

SGB

ISSUE 1328
JULY 15, 2013

WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY

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SportsOneSource Publications

Print Magazine: SGB, SGB Performance
Digital Magazines: SGB Weekly, TEAM Business Digital
Newsletters: The B.O.S.S. Report
Sports Executive Weekly
News Updates: SGB, Footwear Business, Outdoor
Business, Sportsman's Business, TEAM Business

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Addaday Ultra Roller
Photo courtesy Addaday

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ON THE COVER: Barefooters Classic is made from CorksILite, an environmentally friendly material that combines the best physical properties of cork and silicone to walk naturally, with protection and comfort. Photo courtesy Barefooters.



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

SOG Specialty Knives and Tools promoted **Nando Zucchi** to VP of sales and marketing, and **Rabi Gupta** to CFO. **Scott Forristall**, formerly VP of sales and business director for Johnson Outdoors, joined the company as director of sales.

Skins Compression Clothing hired **Conor Fournier** as an independent rep to focus on forming and expanding partnerships in Northern California.

Boa Technology, maker of the Boa Closure System, hired **Alois Badegruber** to head up its European-based sales, marketing and service efforts. Badegruber most recently worked for Puma as head of footwear merchandising EMEA.

FAM Brands, the parent of **Marika**, appointed **John Spotts** as EVP OF business development and licensing. Spotts was formerly SVP international and licensing at Eddie Bauer.

Danish brand **Ecco** announced the extension of its endorsement agreement with Tour legend **Fred Couples**.

Douglas Dayton, who led the transformation of the family's Dayton Hudson department store business into the discount giant **Target**, passed away at the age of 88.

FOOT LOCKER COMPLETES RUNNERS POINT GROUP ACQUISITION

Foot Locker, Inc. completed its previously announced acquisition of Runners Point Group, the specialty athletic store and online retailer based in Recklinghausen, Germany.

Runners Point Group operates more than 200 athletic retail stores, principally in Germany under the Runners Point and Sidestep banners, as well as an online business.

Runners Point Group had sales in 2012 of €197 million (\$254 million). In Europe, Foot Locker, Inc. already operates more than 600 Foot Locker stores and had revenue of more than \$1 billion in 2012.

SAUCONY DELIVERS DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH IN Q2

Saucony's sales grew double-digits in its second quarter ended June 15, according to a report from its newer parent, Wolverine Worldwide, Inc.

The gains were helped by strength in the U.S. market, driven by introductions including the "very successful" Kinvara 4. Don Grimes, Wolverine's SVP and CFO, said on a conference call with analysts. Grimes noted that most recent market stats show Saucony is the fastest growing footwear brand in the run specialty channel.

The addition of Saucony lifted revenues in Wolverine's Performance Group ahead 33.8 percent to \$199.7 million. The group also includes Merrell, Chaco, Patagonia Footwear and Cushe.

Saucony, along with Sperry Top-Sider, Stride Rite and Keds, was acquired in October 2012. On a pro-forma basis, assuming those brands were acquired on January 1, 2012, sales in the Performance Group were down 4.8 percent due to low double-digit declines at Merrell.

Blake Krueger, Wolverine's CEO and president, noted that Merrell had been expected to face a challenging second quarter, with the high single-digit revenue increase in the first quarter driven by the launch of the M-Connect collection, the extension of its Merrell Barefoot concept. He added that M-connect "continues to be a bright spot for the brand and is certainly exceeding our expectations, achieving high double-digit growth in the second quarter."

Also showing strong revenues in the quarter was Merrell's core outdoor programs such as the MOAB Series.

But Merrell's overall sales were hurt by a shift in European shipments, some contraction in the outdoor footwear segment, "a virtually non-existent Spring" across its markets, and lower sales in the discount channel. Its active lifestyle segment also continues to show weakness. Merrell's brand development team has been restructured, including hiring a new head of product creation. Merrell's current order backlog position is up high single-digits.

"We remain very bullish on Merrell and still plan to deliver a low single-digit revenue increase for the full year as well as more robust growth in 2014," said Krueger. "Merrell is a double-digit growth brand and the steps we are taking now will help the brand achieve this growth level within the next couple of seasons."



Companywide, Wolverine's second quarter earnings fell 12.7 percent due to higher expenses largely tied to the acquisitions. But margins widened sharply and better-than-expected earnings from the recently acquired brands helped adjusted earnings come in well above guidance.

Based on the strong performance, the company raised its adjusted per-share earnings view for the year, now expecting \$2.60 to \$2.75 from its prior view of \$2.50 to \$2.65.

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NEW BALANCE LAUNCHES RUNNOVATION GLOBAL BRAND CAMPAIGN

New Balance unveiled a new brand campaign that documents real people redefining the current state and future of running. The campaign introduces a new word, "Runnovation" which reflects New Balance's long-standing commitment to innovation and evolution around the sport of running.

New Balance defines "Runnovation" as a noun, "The act of running evolving from Boston to the Canary Islands, from the science lab to the city streets. Running is getting more social, interesting and more unpredictable."

The campaign ties back to the "Let's Make Excellent Happen" campaign that launched in 2011 but is an update that highlights new interpretations within running.

"This campaign is built on the strong foundation that we as a brand have in driving and supporting innovation in the sport of running" said Hilary Keates, New Balance director of global marketing and brand management. "Running is constantly evolving and 'Runnovation' seeks to document these moments and inspire people to think about the sport in exciting new ways."

The campaign - which includes print and digital advertising, video, online interactive content, in-store and event consumer experiences - launched in the U.S. July 9 with a compilation print ad in the August issue of Runner's World. The campaign highlights Team New Balance athletes as well as real everyday people pushing their limits of performance in the pursuit of achieving excellence.

