

# SGB WEEKLY

ISSUE 1525  
JUNE 22, 2015

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE MARKET





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SGB Magazine and The SportsOneSource Group honored the 40Under40 Class of 2015 at an invitation-only event in Huntington Beach, CA June 12-13.

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ON THE COVER: Photo courtesy Icebreaker

## MOVERS & SHAKERS

**Fanatics, Inc.** named **Lauren Cooks Levitan** as its CFO. She was Co-founder and Managing Partner at Moxie Capital.

**Garment International Srl** appointed **Marco Sancandi** to the newly created position of Director of Operations.

**Injinji**, maker of the patented five-toe-sleeve Performance Toesock for runners and fitness enthusiasts, welcomed back outside sales rep **Travis McMaster** to the Injinji team.

**Kohl's Corp.** promoted **Michelle Gass** to the newly created principal officer position of Chief Merchandising and Customer Officer. Kohl's also commenced an external search for a COO, a newly created principal officer position.

**Lululemon Athletica** founder **Dennis Wilson** filed to sell his entire stake in the yoga wear retailer, ending an association that had become contentious. He holds 14 percent of the company's outstanding shares, a stake valued at about \$1.2 billion.

**Marmot** added **Sara Agah** the brand's newest addition to the Marmot Ambassador Team - a diverse cadre of social entrepreneurs, philanthropists, advocates and global stewards that represent goodwill initiatives worldwide.

**MoGo Sport**, maker of flavored mouth guards, announced that **Bobby Dodd** has joined the company as President.

**Nemo Equipment, Inc.** hired **Pete Cahill** of Exodus Reps LLC to represent the brand in the Mid-Atlantic.

**Ortovox** promoted **Tom Mason** to Brand Manager for the U.S., coinciding with the introduction of the Ortovox Mountainwear line of apparel, gear and accessories into North America.

**Spenco** hired **Andrea Haas** to head Midwest sales efforts for this top insole and footcare company.



Santa Cruz rock climber Chris Sharma

## RED BULL SPONSORS CHRIS SHARMA'S GIANT REDWOOD CLIMB

Thrilling climb helps UC Berkley biologists assess California drought impact on redwood trees. Santa Cruz rock climber Chris Sharma set his sights on free climbing a new medium last week - giant redwoods in the Northern California old growth glade.

In free climbing, he was protected from falls by rope and harness, but Sharma used only his feet and hands to scale a redwood in Eureka, CA. The tree measured 252.8 feet high and 25.8 feet in circumference, and was estimated by UC Berkley biologists to be 600-700 years old.

The climb was sponsored by energy drink Red Bull, and its Australian company Red Bull GmbH.

"Growing up in Santa Cruz, even before I started rock climbing, I always played on trees," said Sharma. "I always come back between my travels to the redwood forest and walk around, and I've started looking up and seeing more than just trees, but actually seeing lines that would be amazing to climb on."

Motivation behind the project was to collect data alongside UC Berkley biologists Anthony Ambrose and Wendy Baxter, helping enhance their understanding of California's giant Coast Redwoods. Sharma's data from the Eureka freeclimb was used as an indicator of how the current California drought has affected redwood tree water status.

"We were pleased to see that the redwood tree appeared to be doing well and was not water-stressed at this time," said Ambrose, one of the UC Berkeley Tree Biologists who helped plan and execute the climb. Data showed a scoring of 1.20 MPa measurement of treetop leaf water potential for the redwood, indicating a low level of hydration stress. Only a year ago, Ambrose noticed high levels of stress on Santa Cruz trees, due in part, he believes, to global climate changes and drought.

The redwood chosen for the climb was a *Sequoia sempervirens*, cousin to the Giant Sequoias growing native to in-land California. Its location was key - positioned in a city park, with established trails that allowed easy access for Sharma and the team of UC biologists, without unnecessary damage to understory.

Ambrose also noted that, "the lower trunk bark was fire-hardened and the trunk did not support sensitive epiphytes such as lichens or mosses that would have been damaged from climbing it," making Sharma's climb low-impact on the tree's ecosystem. "Chris' entire climb was incredibly low-impact and on solid outer bark well below the branch level," Ambrose said.

Sharma was first recognized in the rock climbing scene at age 14, when he won the U.S. Bouldering Nationals. At 15 he climbed a 5.12c, rumored to be the hardest route ever completed at the time. Sharma has since created other 5.15 routes around the world in France, Spain and California.

"Climbing trees is way different than climbing rocks, they're living beings," Sharma said.



## NIKE

### SIGNS UNPRECEDENTED NBA DEAL

The National Basketball Association (NBA) and Nike Inc. announced an eight-year global merchandising and marketing partnership that will make Nike the official on-court apparel provider beginning with the 2017-18 NBA season.

Under the deal, which is reported to be worth \$1 billion, Nike will become the first NBA apparel partner to have its logo appear on NBA uniforms. Nike replaces Adidas, which announced earlier this year it wouldn't renew the contract.

Nike will also have the global rights to design and manufacture authentic and Swingman jerseys as well as on-court warm-ups and shooting shirts.

A marketing partner of the WNBA since its inception in 1997, Nike will also now have an expanded presence at WNBA All-Star and other events throughout the season. Also for the first time, Nike will become a marketing partner of the NBA Development League (NBA D-League).

The partnership will activate around several NBA events such as NBA All-Star, NBA Global Games, NBA Draft presented by State Farm, Samsung NBA Summer League and NBA 3X. Nike will remain the official partner and apparel provider of Basketball Without Borders.



## NEW BALANCE

### INTRODUCES FIRST FOOTBALL BOOTS

New Balance Football officially revealed the brand's first range of football boots.

The brand launched two styles of boots designed for attack-minded players but differentiated by style-of-play and outlook. The Visaro Boot is for players who "Make Chances," and the Furon Boot is for players who "Take Chances."



Visaro Boot



Furon Boot

Visaro features a Vari-zone Ariaprene upper for ball manipulation, a Super-Flex soleplate for ground contact and a low-pressure zone Instep for control. It also features a Fresh Foam insock for cushioning and a pro-form last for feel and comfort.

Furon features an engineered high-energy return upper for optimal release velocity, and a stiffened soleplate for energy return and acceleration. Also built into the boot is "ultra-directional stud design for straight-line speed."

The New Balance R&D team used elite athlete-specific data to create the boot designs. "What has been clear right from the start is that New Balance set out to design a boot to help attacking payers - I have worked



"This boot feels like it's been made especially for me and I know others will feel the same way." - Adnan Januzaj

closely with them from the original prototype to ensure they achieve this," said New Balance-sponsored football player Adnan Januzaj. "This boot feels like it's been made especially for me and I know others will feel the same way."

