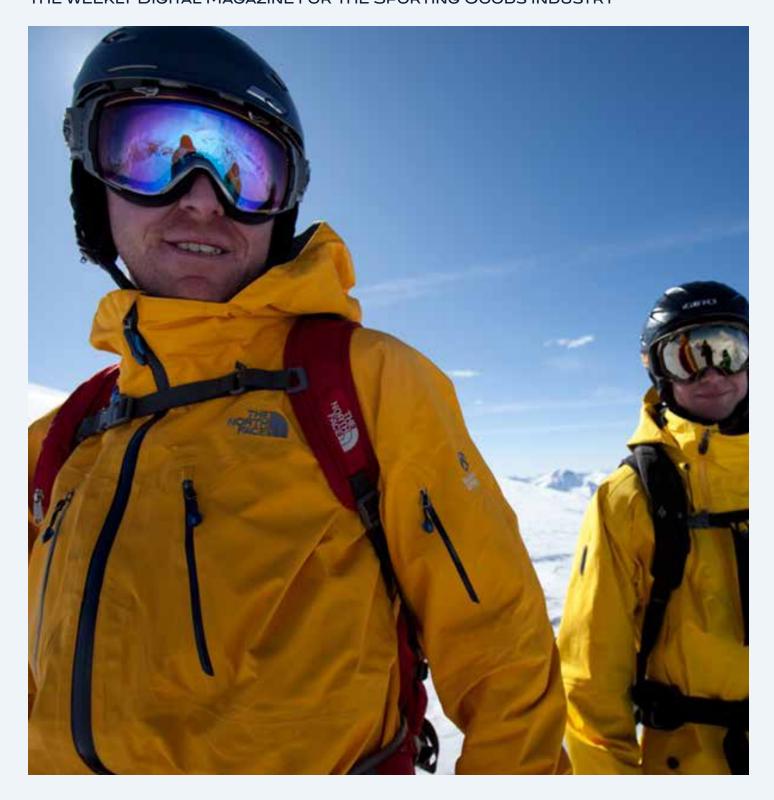
SGB ISSUE 1344 NOVEMBER 4, 2013 WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY



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SGB ISSUE 1344 NOVEMBER 4, 2013 WEEKLY

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NEWS

BY THE NUMBERS

+1.4%

Big 5 Sporting Goods reported sales increased 3.2 percent in its third quarter, to \$259.1 million with same store sales increasing 1.4 percent. Earnings rose 11.0 percent but would have been up approximately 15 percent, excluding extraordinary charges in both periods. The west-coast sporting goods chain said it expects same store sales in the fourth quarter in the positive low single-digit range and EPS in the range of 20 to 28 cents a share, which compares to 19 cents in the 2012 fourth-quarter.

-2.0%

Jarden Corporation reported sales at its Outdoor Solutions segment, which includes K2, Marmot, Coleman, Rawlings, Zoot and several other sports/outdoors brands, reached \$670.6 million in the third quarter, down 2.0 percent versus the same quarter a year ago. Organic sales grew 4.1 percent, led by broad-based revenue growth at Coleman and modest growth in skis. Segment earnings dipped 6.8 percent to \$66.9 million.

-43.6%

Rocky Brands reported third-quarter profits slumped 46.3 percent to \$2.9 million, or 39 cents per share. Revenues decreased 3.3 percent to \$70.2 million as continuing momentum in western boots was offset by challenges in its branded work, outdoor and commercial military footwear areas. The outdoor category was hurt by a third consecutive year of a mild, dry fall.

-2.4%

Crocs reported Q3 revenues slid 2.4 percent to \$288.5 million due to weak wholesale sales in the Americas and Japan. Earnings slumped 71.1 percent, to \$13.0 million or 15 cents per share. Due to weakening conditions in the Americas, Crocs said it expects a loss between 20 to 23 cents a share in the fourth quarter.

-29.6%

Skullcandy reported sales plummeted 29.6 percent to \$50.0 million in the third quarter as the maker of audio and gaming headphones and other accessories continued to scale back its sales to the off-price channel. North America net sales decreased 39.4 percent to \$34.8 million while international sales increased 11.9 percent to \$15.2 million.