The campaign will focus on Runnovation through three different storylines:

1. How running is evolving into a more social and participatory sport through a focus on a grassroots-training group called November Project.
2. How athletes today are challenging the limits of the sport through Team New Balance Athlete Anton Krupicka, two-time winner of the Leadville 100 Race.
3. Looking at the latest in innovative technologies that continue to revolutionize running from a product and design standpoint through the Innovation Studio at New Balance's Lawrence, MA, office.

The campaign coincides with Fall 2013 footwear and apparel launches including the Tri-Viz collection, which helps athletes stand out during low light conditions, and the key update to the 880v3, a neutral cushioning shoe offered exclusively at specialty running shops.

The campaign, developed by Arnold Worldwide of Boston, includes print and digital advertisements in *Men's Health*, *Women's Health*, *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, *Running Times*, *Women's Running*, *Competitor* and *New England Runner* magazines. Branded videos will launch on newbalance.com and the New Balance YouTube channel July 15 featuring interactive overlays that explain to viewers what product is being shown with a direct tie back to the brand's online retail store.

At retail, media content in store windows will invite consumers to join in the 'Runnovation' movement by listing a variety of upcoming local races and fun runs. "Runnovation" will further come to life at the New Balance Falmouth Road Race, Disney Wine and Dine Half Marathon and other sponsored events.

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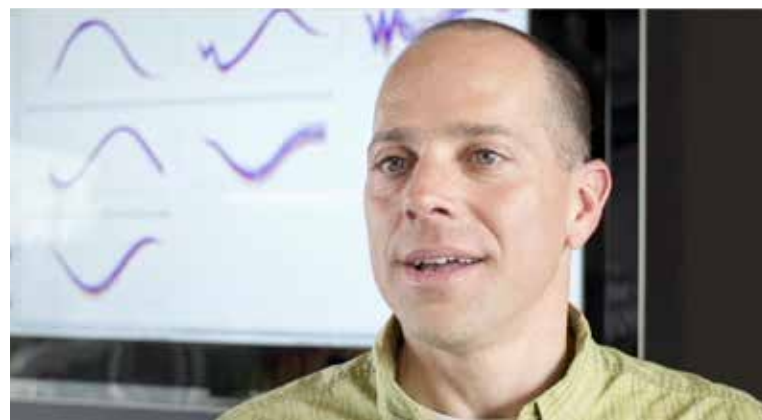
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MERRELL PARTNERS WITH RUNNING TECHNIQUE EXPERT JAY DICHARRY



Jay Dicharry leads the REP Biomechanics Lab at Rebound Physical Therapy in Bend, OR

Merrell has formed a partnership with Jay Dicharry, physical therapist at Rebound Physical Therapy in Bend, OR, and a leading expert in biomechanical analysis.

Dicharry's international reputation is built on one-to-one work with athletes to correct imbalances before they affect performance. His ongoing research focuses on footwear and the causative factors driving overuse injury in athletes, which enables him to develop innovative ways to proactively treat athletes. Over the past year, Dicharry has worked closely with Merrell to explore running and on-trail movement to isolate ways to reduce stress on the body while increasing power and effectiveness.

"Shoes don't run, runner's run," said Dicharry. "Like a spring, a shoe should allow your foot to load and unload energy. Over the past year, I have been working closely with Merrell in my lab and with a team of athletes on the collection of trail running and hiking shoes, AllOut. Through the unique design we are able to get the foot to relax and become mobile allowing the athlete to move more efficiently. Our main goal is to make hiking and running as easy as it can be on the body."

Last year Dicharry wrote *Anatomy for Runners*, a book offering a thorough analysis of running gait assessments. Additionally he writes columns for numerous magazines, and has published over twenty professional journal articles and three book chapters.

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IMPLUS ACQUIRES SHOE CARE ASSETS FROM PENGUIN BRANDS

By Thomas J. Ryan

Implus, manufacturer of Sof Sole, acquired the shoe care, insole and shoelace assets from Penguin Brands, Inc. As a result of the deal, Nathan, the running accessories specialist, becomes a stand-alone company under its current ownership and leadership team.

Terms were not disclosed.

For Implus, this acquisition strengthens its position in the shoe care industry as a whole by broadening distribution capabilities, accelerating product innovation and better serving customers.

“The purchase of select Penguin Brands’ assets underscores our commitment to the growth of the shoe care category,” said Todd Vore, president of Implus. “With the combination of quality and innovation

that both companies are known for, the acquisition complements the strength of Implus’ footwear accessories portfolio.”

Nathan, another Penguin brand and a leader in purposefully designed hydration, visibility, and other running accessories, is not part of this sale and is now a stand-alone company. Current Penguin Brands CEO Bridgit Lombard will remain with Nathan as CEO of the independent brand.

Lombard told *SGB* that Penguin Brands wasn’t looking for a buyer for Penguin assets, but Implus came along at the right time.

“When Implus initially contacted us with their interest, we thought long and hard about it,” said Lombard. “Having loyally served our customers for nearly four decades, it was important to us to feel comfortable that this would be a win for them. After careful consideration and getting to know Seth, Todd, and the team at Implus, we were certain that Implus was the best place for the Penguin products to live on. We also saw the opportunity to focus our time and resources on accelerating growth in the Nathan brand, a business that has grown an average of 40 percent a year for 9 years and is already up 35 percent in 2013.”

Lombard added, “Taking the strengths of both companies and combining them in this way is a win for our retail customers and the consumers who shop with them.”