Added Global Head of New Balance Football Richard Wright, "We believe these boots will meet the player's performance demands and amplify their unique set of skills - not only at the top level of the game but at every level of football."





## WOOLRICH LAUNCHES USA-MADE COLLECTIBLE TRAIL BLANKET SERIES

With a goal of raising awareness of the organizations protecting and stewarding the “Triple Crown of Hiking Trails,” Woolrich is releasing a series of collectible blankets. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the blankets will go to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Continental Divide Trail Coalition and Pacific Crest Trail Association.

The U.S.-made throw blankets are crafted in the Woolrich mill, the longest continuously operating woolen mill in the country, and each features notable symbolism from the three National Scenic Trails, available for \$185 at Woolrich.com.

“Exploring America’s great outdoors is part of the Woolrich brand heritage,” said Nick Brayton, president of Woolrich. “And there’s no better way to get outside and get active than on one of our National Scenic Trails.”



Photo courtesy Hoven

## HOVEN’S FLOATABLE SUNGLASSES ARRIVE IN TIME FOR SUMMER WAVES



Argonaut shades

Hoven blends futuristic design and lightweight technology for a pair of shades to withstand sun and surf.

Hoven Vision, based in San Diego, CA, recently introduced the Montix - the first in a line of floatable, offshore adventure glasses called the Argonaut Series.

The Argonaut shades secure at the nosepiece with Clic Magnetic Connection Technology, keeping the link surprisingly secure. A floatable ergonomic band designed in bright, radical colors

wraps around the back of the wearer’s head, integrating a retention system in a futuristic look.

Argonaut offers seven different lens options, allowing wearers to customize their glasses to their sport or style. The brown/copper base minimizes glare while providing heightened contrast and minimalist color distortion; Green chrome enhances color and contrast as it reduces glare; Fire chrome is designed to keep eyes focused and comfortable over long periods of time; Purple Haze keeps vision sharp when the sun is at its brightest; Tahoe Blue was developed to get the most out of bright, cloudless day; and Grey Polarized is a middle ground, everyday choice, created to protect in any gradations of light.

All Argonaut polarized lenses are made in the U.S. and provide 100- percent UV protection.

The Montix frame is injected with durable Grilamid, but don’t let the toughness fool you. These glasses are so light the frames seem to float over your eyes. Lightness means less pressure on the bridge of your nose, which means no sunglass headaches, and more floatation when dropped overboard. An adjustable temple length feature allows for an instantly customized fit; and the adjustment stays secure without slipping to larger settings as you tackle each swell. Stainless steel hinges and high-impact resistant polycarbonate lenses with hydrophobic coating completes the wrap-around design.

Should the waves and water-based action toss you and your Hovens around too much, don’t worry. The Montix is backed by a limited lifetime warranty. At \$140, the Montix’s blending of design and function make for eyewear that is progressive in purpose and style. You’ll probably get a funny look when you take the Montix off from the nice-piece, but you’re from the future, remember.



# SGB WEEKLY

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Photo courtesy Voke Tab

## VOKE TAB IS THE NEWEST TECHNOLOGY IN SPILL-PROOF CAFFEINE

The quarter-sized Voke Tab is a chewable, candy-like tab made from a basic combination of organic guarana berry, organic acerola cherry and natural green tea leaf.

One Voke Tab is equal to 77mg of caffeine, or one strong cup of tea, “minus the jitters,” according to Voke. Instead of spiking energy, Voke offers a few hours of smooth, natural energy. Each tin contains seven tabs.

There are no artificial colors, sweeteners or flavors. Voke Tab’s pink shade comes from beet coloring, while the fruity smell is a combination of organic cherry and guarana. Tabs are sweetened with rebiana - the primary source of sweetness in the Truvia sweetener brand - and monk fruit, named after Buddhist monks who first cultivated it nearly 800 years ago, according to monkfruit.com.

Voke was created for daily use, either at work, on a ski lift, after lunch, first thing in the morning or late into the night. From mothers to firefighters to professional athletes, Voke ambassadors include Margaret Vap, the yoga entrepreneur and eco-conscious mountain cowgirl; and Conrad Anker, American rock climber, mountaineer and writer. Anker is also team leader of The North Face climbing team.

The Tab tin fits in the palm of your hand. The goal of incorporating Voke into daily life is in part to “reduce the excess.” By replacing one coffee



Kalen Caughey, Creator, Voke Tab

or energy drink per day with a Voke Tab, you could save an average of \$81 a month. The Voke switch also potentially eliminates 150 grams of fat (3.96 lb p/year), 810 grams of sugar (21.42 lb p/year), and 6,000 calories (72,000 p/year) from monthly intake.

Kalen Caughey, creator of Voke Tab, started mixing energy tabs in a dorm room almost a decade ago. As a competitive skier who enjoyed the effects of coffee, he was looking to make a spill-proof alternative to bring on the mountain. Caughey’s biochemist father helped to research an ideal combination of natural ingredients that would provide a balanced boost without sugar or artificial sweeteners. They employed all available scientific literature on ingredients that improve memory, focus, metabolism and physical stamina to create the combination Voke uses today.



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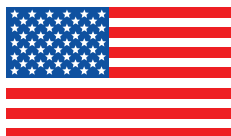
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Photo courtesy Fjällräven's

## FJÄLLRÄVEN'S

### NEW LIGHTWEIGHT APPAREL IS FLEXIBLE, DURABLE AND BUILT FOR SUMMER

Swedish heritage brand, Fjällräven introduces the Abisko Lite Collection of apparel built for warm weather active pursuits.

Fjällräven, the Swedish brand whose name translates to "arctic fox," premiered a new lightweight triad named the Abisko Lite Collection. The line was created for warm weather active pursuits like day treks and dodging rain storms in the mountains.

Consisting of a jacket, trouser and short, Abisko Lite makes use of stretch fabrication, allowing greater ventilation and breathability in areas where greater mobility and flexibility are needed, while Fjällräven's signature G-1000 fabric is added to areas requiring durability and protection.

All three products are impregnated with Fjällräven's Greenland Wax, making the apparel wind and water-resistant. Greenland Wax also increases the durability of the G-1000 fabric and is created by hand without harmful chemical additives. The company explained, "The recipe is secret but the ingredients are simple: pure paraffin and high-quality beeswax."