SPALDING CELEBRATES 30 YEARS AS THE OFFICIAL GAME BALL OF THE NBA

Throughout the 2013/2014 NBA season, Spalding, a division of Russell Brands, LLC, will celebrate 30 years as the Official Game Ball of the NBA. Last week, Spalding launched the "Only1Ball" campaign to celebrate its relationship with the league, which includes more than 38,500 games and nearly 7 million points scored.

The "Only1Ball" Anniversary Celebration will include:

- » A vignette series to honor the incredible moments and images in the NBA over the past 30 years. The series was created in conjunction with NBA Entertainment and will debut around NBA All-Star 2014, with subsequent episodes airing throughout the season;
- » Anniversary advertising featuring Spalding brand ambassador and NBA champion, Paul Pierce of the Brooklyn Nets;
- » #Only1Ball Sweepstakes where one lucky fan will have the chance to win a trip to the 2014 NBA All-Star Game in New Orleans. Fans can enter the promotion by visiting spalding.com/Only1Ball or Spalding's Facebook page; and
- » 30th Anniversary Spalding logo on courts and specialized basketball packaging.

Spalding became the official basketball of the NBA during the 1983-84 NBA season, the same year that David Stern became commissioner.

"Spalding has been a part of so many great NBA moments over the last 30 years," said Sal LaRocca, NBA EVP of global merchandising. The NBA is proud to celebrate this anniversary with Spalding and reflect on 30 years of outstanding basketball."



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ADIDAS UNVEILS ITS ALL-NEW NBA ON-COURT COLLECTION

Just before tip-off of the 2013/2014 Season, Adidas and the NBA unveiled its new collection of premium on-court apparel that is outfitting all 30 NBA teams. The collection includes:

ON-COURT WARM-UP JACKET AND PANT

- » To illustrate the speed of the game, the Warm-Up Jacket features intensity graphics on the sleeves and front panel;
- The sleeves and trim include a contrasting color to the body of the Jacket;
- » An homage to team pride, the back of the Jacket shows the geographical team name and logo in a white-stenciled font; and
- » The Warm-Up Pant includes ventilated panels built in to highperformance areas for comfort and functionality along with Adidas' classic three stripes.

VARSITY WARM-UP JACKET

 » Designed to capture the classic varsity jacket look and feel and built for performance and on-court usage;

- Worn by all players and teams for weekend home games after December 25;
- » Classic heather grey-based jacket with contrasting teamcolored sleeves; and
- » Soft-textured team patch logos on the back and left chest complete the varsity look.

LONG-SLEEVE SHOOTING SHIRT

- » Team name across the chest in the official team font and colors; and
- » Front and back panels featuring contrasting team colors with accent impact camo sleeves to illustrate speed and style.

SHORT-SLEEVE SHOOTING SHIRT

- » Varsity-style shooting shirt features team letter logo on the left chest; and
- » Includes the player's name and number on the back and an impact camo pattern across the shirt to illustrate speed and style.



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Photos courtesy Associated Press for Ralph Lauren

RALPH LAUREN INTRODUCES 'MADE IN THE USA' **OLYMPIC UNIFORMS**

Ralph Lauren introduced a wide range of uniforms for the 2014 U.S. Winter Olympic athletes in Sochi, including their opening and closing ceremony apparel and their Olympic Village gear. The items will all be made in the United States.

During the 2012 London games, an outcry ensued after several Washington politicians complained that much of the U.S. apparel was made in China. In response, Ralph Lauren issued a statement vowing to design, source and manufacture all future Olympic outfits in the U.S.

In making the Sochi collection, the company used 40 U.S. partners to fabricate 65,000 items for the 650 American athletes. The range includes a navy peacoat with a red stripe, a classic ski sweater with a reindeer motif and hand-sewn American flag, and a tasseled chunky-knit hat.

"We have worked incredibly hard as a company to go across America to find the best partners to help us produce the Olympic uniforms at the highest quality for the best athletes in the world," David Lauren, the company's executive vice president of advertising, marketing and corporate communications, told the Associated Press.