Jon Reichlin, Penguin Brands’ founder and current chairman of the board, has made a significant investment in Implus, and will serve as an advisor for the company for the next several years. Implus’ brand family includes Sof Sole, Yaktrax, Apará, Airplus, Sneaker Balls, Sof Comfort, Little Hotties, Perfect Fitness and ICETrekkers.



Todd Vore, president of Implus



Jon Reichlin, Penguin Brands’ founder and current chairman of the board

“We are thrilled that Penguin will live and grow with a team that will not just uphold, but enhance, the standards we have set over the years. Implus’ unparalleled distribution platform and customer service, combined with the innovation and breadth of Penguin shoe care products, will take the shoe care industry to unprecedented heights.”

- Jon Reichlin

Vore told *SGB* that Implus already knew their brands quite well. He added that Penguin has key retail distribution pieces in their portfolio that will boost Implus’ presence in the marketplace.

“As we have excelled in certain sectors of the industry, they have continued to excel in others, namely private label and FDM,” said Vore. “The acquisition helps to complete our shoe care portfolio while also expanding our expertise to more potential customers.”

Besides the FDM and private label business, Vore also sees “great potential” in the specialty market with brands such as Tectron.

From a service standpoint, Implus will be able to streamline its

product distribution to help provide more solutions for both current customers and those coming in with the acquisition. Said Vore, “Stores can expect to see more selection and a fast turnaround, which means less time spent on having to worry about the shoe care on their floor.”

Implus will be bringing on two salespeople from Penguin, Ted Roberto and Rob Noble. Added Vore, “Long-term, we plan to add further support in the future. All terms are confidential.”

The acquisition comes as Implus has been focusing on growing distribution and product innovation, as well as moving to create divisions within the company to help focus its attention on each. Footwear and FDM divisions are now based out of North Carolina’s Research Triangle Park, an Outdoor division based out of Port Orchard, WA, and a Fitness division based out of Sausalito, CA.

“With Penguin, we are first focusing on ensuring a steady transition of inventory and customer service,” said Vore.

For Nathan, the acquisition enables its employees to exclusively focus their energy, resources, and intents on the running essentials brand for the first time in nearly 10 years.



Bridgit Lombard
CEO, Penguin
Brands

“We’ve had a mantra here and that is ‘simplify & focus,’” said Lombard. “The sale does exactly that for us, in that it allows us to simplify and enhance our operations, deepen our financial resources, and focus on one goal – the growth and sustainability of the brand. With the same leadership team and infrastructure still in place, and with rich resources dedicated specifically to one brand and one mission, our innovation and growth initiatives

will accelerate at an even higher rate than before.”

The 35 percent YTD gain has been boosted by 102 percent growth internationally, and overall has benefited from successful innovations and color stories across its hydration, visibility and gear segments.

“We sweat the details to ensure our products are delivering what athletes want and what retailers need,” said Lombard.

But she also believes it has clearly benefitted by helping retailers expand across profitable accessory categories especially those with a tight focus that are making a strong statement around hydration’s benefit.

“The beauty for our accounts is that they are not only seeing sales jump but we are helping them lift the entire category – and this is incremental growth – they are not just swapping out sales from one category to another,” said Lombard.

Nathan’s “How do You Hydrate?” campaign has helped retailers engage with their customers and elevate awareness to position the category as a “performance necessity.” A focus on operational excellence has also helped support its retail partners.

Lombard also believes that hydration overall is gaining popularity, and has the opportunity to become a much larger category with increased awareness. Of the 50 million runners in the U.S., 20 million are core runners, meaning they run 100+ times per year. And events like half-marathons, and even ultra marathons, continue to grow and more people continue to enter the sport and these longer distances require better hydration options.

“When you take all that into consideration, the market is very under-penetrated in terms of hydration users, giving us a tremendous opportunity to educate and drive awareness of the importance of proper hydration, and how our brand and its purposeful products help keep athletes running stronger and longer,” said Lombard.

For Spring 2014, the focus across its hydration and visibility lines focuses on offering solutions for athletes that “surprise and delight because of their functional integrity and also through interesting form factors and colors,” according to Lombard.

In active lighting, for example, while passive reflective vests are still selling well, athletes now want to integrate active LED into their gear and do so in a fun, fashionable and functional way. Nathan’s Run Longer LED series is seeing “explosive growth” in that category. Added Lombard, “We can say the same in hydration, music carriers, and other core essential lines that we’re featuring.”

Overall, its vest category will expand next year. In hydration, the focus will be on helping runners “run longer and run stronger,” with details incorporated in its Spring 2014 lines including soft-touch, no-chafe binding as well as body mapping to allow for maximum mobility and breathability. Fit will also receive special emphasis, highlighted by an expansion of three new female-specific options that complement Nathan’s successful Intensity and VaporShape hydration vests.

Nathan is also planning “first-to-market” innovations around insulated, hi-viz flasks and bottles with its successful Fire & Ice franchise expanding within the product mix.

Long term, Nathan will continue to look for opportunities that complement its core business but still sees a lot of room to further expand existing ones.

“We’ve done a great job at redefining ‘accessories’ into ‘essentials,’” said Lombard. “We believe that continued long-term profitable growth will come from focused efforts on all fronts, products, marketing and retail support that is centered on the importance of the running ‘essentials’ category. We know who we are - we are the trusted training partner that provides the ‘essentials’ that support athletes in running longer and running stronger.” ■



FLEET FEET IS 'MAGNETIC' AT NATIONAL FRANCHISE CONFERENCE

By Thomas J. Ryan

Huntington Beach Pier
Huntington Beach, CA

Fleet Feet, Inc., the nation's leading franchisor of running specialty stores, honored the contributions and accomplishments of its franchisees and store employees during its annual National Franchise Conference, hosted in Huntington Beach, CA, June 23-28.