**Abisko Lite Trousers**, \$170, are designed with stretch fabric covering the thighs for ease of movement, while G-1000 at the knees and lower legs provide extra durability. Pre-shaped knees and a high cut back waist give added comfort when squatting and wearing a backpack. Additional features include two hand pockets, a zippered leg pocket with an interior mesh pocket for a mobile phone and a raw length for a customizable fit.



**Abisko Lite Shorts**, \$120, are constructed with the same stretch paneling as its trouser counterpart but are better suited for trekking on hot days. The shorts are packable and have a zippered leg pocket, two hand pockets and a back pocket for streamlined storage.



**The Abisko Lite Jacket**, \$250, is suited for day trips and general outdoor use. Stretch fabric covers the back and abdomen for greater range of movement. G-1000 panels at the chest, shoulders, hood and sleeves protect against wind, rain and potential abrasion. Along with providing great ventilation, the fabrics are quick drying. Additional features include a fixed, adjustable hood, a two-way front zipper with inside protective flap, a press button at the hem, a spacious vertical chest pocket, and adjustments at the sleeve cuffs and bottom hem.





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Photo courtesy Icebreaker

## ICEBREAKER

### REIMAGINES MERINO HUNT AND FISH APPAREL

The New Zealand brand Icebreaker - pioneer in merino wool outdoor wear - has reimagined its hunting and fishing apparel line for Fall/Winter 2015. The collection was created to offer an alternative to hunters, who after many hours or days outdoors need high performance wear that is both breathable and technical, just like any other outdoor athlete.

In the collection, Icebreaker set out to expand new styles and camouflage patterns while staying loyal to its ethos of using natural fibers. A combination of merino wool and a partnership with RealTree led to the new collection, which revolves around a detailed layering system designed to control body temperature during drastic swings in activity level. The collection draws its main source of inspiration from merino wool.

The layering system also accounts for the hassle of packing for a hunt, and was created so wearers can go longer with less changing. Icebreaker's merino fiber blend encourages moisture to evaporate before it becomes sweat. The blend also has no added chemicals and is naturally odor-resistant.

Classic Icebreaker styles inspired the new hunt/fish line in an update to old favorites. New IKA active base layers, offered in plain and RealTree prints, are made with 100-percent merino wool and offered in tops and bottoms.

Icebreaker also updated its MerinoLoft outerwear with the Icebreaker Stratus LS Zip, featuring fabric-woven 100-percent recycled polyester body with Icebreaker MerinoLoft insulation (body 180gm/sleeves 100gm). All MerinoLoft styles are water repellent, machine washable and include recycled merino insulation.

However, the biggest renovations were made to the mid-layer. The process of re-vamping the mid-layer fleece involved a new process of treating the fabric weave, where merino wool is wrapped around a nylon core. The weave is then brushed to create millions of extra air pockets, nearly doubling the warmth while keeping garments thin, lightweight and low bulk. Icebreaker replaced traditional fleece synthetics with RealFleece, made entirely of merino. Like the MerinoLoft Jacket, the improved temperature-regulating weave of ReelFleece is made with recycled fabrics.

Other notable pieces in Icebreaker's Fall/Winter 2015 collection include the Men's Lodge LS Shirt, a heavier weight woven shirt; and anatomically sculpted and densely cushioned Hunt + Fish Mid-Calf Heavy Cushion Socks.



Men's Real Tree Stratus LS Zip Hood



Women's Real Tree Cascade LS Zip



Men's Real Tree IKA Leggings



Men's Real Tree Tech Lite SS Crew



Men's Lodge LS Shirt



Hunt + Fish  
Mid-Calf Heavy  
Cushion Socks



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# The SGB *40Under40* 2015 Awards

Huntington Beach, CA | June 12-13, 2015



## 2015 SGB 40Under40 Class

**Back Row from Left to Right:** Brian Burnett, Drew Davies, Gavin Whelan, Matthew Weiss, Ted Kushion, Michael Meyer, Neal Taylor. **Middle Row from Left to Right:** Kent McKeaigg, Jonathan Degenhardt, Todd Bronson, David Polivy, Tai Neal, Lauren Blanda, David Feld, Michael Rossi, Matt Helbig, Fynn Glover. **Front Row from Left to Right:** Margaret Newhard, Danielle Quatrochi, Laura Wolf Stein, Sarah Matt, Kelly Milazzo, Stephanie Militello. **Honorees Not Pictured:** Dan Abrams, Linda Balfour, John Barrett, Tammy Christensen, Guillaume de Monplanet, Brendan Gibbons, Joel Grabenstein, Wendy Lee, Lauren Mallon, Sara Parker, Chris Sackett, Matt Schultz, Josh Shaw, Katie Swenson, Megan Tompkins, Tina Wade

Last weekend at the eighth annual SGB 40Under40 awards in Huntington Beach, CA The SportsOneSource Group honored this year's 40Under40 class as the best and brightest young professionals under the age of 40 shaping the future of the sporting goods, outdoor and active lifestyle industries. Along with family, friends and SGB 40Under40 alumni, the awards call out the value each of these young professionals are making in the sporting goods and active lifestyle industry with their talents and fresh ideas to keep the industry moving forward.

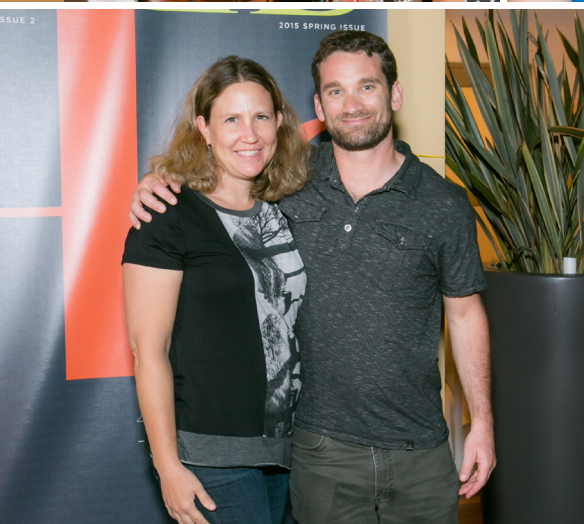
The qualifications? Leadership, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Energy. Every year, The SportsOneSource Group honors 40 individuals under the

age of 40 who embody these characteristics and who come highly recommended by their peers, mentors and co-workers and who are making a difference in their workplaces and in the industry.

Because their commitment and passion inspires us, it was a pleasure for The SportsOneSource Group to honor them at last weekend's event and awards ceremony.