The range is smaller than the London games collection because of the challenges the company faced meeting the quantity and quality standards needed to make the items for the athletes as well as versions to be sold to the public.

Uniforms used for competition are made by many sports brands through sponsorships with individual sports associations. Those outfits weren't part of the "Made in America" outcry but The North Face, which is making the freeskiing uniforms, is among those suppliers who have also committed to U.S. manufacturing.

Ralph Lauren Corp. has been making most of the athletes' casual apparel collection since 2008, when it took it over from Canadian clothier Roots.

CANADIAN TIRE TO FOLLOW CANADIAN **OLYMPIC TEAM**

With less than 100 days to go before the start of the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games, Canadian Tire, the parent of Sport Chek, is sending four employees from offices across Canada to act as 'roving reporters' in Sochi this coming February.

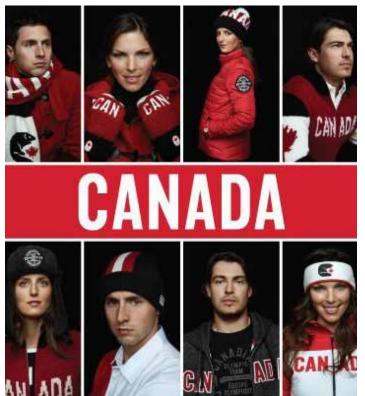
The employees will share pictures, videos and stories of their Olympic experiences with the Canadian Tire team back in Canada. Employees will be able to follow the Games through their colleagues' reports and daily up-to-the-minute coverage of high-profile events through all of the company's internal communication channels.

Sport Chek is also launching a new advertising campaign called 'What it Takes' (#whatittakes), to celebrate what it takes to become one of the best athletes in the world. The ads feature Olympic hopefuls who will compete in a cross section of Canada's most popular winter sports including ice hockey (Sydney Crosby and Meaghan Mikkelson), skiing (Christopher Del Bosco and Erik Guay), skeleton (Jon Montgomery), bobsleigh (Kaillie Humphries) and snowboarding (Maëlle Ricker and Mark McMorris).

Earlier this year, Sport Chek announced that it was named the exclusive retail partner of the Canadian Olympic Team Performance Collection by Canada in early November.

Earlier this year, Sport Chek announced that it was named the exclusive retail partner of the Canadian Olympic Team Performance Collection by Adidas, which will be available in all 170 Sport Chek stores across the country on November 6, 2013.

"The team at Sport Chek are beyond excited to watch not just its sponsored athletes but all of Team Canada in action as they inspire the nation and rally Canadians around the power of sport this coming February," said Michael Medline, president of FGL Sports. "Like many Canadians, the team at Canadian Tire is inspired by our athletes and their achievements as their sporting pursuits have taken them from the playground to the podium."





OAKLEY EXPANDS TEAM USA COLLECTION

The U.S. Olympic Committee and Oakley, Inc. announced the latest additions to the Team USA collection, an array of special-edition products with colors and highlights that honor the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic teams.

Oakley has expanded the collection with two elite performance eyewear designs that utilize Switchlock interchangeable lens technology. The new Team USA Airbrake Snow and Team USA Crowbar Snow goggles are also part of the collection. These latest additions join current Team USA products including custom renditions of Oakley Radar and Flak Jacket XLJ performance eyewear, and a popular lifestyle sunglass called Fuel Cell.

A percentage of the Team USA eyewear collection sales supports the training of U.S. Olympic and Paralympic athletes and hopefuls.

"Oakley shares the relentless dedication to performance that defines Olympians and Paralympians, and we are proud to expand the Team USA collection with new additions that feature premium performance innovations," said Oakley CEO Colin Baden. "The drive behind decades of Oakley innovation has been fueled by world-class athletes who accept nothing but the best from themselves and their performance gear."

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Lululemon Athletica announced that **Tara Poseley** has been appointed as its chief product officer. She most recently served as president of Kmart apparel.

Cobra-Puma Golf has hired **Tom Olsavsky**, senior director of product creation for TaylorMade, as its new VP of research and development.