Franchise owners and employees from across the 105-store system and representatives of more than 70 vendors gathered for a week focused on education, networking, business planning and a trade show designed exclusively for Fleet Feet Sports franchisees.

"During this summer's conference we connected with our franchisees and operators on a different level by focusing on life balance, staff empowerment and driving long-term relationships with our customers," said Fleet Feet, Inc.'s President and CEO Jeff Phillips. "Our conference theme, 'Magnetic', represents the magnetic connection we must create and the opportunity we have to strengthen the customer's relationship with Fleet Feet Sports every time we engage them. It's what we do best, and it's the fuel around 'Magnetic' and the whole Customer Connectivity initiative."

In an interview with *SGB*, Emily Davis, co-owner of Fleet Feet Winston-Salem and the franchisee's national branding consultant, said that once Fleet Feet decided the educational content of the conference would focus on customer connectivity, 'Magnetic' became the closely-linked conference theme.

"One of the biggest messages we wanted to get out there is that when we create an experience that truly connects with the customer, we become the center of influence in their life when it pertains to living a more fit life or just being more comfortable in their life," said Davis

at the conference. "It doesn't matter if they're working on their feet all day or working out. When we create that strong in-store connection, it becomes a relationship. And it's hard to build that relationship. It takes time. And all the franchisees are already doing it, but the big message for the week has been staying true to it and committed to it."

It was only the second time Fleet Feet had themed its conference. Last year's theme was 'Beyond,' which reflected the transition period the company was undergoing as Investors Management Corporation (IMC), best known as the owner and franchisor of the Golden Coral family restaurant chain, acquired Fleet Feet Sports from Tom Raynor. Raynor had owned the franchise for nearly 20 years.

With new ownership naturally creating some concerns for long-tenured franchises, the 'Beyond' theme addressed the opportunities the acquisition created in providing greater financial flexibility. Davis said the merger has since "been fantastic" in further supporting franchisees. Along with an improving economy, the new partnership helped the franchise reach its 100th store milestone with a healthy pipeline of new potential franchise locations in the works.

While customer connectivity may be a common topic at such conferences, the 'Magnetic' theme resonated in 2013 since the run specialty industry, largely run by independents since its start in the 1970s, is undergoing consolidation, led by Running Specialty Group (RSG), the joint partnership between The Finish Line and Gart Capital Partners.

In early June, RSG acquired Boulder Running Company to bring its total store count to 38. The group also acquired the six-unit BlueMile chain in Indiana in May and Dallas-based Run On! last year. Others

threatening to make big waves in the space include Dick's Sporting Goods, which is testing a True Runner concept, as well as Foot Locker, which has opened three Run Foot Locker doors.

Davis said that while these larger companies "might have the financial wherewithal to do whatever they want to do," the many independent Fleet Feet owners have the "local passion that is really hard to duplicate."

"That's the biggest core competency of the brand," added Davis. "There's this passion and drive that can only come from somebody who has lived in the community and touches the community on a daily basis. Their livelihood is there. That's a big differential."

Davis headed a presentation addressing the "Core Building Block to Success" toward becoming a "Magnetic Retailer." A session by Susan Fowler of The Ken Blanchard Company addressed empowering employees to create such "Magnetic" relationships through situational leadership.

One educational session centered on finding balance in life. At the session, headed by life coach Joyce White, franchise owners were

encouraged to draw their life pie considering time spent on career, family, finances, emotional and spiritual needs. Many found a large part of their life overly-dedicated to work and career. White offered examples of how creating life-balance can be positive overall, including a business owner who pursued a dream of starting a family and found a 38 percent uptick in revenues that year.

Davis said that while sessions in the past focused on footwear or apparel categories or selling techniques, this year's classes touched somewhat more on intangibles to understand "what's really going to drive the business is having our hearts and our heads straight."

"What we do as a brand is we create an awesome experience for the customer that we believe is untouchable," said Davis. "If we remain true to our core mission, then we don't have to worry about what else is going on in this crazy, competitive industry."

As part of the event, Fleet Feet honored its franchise owners and store employees during its annual Brand Banquet, with many honoring outreach efforts to their communities.

FITlanthropy Grants

Fleet Feet awarded grants to six stores on behalf of its major vendor partners. FITlanthropy Grants support the stores charitable contributions at the local level. Grants were awarded as follows:



Brooks Sports awarded Fleet Feet Sports Mt. Pleasant, SC

a grant for Meeting Street Academy. This grant will help support the school's running program which provides under-resourced children the opportunity to learn goal-setting skills and discipline, while teaching the importance of living healthfully.



Pictured at left: Fleet Feet Sports Mount Pleasant, SC Franchisee Owners, Chris and Amy Minkel with vendor sponsor Brooks Sports

Saucony awarded Fleet Feet Sports Brentwood, CA a grant for their initiative supporting Amputee Blade Runners. The grant will allow Fleet Feet Sports Brentwood to continue to provide footwear, socks, and race entry fees to amputees who have extremely high medical costs and may not otherwise be able to afford their favorite sport of running. ▶

Pictured at right: Fleet Feet Sports Brentwood, TN Franchisee Owners, Christi Beth and Matt Adams with vendor sponsor Saucony





New Balance awarded Fleet Feet Sports Sacramento, CA a grant for Project Fit, a free after school running program for children in low socio-economic communities. The program serves more than 1,000 students in 12 schools in northern California. This is the third consecutive year Fleet Feet Sports Sacramento has been awarded this grant for their goodwill.