Congratulations to this year's honorees into this truly special active lifestyle industry fraternity. ■













■ SPORTSONESOURCE

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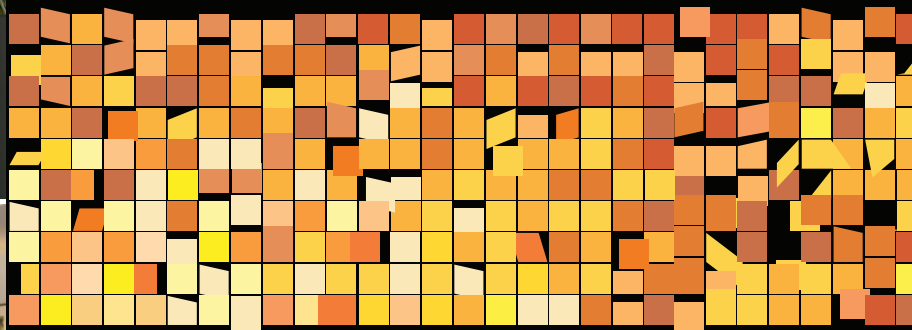
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# SPORTS BRAS EVOLVE WITH MARKET TO MEET WOMEN'S NEEDS

As the market for functional, stylish sports bras grows, so does the number of offerings.

By Berne Broudy

In 1978, Hinda Miller and Lisa Lindahl invented the “jock bra,” sewing together two jockstraps as cups. They refined their design and materials, and eventually turned their jockbra into the first commercially available sports-specific bra - the Jogbra. And for the first time, bras became sports equipment, not just lingerie.

Now strongly established in sporting goods, sports bra manufacturers see an opportunity to shave marketshare from Werner, Warners and Maidenform with bras that bridge the gap between lifestyle and sport.

“Women wear athletic wear as clothing,” said Britt Gelineau, product guru at Lululemon. “We are starting to wear bras as clothing too, and that trend is on the up. As women, we’re constantly on the go, and we pack life with us. Our apparel needs to follow in order to serve us. What was practical 20 years ago is not practical today.”

In fact, sports bras have become so much the norm at the Lululemon offices that the company’s 800 female employees jokingly instituted “Real Bra Fridays,” when women wear traditional lingerie to work.

Manufacturers like Victoria’s Secret are aware of the market opportunity - they’re keeping their lacy bra customers from exploring other brands by offering sexy sports bras. Many have plunging v-necks - not practical for a C- or D-cup runner who needs support, but good looking with enough structure for pilates or yoga. By stepping into the sports bra market, lingerie brands like Victoria’s Secret are pushing Brooks, Moving Comfort, Hanes and other core manufacturers to up their game and make sports bras stylish enough to wear to yoga or running without a shirt, or peeking

out from under a tank when you’re running errands.

The good looks that women want are twofold: the bra itself has to be attractively styled, and the bra needs to make the wearer look shapely, not squashed flat. Luckily, in the past five years, support has evolved dramatically. Ace bandage-like bondage is no longer standard. And even bras for well-endowed women come in prints, colors and soft fabrics that feel good against the skin.

The future - in fact the near future - holds serious innovation in bra construction. Designers have subbed silicone for wire, they’ve used bonded fabrics, seamless construction, hidden hook and eye closures, straps that adjust on the fly, and re-thought support, so compression is no longer the only option. Lululemon has a bra that heat molds to your body while you exercise, with stiff, bonded fabric around but not on the breast tissue encapsulating and supporting.

According to Gelineau, the company will “disrupt the world of sports bras,” with forthcoming innovations from its team of sports scientists, industrial designers, chemists, and physicists. We’re excited to see what they come up with. Most of the bra designers we talked with were searching for better hooks, less thread and baby steps to evolve their bra construction - evolutions, not revolutions.

Bras are big business. According to Michelle Ave, Brooks director of merchandising focused on Moving Comfort, “Bras are the number one growing sport category for apparel - they’re relevant to every woman, doing every activity, every day.” Brooks reports that its sport bras are





Moving Comfort  
UpLift Crossback  
(top) and  
UpRise Crossback  
(bottom)



Photo courtesy New Balance



"...when a woman finds a bra that works, she will stick with it indefinitely. Bras have more loyalty than footwear."

- New Balance's Brand Manager for Sports Bras, Audrey Kirkland

consistently in the Top 10 best selling styles in specialty running stores, with its Fiona routinely headlining the list. "The bra category doesn't have any seasonality," said Ave. "It's consistent, and the second biggest revenue-driving category after footwear. Once it's set up, it tracks season after season."

According to retail point-of-sale data compiled by SSI Data, the sports bra market increased nearly 20 percent in fiscal 2014, driven primarily by the national accounts segment. Total sports bra sales were projected to just under \$205 million in fiscal 2014, excluding vertical operation such as Lululemon, Title 9 and Athleta. Sales were flattish in the specialty channels, due in large part to the flat business in the run specialty channel. Sales were up in the high-teens in the fiscal first quarter ended May 2, 2015, again driven by strength in the national accounts segment - and the Internet more specifically.

"The sports bra sales slow down in the running specialty channel comes as no surprise based on the trends in the channel over the last year," explained James Hartford, CEO and chief market analyst at The SportsOneSource Group, which manages the SSI Data platform. "With females generating more than 65 percent of running specialty sales in recent years, the shifts in their buying trends are going to have a considerable impact on all women's product. As she heads to family footwear or mid-tier department stores for her running shoes, she is more likely to be exposed to additional apparel options."

And it has room to grow. But perennial challenges linger, like getting women into the right bra. Best fit isn't just cup size and bandwidth - though many women buy bras with too big a band and undersized cups. Correct bra sizing is also determined by how a woman's breasts attach to her body, and on the nature of her breast tissue.

For female shoppers, buying a bra in male-dominated shops can be uncomfortable, and historically women have been hesitant to ask for help. Most specialty retailers now have a bigger and better bra wall, and manufacturers like New Balance are working closely with shops to educate buyers and floor staff on proper selection, merchandising, and even comfortable and welcoming changing rooms.

New Balance's Brand Manager for Sports Bras, Audrey Kirkland, asserts that a shop doesn't have to have female employees to sell bras. "It's something anybody can do," said Kirkland. "When you open the conversation with your customer and she identifies you as an expert in the space and someone who can help her navigate your store's selection, the gender of the salesperson doesn't matter."

