting technologies, in the U.S. (with imported yarns), produced for the outdoor, snow sports, running, cycling and active lifestyle markets.

For skiers is the Colorado Sky High - Ski Ultra Light, \$21, a minimalist design with fun new backcountry inspired, mountain-sport culture of Colorado graphics. Braces secure the sock in place and hug the foot for an anatomical fit. Temp-regulating merino helps keep feet dry and comfortable.

The Ski Pro Light Parallel, \$23, was designed by boot fit specialists with light cushioning around the heel and shin. A proprietary Achilles heel pad anchors the heel in place and an anatomical fit provides all-day protection from friction and the elements.

Splitboarders get the new Snowboard Powerhouse, \$24, also featuring lightweight design with slight cushioning around the calf and under foot. Soft merino ideally prevents hot spots, blisters and swamp foot.

Point6 founders Peter and Patty Duke helped introduce merino wool to the outdoor industry more than 20 years ago and subsequently brought Point6 to market in 2008.

FARM TO FEET

and its New Snow Sports Sock Collection

For Fall 2015, Farm to Feet, maker of “100-percent American socks,” is introducing a new collection featuring a “layered knit” technology that touts comfort and fit while reducing bulk specifically designed for wintersports enthusiasts. All Farm to Feet socks feature seamless toe closures, a comfort

From L-R:
Farm To Feet
Women's
Jackson, Sugar
Mountain, and
Park City



compression fit from the top through the arch, and cushioning for performance and comfort.

Farm to Feet undertook a layered construction process coupled to create cushioning and durability “zones” anatomically designed to target key impact areas and to optimize weight savings while increasing durability and comfort.

As with all Farm to Feet socks, the names of the socks are derived from U.S. locations tied to the brand and its partners. For it's Snow Adventure collection, Farm to Feet pays homage to partners in key ski markets:

- » Jackson, WY - home to Larry Hartenstein, retail manager for Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, who consulted on the ski collection design
- » Waitsfield, VT - home to Pale Morning Media, Farm to Feet's public relations partner
- » Sugar Mountain, NC - home to Farm to Feet's favorite local ski area
- » Alpine Meadows, CA - home to Farm to Feet's California sales representative
- » Park City, UT - home to Batch 171, Farm to Feet's branding and design partner

Farm to Feet's goal of creating the “world's best wool socks” to them means using U.S. merino, U.S. manufacturing, and U.S. workers. With a supply chain completely within the U.S., the company said it is able to ensure the highest quality materials and end products while having as little impact on the environment as possible. The wool is grown and sheared in the Rocky Mountains and the remaining processes take place within 300 miles of its sustainability-focused knitting facility in Mt. Airy, NC.

WIGWAM

Turns 110

Wigwam Mills is fourth-generation family owned and is celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. All of its products are knitted in the U.S. (on state-of-the-art Italian machines in Sheboygan, WI) and 85-percent of their wool is U.S.-sourced. For Fall 2015, customers can look forward to three new lines.

Classics look like the itchy rag socks your grandfather might have worn; however, citing a robust market for heritage products, Wigwam is re-launching its Classics line with modern tweaks in style and intelligent blends including elements of Spandex, Olefin, stretch nylon and U.S.-produced wool.



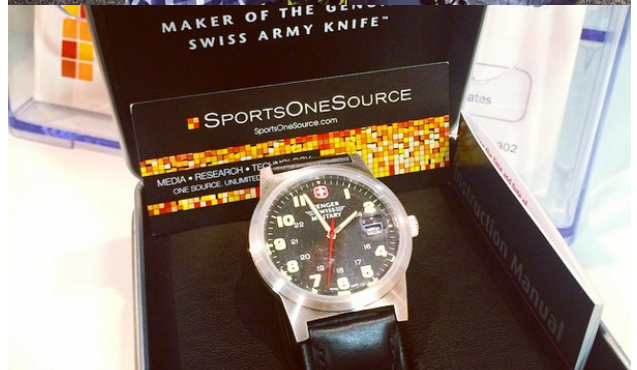
Wigwam Ultra Cool-Lites

The new Fusion line is taking the old two-sock model (thin wicking hydrophobic socks worn under a thick insulating hydrophilic sock), and through the use of advanced knitting processes, blending those two socks seamlessly into one. Fusion has lived within the line for years and is now being applied to Snowsports.

In the new Ultra Cool-Lites, instead of an inner and outer layer, sections of the sock are knitted with different yarns to pull moisture and move it up and out of the sock through the cuff. Cool-Lites have been in the line for a while and the new Ultra Cool-Lites are a thinner and lighter version of that inline product. ■

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INDUSTRY CALENDAR



Usain Bolt. Photo courtesy Puma

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Mount Prospect, IL 60056
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nbs.com

Outdoor Industry Association
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Boulder, CO 80301
t 303.444.3353
outdoorindustry.org

Sports & Fitness Industry Association
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Silver Spring, MD 20910
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t 703.556.9020
snowsports.org

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Tennis Industry Association
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8-12 Worldwide Spring Show
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18-21 Sports Inc. Outdoor Show
Phoenix, AZ

18-23 NBS Spring Semi-Annual Market
Fort Worth, TX

MARCH

3-4 SFIA National Health Through Fitness Day
Washington, D.C.

13-15 Imprinted Sportswear Show
Atlantic City, NJ

APRIL

14 SFIA/HFHS/NCAA Rules Meeting
Indianapolis, IN

MAY

3-6 NSGA Management conference
and Team Dealer Summit
Austin, TX

JUNE

25-27 Sports Inc. Athletics Show
San Antonio, TX

JULY

10-12 A.D.A. Spring Show
Minneapolis, MN

AUGUST

13-15 Sports Inc. Outdoor Show
San Antonio, TX

SEPTEMBER

9-10 SFIA Industry Leaders Summit
New Orleans, LA

OCTOBER

29-31 A.D.A. Fall Show
Baltimore, MD

NOVEMBER

22-24 Sports Inc. Athletic Show
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A woman wearing an orange zip-up hoodie, black leggings, a black headband, and white sunglasses is running on a sandy beach. A white dog is running alongside her to the right. The background shows the ocean with waves under a blue sky with light clouds.

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