Featured above: Fleet Feet Sports Sacramento, CA Franchisee Owners, Pat and Jan Sweeney with vendor sponsor New Balance



Balega International awarded a grant to Fleet Feet Sports Winston-Salem, NC for Mission: Feet First. This mission distributes properly fitted footwear to homeless and under-privileged children and families. Since 2010, Mission: Feet First has provided shoes to more than 1,000 individuals.

Featured above: Fleet Feet Sports Winston- Salem, NC Franchisee Owners, Keith and Emily Davis with vendor sponsor Balega Sports International



Superfeet awarded Fleet Feet Sports Syracuse, NY a grant for their six-legged 5K race. This race, founded in 2009, has raised more than \$45,000 and saved the lives of countless dogs and cats. Fleet Feet Sports Syracuse donates 100 percent of the event's proceeds to the Central New York SPCA every year.

Featured above: Fleet Feet Sports Syracuse, NY Franchisee Owners, Ed and Ellen Griffin with vendor sponsor Superfeet Worldwide, Inc.



Nike awarded Fleet Feet Sports Tulsa, OK a grant for Zoomerangs, their youth running program in north Tulsa. For the past two years they have provided a structured youth running program for children without access to such activities. This program motivates and builds self-confidence and will expand to additional area schools with the aid of this grant.

Featured above: Fleet Feet Sports Tulsa, OK Franchisee Owners, Tim and Lori Dreiling with vendor sponsor Nike

ANNIVERSARIES

The following stores were recognized for reaching milestones of 10 and 20 years in business:

10 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Fleet Feet Sports Baltimore, MD

Fleet Feet Sports Roanoke, VA

Fleet Feet Sports Hoboken, NJ

Fleet Feet Sports Tulsa, OK

Fleet Feet Sports Stuart, FL

20 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Fleet Feet Sports St. Louis, MO

SCHOLARSHIPS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Scholarships of Achievement were awarded to Fleet Feet Sports employees and students. Since 1999, Fleet Feet has offered scholarships to enable young people associated with Fleet Feet Sports to pursue their educational goals and career aspirations.

2013 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Grace Bentley, Fleet Feet Sports American Fork, UT

Thomas Chamberlain, Fleet Feet Sports Redding, CA

Brent Christensen, Fleet Feet Sports Spokane, WA

Emalyn Embree, Fleet Feet Sports Annapolis, MD

Casey Lewis, Fleet Feet Sports Roanoke, VA

Ellen Matheny, Fleet Feet Sports Knoxville, TN

Jake McManus, Fleet Feet Sports Rochester, NY

David Stewart, Fleet Feet Sports Tulsa, OK

Whitney Tetrault, Fleet Feet Sports Madison, WI

Chris Trinidad, Fleet Feet Sports Orlando, FL

Rachel Williams, Fleet Feet Sports Louisville, KY

FLEET FEET PARTNERS WITH OFF 'N RUNNING



Fleet Feet, Inc. announced a franchise partnership with John Dewey, owner of Off 'n Running stores in Greensboro and High Point, NC. The arrangement marks the first time an independent store has converted to a Fleet Feet location.

As part of the agreement, Dewey becomes a franchisee and his two stores will be rebranded Fleet Feet Sports.



Robyn Goby, VP of marketing & communications, Fleet Feet, Inc.

In an interview with *SGB*, Robyn Goby, Fleet Feet's VP of marketing and communications, said the way Fleet Feet had grown to 105 locations across 35 states was by opening new stores and outright acquisitions. But management had recognized that it had been developing tools over the last ten years, that "could help anyone in the channel," and several independents had been in contact with Fleet Feet, Inc. exploring ways to access them.

The partnership came at the urging of Keith Davis, a co-owner of Fleet Feet Winston-Salem, NC, who had a friendship with Dewey. Fleet Feet, Inc., based in Carrboro, N.C., was interested in having a presence in Greensboro, was impressed with the Off 'n Running operation, and approached Dewey last year about working together.

"John has done an amazing job in his marketplace and his business is very similar to ours so we thought, 'Why don't we partner with him instead of opening up a new store?'" said Goby. "At the same time, John was looking for more support, more tools and the better access that working with a national company provides."

With several other independents in talks with Fleet Feet on similar structures, the company sees such independent partnerships as "an opportunity to expand our retail footprint and our national position," said Goby. The structure also avoids any cannibalization issues that may result if Fleet Feet opening a new store in the same area.



Jeff Phillips, president & CEO, Fleet Feet, Inc.

"We have great respect for the service, education and loyal following Off 'n Running has built in the local community over the last ten years and that is why this type of partnership makes sense for Fleet Feet Sports," said Jeff Phillips, president and CEO of Fleet Feet, Inc. in a statement. "It allows us to work closely with successful local retailers, support them to grow their businesses and bring what we do to more communities around the country."

"I'm excited to become a part of the Fleet Feet Sports community," said Dewey. "I've had the opportunity to get to know the company and the people and the tools they provide will help me take my business to the next level. I can get the support I need but still run the business and that's important to me."