Manufacturers are getting better at training. Retail employees are getting better at helping. Behind the scenes, New Balance is reclassifying the bra wearing experience to help women hone in on what's best for them. The company's new categories are no longer low, medium and high impact but *secure* - for smaller cup sizes and no or low impact, *stabilize* - for shaping with adjustability, and *control* - and fully supportive, fully adjustable in a range of sizes. Jockey has taken a different approach to help a woman find the right bra online. Buy its DIY bra fit kit for \$20, and when you order a bra, Jockey refunds the price of the kit.

It's worth the investment for manufacturers and retailers to help women find a bra they love. "Apparel is not traditionally a loyalty item," said Kirkland. "But when a woman finds a bra that works, she will stick with it indefinitely. Bras have more loyalty than footwear."

No wonder. "The right bra can change your life," according to Ave. "It influences how you feel and how you move every day regardless of what activity you're engaged in."

It's true, whether you're 16 or 60. That's why Lululemon created a sub brand, "ivivva," that caters specifically to pre-teen and teenage girls. Like Lululemon, ivivva sells online and in brick and mortar ivivva stores, offering complimentary dance, yoga and athletic classes, from hip-hop to Hatha or Highland, helping girls explore their athletic side and build community. Girls are also invited to submit design ideas online or via design rallies/parties where they can try new apparel and give feedback.

"In the end, no woman should have to compromise what she desires in her bra," Kirkland said. "When we achieve that, we've succeeded." ■





Photo courtesy Nike

# Talking Sports Medicine

SGB spoke at length with two orthopedic surgeons and a head athletic trainer for a NCAA Division I national-championship winning men's basketball team to get a unique perspective on the sports medicine category. These experts shared insights about the injuries currently most impacting athletes, about how sports medicine products are addressing the needs of players on and off the field, and what the future of the sports medicine retail market holds.

By Fernando J. Delgado

The sports medicine category continues to present a lucrative opportunity for manufacturers to meet the needs of athletes at retail. According to point-of-sale data compiled by SportsOneSource's SSI Data, Supports were up 17.5 percent in units and up 25.6 percent in dollars for the 2014 calendar year. Team Sports Compression Sleeves remained a hot subcategory, up an impressive 32.7 percent in units and 46.2 percent in dollars for the 2014 calendar year. Together they tallied more than \$113 million in 2014. Showing no sign of slowing, Team Compression Sleeves are up 30 percent in units and 32.9 percent in dollars year-to-date as of April 16. We reached out to our experts to help tie these numbers to real life scenarios.



Dr. David Chao

*Dr. David Chao, an orthopedic surgeon based in San Diego, CA, attended Harvard University and received his medical degree from the Northwestern University School of Medicine. A board-certified Orthopaedic Surgeon with a Subspecialty Certification in Sports Medicine, Dr. Chao has maintained an active San Diego practice since 1995. He is a member of the international*



ACL Study Group, the NFL Physicians Society, American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and is an Assistant Clinical Instructor at UCSD. Chao performs over 500 surgeries a year on patients of all ages and competition levels, including high school and college athletes, professional athletes and recreational athletes. He also served as a team physician for the NFL's San Diego Chargers and contributes a regular column, "Monday Morning MD," to the National Football Post website.

**What are the most common injuries you see athletes dealing with?** The injuries I see most commonly are very sport-specific. As an orthopedist, I see more traumatic injuries than overuse injuries, but one trend I'm seeing with young athletes is that there are more and more overuse injuries because there are more and more season-round sports. In the past, a young serious athlete usually played more than one sport during an academic year across different seasons – playing football or soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and baseball in the spring, for example. However, the modern athlete is much more specialized, and an athlete who played multiple sports in the past is now playing one sport year-round. There's less cross-training going on, and less changing of sports, and part of it is based on the competitive nature of high school sports. It's less and less common to have an athlete move between different sports. So I think that's one of the issues causing the increases of overuse injuries."

In football, as part of my Monday Morning MD column, you'll read that we're seeing more and more lower extremity foot and ankle injuries in athletes. My theory – and it's just a theory – is that you can train, and you can get bigger, stronger and faster, like all athletes are doing, but you can't make your foot any bigger or stronger, so to speak. It's like planting a bigger tree in the same size pot – eventually it doesn't hold. And as a result, I'm seeing the trend of more and more foot and ankle injuries.

Sports medicine used to be mostly knee and shoulder injuries, with the occasional elbow, as the most common injuries. Now I think foot and ankle is right up there, be it high ankle sprains or Jones fractures. Ten years ago, a lot of doctors weren't clear – unless you were a specialist in sports – about what the difference between a high and low ankle sprain are. Now every journalist and every fantasy player knows the difference.

**What changes have you noticed in sports medicine products over the past few years in regards to overuse injuries, and what does the future hold?** I think there's a big shift coming in the sporting goods business for multiple reasons. Number one, people continue to be more and more active and more and more knowledgeable about what's going on. So the old school low-tech braces and sleeves that were out there don't cut it anymore. And then you add to that – on the medical side of the industry because of insurance changes – fewer and fewer



place are being covered from the medical perspective. The specialty sleeves and braces are still being covered, but the common sleeves and braces have to be purchased by consumers, whether it's because of deductibles or because insurance companies aren't covering it. So as a result, there's a movement – and I think it's a good movement – of more and more of the high-end medical companies and brace companies moving into the retail space. And I think that will provide a lot more access to all athletes, whether they are an everyday athlete, a weekend warrior or high school athlete, to some of the higher-end products.

A company like DonJoy or Breg used to always sell through a doctor. Now, more companies are focusing on selling directly to the consumer, whether it's at brick-and-mortar sporting goods stores or at online retail. DonJoy has started a medical sporting goods division, so to speak, as opposed to medical braces being their core business. All the time now, when someone wants a specialty brace, I may say, 'Look, just go to [betterbraces.com](http://betterbraces.com) and you can get what you want there.' And the brace is on their doorstep overnight. As opposed to having to get a prescription and waiting three weeks for an insurance company to approve it.

**Are there any particular braces or sleeves that you recommend that you've experienced success with for your patients?** Here's where the consumer really needs to have their antenna up. For anyone to say a certain brace cures all elbow problems or cures all knee problems, or prevents all knee injuries, is absolutely ridiculous. It depends on what injury you have and what you're really treating. A lot of times I'll have patients come in and say, 'Well, I've got patellar tendonitis, and yeah I've tried a brace, but it doesn't work.' Well, what kind of brace is it? And where is your patellar tendonitis? Is it classic inferior pole tendonitis, or is it in the distal pole? There are different techniques to treat them and different bracing concepts. Some things work better for certain people. I think you need to customize a little bit. And I think that's what's happening more in the sporting goods industry. You're seeing more customized products as opposed to more limited options. It used to be that you'd go to the store



and here's one knee sleeve and here's one elbow sleeve mostly. Now there are different types of products out there, and that's not bad. The key is to figure out which product is right for you before you get it, and how to educate the consumer.