FLEET FEET TRADE SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

By Thomas J. Ryan

More than 70 vendors showed off their latest wares at a trade show in late June that accompanied Fleet Feet's annual National Franchise Conference in Huntington Beach, CA. Beyond established and upstart footwear and apparel vendors, the booths showcased an array of accessories, including many recovery/massage tools, electronic gadgets and nutritional supplements that are increasingly becoming essential parts of the running experience. Here, a few highlights:

◀ Moving Comfort unveiled its Switch It Up collection. Each piece offers two looks in one - a solid that reverses to a seasonal print. Rather than bonding two fabrics together, Moving Comfort sourced a single, two-sided fabric to deliver two looks without unwanted weight or bulk. "Women are looking for variety and versatility in their workout apparel as well as higher quality performance products that feature a touch of pizzazz," said Heather Cvitkovic, senior product line manager, Moving Comfort. "Switch It Up offers her value, spontaneity, and the ability to literally switch it up depending on her mood."

The mix includes the Switch It Up Hoodie, MSRP \$88, reversible from a print to a solid. With DriLayer Lace insets for breathability, the lightweight full-zip works for lounging or sweating. Colors include Pixie Swirl/Pixie, Rainbow/Stardust and Black Splash/Black.



▲ Gatorade Endurance Carb Energy Chews, MSRP \$1.30 for a package of four, \$2.30 for a package of eight. With 31 grams of carbs, Gatorade Carb Energy Chews are gummy chews that provide energy when consumed prior to and during prolonged training or racing to help endurance athletes continue to perform at a high level.

▼ Garmin Forerunner 10, MSRP \$130, accurately tracks distance, pace and calories. It also identifies personal records and has a Virtual Pacer to compare current pace to personal target. When the run's finished, the runner can upload the data to the Garmin Connect site to plan, store and share runs.



▲ Moji unveiled its 360° Foot Massager, MSRP \$39, a stationary foot massager featuring the recovery brand's freely rotating, steel massage spheres. Different massage zone intensities mimic the touch of a professional massage therapist.



▲ Triggerpoint brought out the Grid Mini, MSRP \$24, promising to be the most travel friendly foam roller on the market at 5 inches tall by 5.5 inches in diameter. Featuring Matrix Technology and Distrodensity Zones, it provides a unique targeted massage to increase circulation and help maintain flexibility. It attaches to a gym bag, backpack, or a suitcase.

The Cold Roller from Triggerpoint, MSRP \$100, offers Myofascial Release and Cold Compression in a sleek looking roller. Targets muscles with cold compression to maximize recovery and improve results. Also designed to reduce rolling time with the greatest rate of return.



▲ Headsweats offers an update on its popular Race Hat and SuperVisor, MSRP for by manufacturing it in Headsweats proprietary fabric, Eventure Grid instead of Coolmax. Eventure Grid is a lightweight, moisture wicking fabric that offers superior moisture management. Also features dual stretch for comfort and conformability. MSRP both styles \$20.

Headsweats also showcased its new collegiate collection through a partnership with Top of the World Caps to over 350 different university logos.



▲ At Lucy, a highlight was the Girls Best Friend Bra, MSRP \$59, ranked number one in stability when tested against five similar bras from its top competitors. Featuring deep, reinforced cups for better encapsulation; stabilizer fabric throughout for support and stability, and wider straps with padding for added support and stability.



At Pro-Tec Athletics, the Orb, MSRP \$20 (5-inch) and \$25 (7-inch), is a deep tissue massage ball that provides a multi-directional roll, allowing the user to focus on specific areas of tightness or soreness. Made of a high density EVA foam. The 5- inch Orb provides an aggressive targeted massage, and is more ideal for the calves, hamstrings, IT band, gluteus, and quads. The 7-inch Orb provides a more moderate massage and is better for larger surface areas, such as the back.

Tiger Tail showcased its Ball Massage-on-a-Rope, MSRP \$28, designed for working out knots, trigger points and sore muscles in the back, shoulders, piriformis, legs, and other areas needing deep pressure. Used by putting the ball over your shoulder and leaning up against a wall or chair.



Skins showcased the Dynamic Gradient Compression Lightweight Run Sock collection, MSRP \$50, featuring its BioAcceleration Technology that reduces the build-up of lactic acid immediately after periods of sustained exercise for rapid return to normal levels. The color range - fluoro pink, fluoro orange and green - promises to add pop to selling floors.



Soleus unveiled its GPS Mini with integrated USB, MSRP \$100, the smallest GPS watch on the market. With a low profile design yet still easy to read, the Soleus GPS Mini records speed, distance and pace. Charge and upload via integrated USB, 100-lap memory, automatic lap splits, calorie counter, simple 4-button user interface and a customizable display viewing area.



Balega showcased the Hidden Contour Sock, MSRP \$14, a supportive yet close fitting sock. Features a complete hand-linked toe seam to prevent blisters, supportive elastic bands in the arch, heel and ankle, full mesh top panel with Drynamix moisture management yarns, and a high 200-needle count for support without added bulk.



Available in six bright new colors, Features! Elite Merino+No Show Tab combines Features! Elite technology with a blend of Merino wool and rayon from bamboo. The Ultra Light, MSRP \$15, comes in Silver/Reflector, Gray/Brilliant Blue, and Eggshell Blue/Fuchsia. The Light Cushion Tab, MSRP \$16, comes in Silver/Cherry Tomato, Charcoal/Reflector, and Raspberry/Reflector.

Features! Plantar Fasciitis Sleeve, features six zones of support with graduated compression levels that are greatest above and below the heel. Lifts, stretches and stabilizes the plantar fascia tissue to reduce heel and arch pain. Graduated compression improves circulation to reduce swelling. MSRP \$25 Single Sleeve; \$45 Pair



At SmartWool, a highlight was the PhD Run Long Sleeve Crew, MSRP \$95, featuring varied knit textures (85 percent Merino/15 percent Nylon) in body-mapped heat and sweat zones for ventilation. Seamless construction with strategically designed raglan sleeves to remove underarm seams. Also features UPF30 and 360-degree reflectivity.



▲ Nuun unveiled three new flavors - watermelon, lemonade and caffeine-enhanced cherry limeade

Nuun contains 12 tablets, MSRP \$24, and offers a fast-absorbing electrolyte blend without sugar or waste of bottled sport drinks.



▲ Barefooters features reflexology massage pods on the Oooaaahs Reflex Insole and proprietary CorksiLite material work as a system to promote a natural walking gait - similar to barefoot, but protected. Superior impact absorption, naturally anti-microbial, ecologically sensitive and gentle on the skin, the Classic, MSRP \$100, has become Barefooters' signature shoe. The brand also offers both a ladies sandal and a thong-style sandal.



▲ Tifosi brought out the Lore, MSRP \$60. Features include open lens design, vented lenses to prevent fogging, hydrophilic rubber pads on nose and arms, and an adjustable nose piece.



▲ Addaday offered its Ultra Roller, MSRP \$37, featuring a gear design that kneads like the human elbow for optimal blood flow around muscle groups. The multi-gear design is easy to navigate around the human body, especially the waist, back and hips.



▲ Hoka One One unveiled the Conquest, MSRP \$170, ideal for runners looking for a fast, highly responsive yet cushioned shoe. Features a Rmat Midsole material with state of the art weight-to-resilience ratio with Hoka One One maximal cushioning protection. An early stage Meta-Rocker promotes accurate foot roll through the gait cycle. Also highly breathable layered, no-sew upper construction.



▲ From Nathan, the QuickShot Plus Insulated, MSRP \$30, features a reflective and double-wall insulated 8 ounce, Fire & Ice Flask with high-flow Race Cap. A fully adjustable hand strap with thumbhole enables grip-free running. Also features a zippered pocket with internal stretch mesh pocket for storage.



▲ Ecco, the Danish shoe giant, introduced the BIOM Evo Racer Pro, MSRP \$130, a lightweight, minimalist shoe featuring direct-injection technology and seamless uppers. Ultra-breathable and low-to-the-ground with a 5mm drop.



▲ Amphipod introduced the HandPod SmartView, MSRP \$30, carrier that allows runners access to their tunes with just about any size phone. Multi-position thumb-lock design allows the hand to relax for comfort and versatility. The pouches make the phone fully accessible through the protective clear ViewThru front panel. A SmartView Plus version, MSRP \$35, is also available for Androids and larger phones.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a bright blue zip-up athletic jacket and black leggings, is captured in a running pose. She is wearing white earbuds and has a focused expression. The background is a dense forest with tall, thin trees and soft, natural lighting filtering through the canopy.