**A common theme in the sports medicine category, as well as protective gear in general, is finding the balance between lightweight and comfort while maximizing support and protection. Reducing weight and bulk can sometimes mean sacrificing protection. Are brands moving too far toward creating a product that feels light and looks good to the point safety is compromised?** There are theories out there. [NFL analyst for ESPN and former NFL executive] Bill Polian and I were talking about increased foot and ankle injuries, and I agree with what he said, which is that some of the athletes, including the linemen, are all wearing lightweight wide receiver shoes. They want to feel lighter. It's only a couple ounce difference, but the shoes don't necessarily give as much support. And that might have something to do with increased foot and ankle injuries as well. If you look at some of the cleats today compared to what they were a decade or two ago, it's completely different. Cleats are now much more lightweight and low profile. And with it being so lightweight, there's less rigid support.

**Are there any technologies or innovations that you've seen, or that are in development, that will impact the sports medicine category?** People have heard already about PRP and stem cells. But I'll give you one innovation that most people haven't heard of that is an emerging technology that will have some legs. Blood flow restriction training is something new and on the horizon. It's actually been in Japan for a long time but it's catching hold – some NFL teams are using it, some Olympic sports are starting to use it. It's what I'll call a poor man's altitude training. Blood flow restriction training consists of using tourniquets and devices to restrict flow. Think of it this way...a lot of athletes go to high altitudes as a way of using decreased oxygen to build up red blood cells in their body. If you're training with a tourniquet at sea level, you're restricting red blood cells, which in turn might induce your body to get used to an oxygen-deprived state. It's not exactly altitude training, but that's an easy concept for people to see. It's very safe, and there are all kinds of blood flow restriction training that are emerging, but the big one that now has a certification protocol for trainers and users and a fairly fancy technology that pairs with your smart phone, is Kaatsu. The blood flow restriction area in general is emerging, but Kaatsu is the leader. If you look online, you'll see that the Houston Texans have incorporated blood flow restriction training. The U.S. ski team, the U.S. swim team, and the military have all done some stuff with it."

**We're seeing more and more sporting goods mergers, with the recent merger between Shock Doctor and McDavid being a prime example. In an increasingly competitive marketplace, can smaller manufacturers survive?** The way people buy things is different now. Big box retail isn't always the king anymore. There are a lot more direct-to-consumer options. But I think there's an advantage to integrating product lines. That's why the bigger ones are buying up the smaller niche



companies. They have more vertical integration and perhaps easier entry into stores. But the key here is still your product. If you have a good product, it will still work. So I still think there's room for smaller companies and for innovation. But I think there is certainly a trend toward a bigger kind of company and more kinds of products under one roof, as opposed to individual lines. And that's what a lot of the sports med companies have done."

*Jose Fonseca, MS, ATC, LAT, is in his 10th year as men's basketball athletic trainer at Duke University. Fonseca arrived at Duke after spending two seasons in a similar role at University of Nebraska, where he assisted with the Cornhuskers' nationally ranked football program. Originally from El Salvador, Fonseca earned a bachelor's degree in exercise and sports science with an emphasis in athletic training at The Pennsylvania State University, also earning his master's degree there in kinesiology. The Duke men's basketball team recently won its 5th NCAA Division I National Championship this past April.*



**As someone who works with high-level Division I basketball players who play the sport almost year-round, can you share some of the typical injuries that you deal with throughout the course of the season, as well as some injuries the average basketball fan might not be aware of?** We definitely deal with a lot of ankle sprains. That's probably the number-one thing we deal with just because of the nature of the sport, with guys jumping and landing – especially landing on someone else's feet. The next thing we deal with are overuse injuries. Jumper's knee, which is patellar tendonitis, is something else we deal with on a daily basis, as well as a little bit of Achilles tendonitis, another overuse injury. From there, we see a variety of muscle strains and low back pain. That, as well as finger sprains are the most common things we see here at high-level basketball.

**What kind of sports medicine products do you use on a daily basis that you have found to be effective in helping players recover or perform at their best when dealing with a nagging injury?** A lot of sports medicine products a person can buy at a sporting goods store or even online. For an ankle sprain, we prefer to tape our guys. I feel that tape is more supportive. I can make it tighter, I can make it looser, I can make it sturdier, and it's lightweight. But for a common person who might not have the availability of an outside trainer on hand 24 hours a day, I would suggest an ASO ankle brace made by Medical Specialties Inc. out of Charlotte, NC. They make a terrific lace-up ankle brace, in many different styles. I definitely believe that's the best ankle brace on the market.

For other things, say for the tendinitis issues I mentioned, a good flexibility program really helps our guys. Checking out any kind of muscle imbalances



they may have, which obviously a layperson can't do. For tendonitis injuries and other chronic injuries, we use a sports rub, something that really helps our players by getting that affected area warm and going. We use something called Flex-Power, which is a heat balm or cream that you can put on. It doesn't have that crazy eucalyptus smell like the old Ben-Gays or Flexalls. It's actually a rather pleasant smelling cream, and it works by warming up as you get moving. It's a nice addition for those chronic injuries we see out there. These athletes are starting to play that one sport year-round. In the past, when you and I grew up, we were playing three different sports. We would play football or soccer in the fall, basketball in the winter, and then baseball or whatever else in the spring. And when you play all those different sports, you use different sets of muscles. There are different actions, there are different types of running, there are different types of forces that your body absorbs over the course of the year. You can develop those chronic injuries, especially if you're not moving correctly.

**More and more basketball players are wearing compression sleeves in games. There doesn't seem to be much scientific data that supports the physiological benefits, but on the other hand, many players seem to feel comfortable wearing them, and oftentimes report increased confidence as a result of using them. Some say it's just a style factor. What**

**do you feel about sleeves and what they can provide a player?** Our program at Duke has never been about flashy looks, so none of our guys wear headbands or other things just to look cool. Anything our guys are wearing is for a purpose. [Duke point guard] Tyus Jones wears an arm sleeve with a padded elbow. Many basketball players can injure their elbow when they take a hard fall onto the court. There's a bursa on your elbow called the olecranon bursa, and when you hit it really hard, it blows up and becomes really painful and sensitive. So our guys are wearing sleeves to protect that portion of the elbow. So when he does dive on the floor – which our guys do – he's not going to bang it and have it become sensitive. So it's preventative. Same thing for our knee sleeves. Some guys experience patellar tendonitis. The tendon is very close to the surface, and when you hit it on something, you can feel a sharp shooting pain that no one likes. Our guys wear those kneepads to, (a.) cover the tendon to make sure they don't hit their knee on another player setting a screen or when they dive on the floor, and (b.) it also provides a little bit of warmth on the knee area. Clinically, those compression sleeves may not really be proven to do anything, but when you add the padding, they can really help in protecting the areas that are sore or have been sore in the past. The players use the sleeves so they don't have to re-live that injury."