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5.11 TACTICAL

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Product Manager

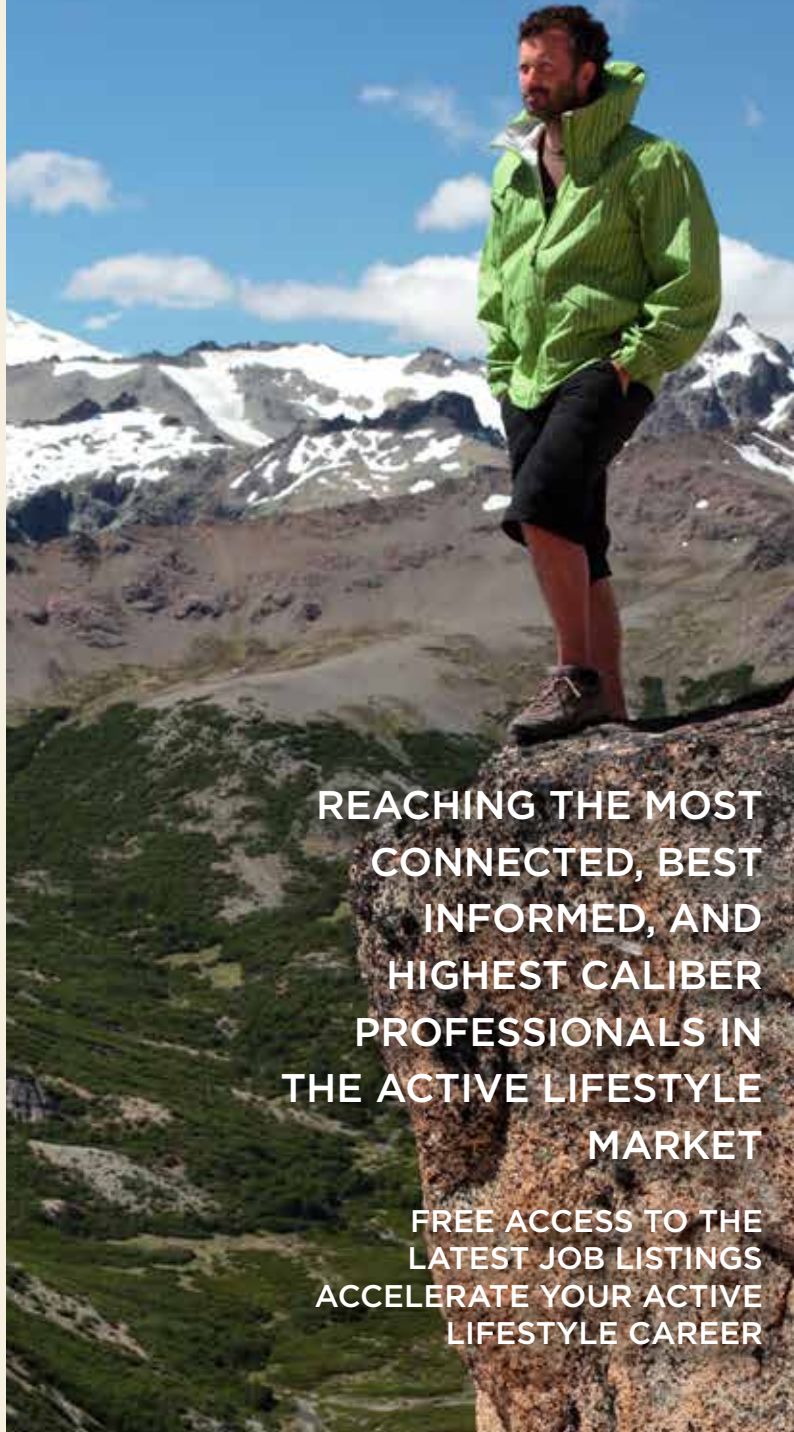


As Product Manager, the primary responsibilities of the job include: Establish, implement, and lead near and mid-term, product tactics to achieve net sales, net margins, SKU productivity, and market share for knives and tools; Develop, facilitate, and implement product roadmap tactics for current and new product initiatives...

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BOB PUCCINI

President, Mizuno USA, Inc.
Chairman, Mizuno Canada, Ltd.
Director, Mizuno Corporation

Bob Puccini's passion for sports and competition has transcended across his professional career. He joined Mizuno USA in August 1995 as vice president and general manager of Mizuno's diamond, athletic footwear/apparel and South American businesses. A year later in October 1996, Puccini was appointed President of Mizuno USA to oversee all operations in both the U.S. and South America. In 2002 he was appointed Chairman of Mizuno Canada, Ltd., expanding his responsibilities to all Mizuno activities in the Western Hemisphere.

In 2006, he was elected to the Board of Directors of Mizuno Corporation, Mizuno USA's publicly traded parent company based in Osaka, Japan.

Before Mizuno, Puccini served as president and CEO of Head Sports in Boulder, CO, where he began as vice president and general manager of the summer sports division. He also worked for Adidas USA as vice president, marketing communications; and for Spalding Sports Worldwide as vice president, field sales, and as business unit manager for golf products. He began his career with The Gillette Company in 1976 where he progressed from sales into brand management over a seven-year span. He attended Fordham University in Bronx, NY, on a baseball scholarship and completed his MBA from Pace University in New York. In 2007, Puccini was elected to the Board of Directors of the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), taking the reigns as Chairman in 2012 to help the organization restructure for growth. His passions for sport and the Mizuno brand are lauded both on the golf course and in the boardroom.

What first drove you to get active in sports? My father was a multi-sport athlete at the same high school my brother and I also attended, and became a golf (teaching) professional and life member of the PGA. My parents encouraged both of us, at an early age, to get engaged in sports because of the core values it would teach us, keep us “out of trouble,” as well the hope that we would both earn college scholarships since we would need financial aid. Both of us did exactly that.

What was your proudest athletic moment? While there are a number of proud moments, such as pitching a no-hitter to win our high school league championship, earning the New York Daily News All Star award, leading the league in strike-outs, and winning League MVP, my proudest moment had to be receiving the news that I had earned the scholarship to Fordham University. Fordham’s coach was Gil MacDougald, Yankee star of the 1950s.

What set the stage for your career? When I blew my arm out and knew I couldn’t pursue my dream of major league baseball any longer (I wanted to be a pitcher for the Yankees), I redirected that passion to compete into becoming a better student and competing in business.

How did you get started in the sporting goods business? I was recruited by a very smart Harvard MBA, ex-General Foods marketeer and GM at Spalding, Chuck Yash. He gave me an opportunity to work as the product manager for the Golf Club business. Back then (1983), Spalding was still a major force in the golf business and I felt I could learn a lot from Chuck and the team while living a dream of combining my vocation with my avocation.

Was there one person who served as your mentor for your career? In addition to my father, my high school baseball coach Mr. Dom Cecere was one of the most influential people in my life. He challenged, pushed and encouraged me to become the athlete and student I became. He instilled so many core values that we thought were about baseball and sports, but later, realized were about life. Discipline, hard work, dedication, team work, character and being a class act both on and off the field

are values that drive me today and I will be forever grateful to a humble, dedicated and selfless man who will always be respectfully called “Coach.”

What do you love about working at Mizuno USA? Most significantly, my personal values and convictions and those of Mizuno Corporation are tightly aligned: integrity, honor, discipline, hard work and attention to detail. A focus on quality and doing things right and “doing the right thing” are also critical values we share. The company was founded by Mr. Rihachi Mizuno in 1906 and his entrepreneurial and challenging spirit and view toward being unafraid to be the underdog, in many ways reflects my own life story from baseball, to education, to my business career.

What are you trying to change? While we will never sacrifice our values, it’s important to adapt our “what, how, why, where and when” we execute to remain relevant, compelling and aligned with our evolving consumer and customer behavior. I have initiated a major project to ensure we are prepared to carry the brand to the next level of success and are positioned for long-term sustainability.

What’s one thing that industry folks may be surprised to know about you? My wife of 35 years and I still enjoy our Friday night pizza date (when I’m not traveling) and still love watching the Yankee games on TV. And how blessed I am to be a grandfather and have my kids and their kids living five miles from my wife and me.

What is your advice to someone looking to work or grow their career in the sporting goods industry? Learn the fundamentals of professionalism, business management and leadership, including best practice methods and ideologies. Then, realize that these can be applied to and are transferable to most any business. Importantly, work in a culture and environment where you can make a difference, and pursue what you love - you’ll never work a day again! ■

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