**Are there any other trends that you've seen in what athletes are gravitating toward for their sports medicine products?** All these sports medicine companies out there – or any kind of company – are looking to make everything lighter, to make it look like you're not wearing anything, and for most people, I think that's ok. But when you make something lighter, I think it also can reduce the durability and the protection of those products. So you're not as protected as possible, and therefore it could lead to an injury. Even though some of these products can't com-

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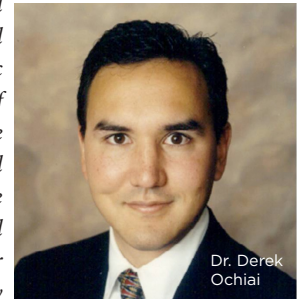
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pletely prevent an injury from occurring, sometimes you can prevent the injury from being as severe as it otherwise would have been without any protection. I'm always leery about anything being lighter and thinner. But if someone's completely healthy, as long as they feel good and want to wear it, and it's not hindering them, then that's fine. But when they get hurt, then I step in. And they're going to wear what I want them to wear, where it's going to be bulkier and offer more protection. It's going to actually do something to protect them and keep them on the floor."

*Dr. Derek Ochiai is a graduate of Cornell University and Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and is fellowship trained in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgeons and specializes in injuries to the upper and lower extremities including the hip, knee and shoulder arthroscopy. Dr. Ochiai has extensive experience in the arthroscopic treatment of hip injuries and pathology. He is a member of the International Society for Hip Arthroscopy, AANA, American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine and the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons.*



Dr. Derek Ochiai

**Based on what you're seeing in your practice, and also from what you're hearing in the medical community, what kind of injuries are on the rise among serious athletes such as travel, high school and college players?** First of all, we obviously still see the common injuries such as ankle sprains and overuse injuries. But in terms of more serious injuries, ACL tears are still common and there are still thousands of ACL reconstructions done each year. It's highly common for people playing soccer to twist their knee, hear a pop, feel that their knee is unstable, and then it turns out that their ACL is torn. In baseball pitchers, we have the epidemic of ulnar collateral ligament injuries. Surgeries for pitchers who have overworked the ligament on the inside of their elbow and have it tear and need it reconstructed are really common. Less likely in the younger age ranges, but more so in the weekend warriors, are rotator cuff tears, which are common in the 40 and 50-year-old age range. Shoulder dislocations are not uncommon. Whether you're sliding into second base or you're reaching out to catch a football pass, the shoulder goes out of socket, tearing up the shoulder labrum and the ligaments that stabilize the shoulder. That's very common.

**Have you seen an increase in injury rates in any particular sports that might be surprising?** With the ubiquity of people playing soccer – it's just a hugely popular sport – you get a lot of soccer injuries. Especially relative to a lot of other sports, with the sheer number of children and adults playing soccer, of course you're going to get a large number of injuries from that. Thinking of injuries that are on the rise that might be surprising, overuse injuries from fitness fads are more noticeable now than in the past. With Cross-Fit and the like, people are maybe taking a body that wasn't in shape enough to be pushed to the level they were trying to push themselves, so they'll get overuse tendonitis issues from taking a workout program that was probably not designed for them and trying to immediately implement it. We definitely see that more in the January-February-March period, when people are still trying to stick to their New Year's resolutions. They're doing more at the gym than they probably did in the last year combined. Springtime is cycling season. Around that time we'll see a rash of clavicle fractures. Cyclists flipping over their handlebars and landing on their shoulders will lead to those fractures. Football injuries always happen. Basketball injuries are pretty much the same. We have ACL prevention programs that are trying to decrease ACL injuries, especially in female basketball players and female soccer players. The programs do help, but they don't prevent everybody from getting an ACL tear.



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**Are there any specific products that you recommend for your patients to treat certain injuries?** In general the products that have either lace-up or Velcro construction for ankles are going to be more stable than anything that has the same kind of stretchy material throughout. A lot of times, patients coming in to my office need ankle stabilization. In those cases, I'll give them an ankle strap that we carry. But those are not all that different than what you can get at Dick's Sporting Goods. They don't have any technology that's night and day different. At a retail store, they will have more sizes that can fit athletes better. But if they can get an over-the-counter ankle lace-up, that's probably going to do pretty well for them. In terms of ankle braces, nowadays you can't get an over-the-counter ACL stabilizing brace. You have to get that made for you and it will cost at least several hundred dollars. They're not going to stock that at a sporting goods store."

**You alluded to the biomedical effectiveness of kinesiology tapes and similar products being unclear. Is there something to the idea that sleeves are improving an athlete's performance**

**What are your observations regarding the sports medicine products available to athletes at retail? Are there any new products you've noticed being used more? How are athletes responding to the technologies and materials in the sports med items they use?** I've seen athletes using a lot of kinesiology tape. I'm seeing that a lot more, even though it's highly debatable how effective they are. I think the effectiveness is based on whether they actually feel better with the tape on. If they feel better with the tape on, they should keep using it. But the research isn't that compelling at this point. With knee braces and ankle braces, sports med manufacturers are taking some of the technology that's been used more for traditional custom bracing concepts and have started applying it more to off-the-shelf and over-the-counter products. Your knee braces and kneecap wear-and-tear type products – those are getting better. They're slowly evolving. Is there any product that makes you say, 'Oh my gosh, I've got to use this thing?' Not that I've seen. But something that piques my interest – and this is not something that you can get at Dick's Sporting Goods – is these elbow sleeves for pitchers that can measure all these different angles that you're pitching at and start using that to train and try to change your pitching style perhaps in order to decrease abnormal stress around your elbow with the goal of decreasing your chances of suffering ulnar collateral ligament injuries. That's pretty exciting. You can think of it as Fitbit for the elbow. Speaking of which, I think those kinds of leisure and fitness wearable technology devices and smart technology apps for your iPhone are great. Those are a way of getting people more engaged in becoming more fit and healthy overall. You can overdo it and injure yourself, but in general, the fitness and cardiovascular benefits of monitored exercise far outweigh the risks of injury."

**formance if they feel confident and comfortable wearing them, even if there isn't clear scientific data that shows what they may or may not do?** I absolutely agree with that. Anybody that tells Kobe Bryant not to wear an arm sleeve because it's not going to be helpful is probably not going to be working for the Lakers that much longer. If athletes feel better with something on, then they should wear it. Is it a placebo effect? Is it that they might be gaining a little bit better feel for their internal joint mechanics, and they also have an external compression sleeve on that's giving a little bit more bio-feedback? Is it helping with a little bit of swelling? I guess it really doesn't matter. If you can afford it and it makes you feel better, then sleeves are fine to use. But as an orthopedic surgeon, I don't think a sleeve is doing what they say it does, in terms of why it works. I think if it helps an athlete, whether it's because of a placebo or because of some unknown mechanism that's making them do something different with a knee sleeve or elbow sleeve, or whatever it is, then it's fine for them to use it.

**What advice do you have for athletes dealing with injuries – those that do not require surgery - when it comes time for them to make a purchase for a sports medicine product? What are some important factors they should be considering when choosing from so many options?** If they're not getting better, and they're getting worse over the next week following the injury, then that's not normal, and they should see an orthopedic surgeon or at least a primary care doctor to have it checked out just to make sure, because sometimes you may think it's an ankle sprain, but it's actually a stress fracture. If over the next week to 10 days you're actually getting worse, or not getting significantly better, then it really doesn't matter what brace you're using. You should get to someone who has the competence to make sure that it's something that's relatively benign. Any kind of ankle brace or knee brace – those are all helpful, but not curative. If you have an ankle sprain, it doesn't cure the sprain if you put on an ankle brace. It can limit your motion, but you can still sprain your ankle more in an ankle brace. Having a brace or strap on doesn't mean you're bionic or completely protected from injuries. If you have an ankle strap on but you're still limping around, you shouldn't be playing basketball until you stop limping. You can still injure yourself, even when you use the newer braces that look much more fancy than your mom or dad's brace they might have worn. ■



A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a teal Nike t-shirt and black climbing gloves, is climbing a thick rope. He is smiling and looking up. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with dry grass and trees.

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## INDUSTRY CALENDAR

### JUNE

- 22-26 Fleet Feet Franchise Conference  
Pittsburgh, PA
- 23-24 MRA June Cincinnati Market  
Cincinnati, OH
- 23-25 EORA Summer Early Show  
Manchester, NH
- 23-25 EORA Summer Early Show  
Lakeland, FL
- 25-27 Sports, Inc. Athletics Show  
San Antonio, TX
- 26-28 NRFtech 2015  
Half Moon Bay, CA
- 28-29 NRF Retail Advocates Summit  
Washington, DC
- 29-July 1 NBS Summer Athletic Market  
San Antonio, TX
- 29-July 1 The Running & Fitness Event For Women  
Chicago, IL

### JULY

- 8-9 Agenda Long Beach  
Long Beach, CA
- 10-12 ADA Spring Show  
Minneapolis, MN
- 14-17 ASA-ICAST International Sport Fishing Expo  
Orlando, FL
- 15-18 European Outdoor Trade Fair  
Friedrichshafen, Germany
- 15-16 EORA Summer Market  
Ellicott City, MD
- 15-16 EORA Summer Market  
Manchester, NH
- 19-21 Project New York  
New York, NY
- 20-21 Agenda New York  
New York, NY

### AUGUST

- 4-6 FFANY  
New York, NY
- 5-7 BCA International Billiard & Home Recreation Expo  
Las Vegas, NV
- 5-8 Outdoor Retailer Summer Market  
Salt Lake City, UT
- 13-15 Sports, Inc. Outdoor Show  
San Antonio, TX
- 16-18 EORA Greenville Summer Market  
Greenville, SC
- 17-19 MAGIC Show  
Las Vegas, NV
- 17-19 Agenda Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, NV
- 20-23 NBS Fall Semi-Annual Market  
Ft. Worth, TX
- 24-26 EORA Killington Primary Expo Show  
Killington, VT
- 26-29 Eurobike  
Friedrichshafen, Germany

### SEPTEMBER

- 1-3 WDI Worldwide Fall Show  
Reno, NV
- 8-10 SFIA Industry Leaders Summit  
New Orleans, LA
- 10-12 Imprinted Sportswear Show  
Orlando, FL
- 10-12 Surf Expo  
Orlando, FL
- 16-18 Interbike International Trade Expo  
Las Vegas, NV

### OCTOBER

- 5-7 OIA Rendezvous  
Seattle, WA
- 5-7 Shop.org Digital Summit 2015  
Philadelphia, PA
- 8-9 The Retailing Summit  
Dallas, TX
- 15-17 Imprinted Sportswear Show  
Ft. Worth, TX
- 27-30 NASGW Annual Meeting & Expo  
Reno, NV
- 29-31 ADA Fall Buying Show  
Baltimore, MD

## TRADE ASSOCIATIONS BUYING GROUPS

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Melbourne, FL 32935  
t 321.254.0091  
athleticdealersofamerica.com

National Shooting Sports Foundation  
Flintlock Ridge Office Center  
11 Mile Hill Road  
Newtown, CT 06470  
t 203.426.1320  
nssf.org

National Sporting Goods Association  
1601 Feehanville Drive I Suite 300  
Mount Prospect, IL 60056  
t 847.296.6742  
nsga.org

Nation's Best Sports  
4216 Hahn Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76117  
t 817.788.0034  
nbs.com

Outdoor Industry Association  
4909 Pearl East Circle I Suite 300  
Boulder, CO 80301  
t 303.444.3353  
outdoorindustry.org

Sports & Fitness Industry Association  
8505 Fenton Street I Suite 211  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
t 301.495.6321  
sfia.org

Snow Sports Industries America  
8377-B Greensboro Drive  
McLean, VA 22102  
t 703.556.9020  
snowsports.org

Snowsports Merchandising Corp.  
235 Cadwell Drive  
Springfield, MA 01104  
t 413.739.7331  
snowsportsmerchandising.com

Sports, Inc.  
333 2nd Avenue North  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
t 406.538.3496  
sportsinc.com

Sports Specialists Ltd.  
590 Fishers Station Drive I Suite 110  
Victor, NY 14564  
t 585.742.1010  
sportsspecialistsltd.com

Tennis Industry Association  
1 Corpus Christi Place I Suite 117  
Hilton Head Island, SC 29928  
t 843.686.3036  
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