Jordan Brand announced that NBA rookies Victor Oladipo, on the Orlando Magic, Otto Porter Jr., Washington Wizards, and Cody Zeller, Charlotte Bobcats, have all joined the Jordan family of athletes.

Brooks re-signed **Ryan Vail**, who ran 2:12 in the marathon at the 2012 Olympic Trials, to its endorsement team.

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SportScanInfo.com A Service of The SportsOneSource Group FOOT LOCKER HOLDS 13TH ANNUAL "ON OUR FEET" FUNDRAISING GALA



On Tuesday, October 22, Foot Locker Foundation, Inc. joined together members of the athletic industry, as well as its business partners, at New York City's Gotham Hall in midtown Manhattan to celebrate the 13th annual "On Our Feet" fundraising gala.

The black-tie event benefits educational and other initiatives supported by Foot Locker Foundation, Inc., including the United Negro College Fund and the Foot Locker Scholar Athletes Program.

Launched in 2011 in collaboration with DoSomething.org, the Foot Locker Scholar Athletes Program awards \$20,000 college scholarships to 20 exceptional students (totaling \$400,000) who demonstrate academic excellence and exemplify strong leadership skills both in sports and within their communities. This year's scholarship program, awarded in April 2013, saw 25,915 entries from across the nation.



A highlight of this year's "On Our Feet" event was a brief speech by John Bender, a 2012-2013 Foot Locker Scholar Athlete winner who just recently started attending Columbia University in New York City. At Woodlands College Park High School in Houston, Bender was a point guard on his basketball team. He was also captain and president of the Science Bowl Club, involved in locating sponsorships, funding competition trips, running meetings and mentoring younger students. And he spent many hours volunteering to help clean up after Hurricane Ike.

In his junior year, Bender began suffering from epilepsy that he estimates gave him about 325 seizures and caused him to miss nearly an entire semester of school. Despite the disability, Bender returned to classes his senior year and was even able to play in four games. Receiving a clean bill of health after doctors finally identified the cause of his seizures, Bender's story became an inspiration on the local level around overcoming adversity.

Bender said his experience and winning the award has made him more committed to helping others, and he is already actively involved in the community around Columbia University. He told the attendees, "It is on me to become involved in the community and I am prepared to answer that call."



Much of the buzz at the event, however, naturally went to the many celebrity guests Foot Locker was able to attract. This year's star lineup included Geno Smith and Antonio Cromartie of the New York Jets, NY Giants players Aaron Ross, Prince Amukamara and Terrell Thomas; Olympian Sanya Richards-Ross; John Starks, legendary guard for the New York Knicks; actress Brooke Shields; actor Mark Consuelos; MTV reality star Vinny Guadagnino; and Adam Richman, the star of the Travel Channel's Man v. Food.

Proceeds from the evening's silent auction of largely sports memorabilia went to support the educational causes of the Foot Locker Foundation, which includes both the scholarship program and its long-time partnership with the United Negro College Fund.

The Platinum sponsor for the event was Nike, the Silver sponsor was G3K Displays, and Bronze sponsors were Adidas/Reebok, Color Ink, Converse and Latitude. Other vendor contributors were Asics, New Balance, New Era, Skechers, Under Armour, Puma and Timberland. Implus kicked in a donation for the events' gifts.

Throughout the years, the "On Our Feet" Gala has provided more than 700 scholarships to students across the country.

"Our mission is to create a better world for today's youth through innovative education and sports programs that empower them to achieve their goals and be successful in life," said Ken Hicks, chairman, president and CEO, Foot Locker. "We are proud that this year, monies raised from this event will benefit the Foundation's educational initiatives, including The Foot Locker Scholar Athletes Program and our longstanding scholarship program with UNCF, as well as other programs that help deserving young people reach their fullest potential."

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Timberland's Ready_{for} its Close

Timberland unveiled its relaunched Fall collection and celebrated the 40th Anniversary of its classic yellow boot at an event in Williamsburg, Brooklyn in September. Photos courtesy Timberland n late September, Timberland invited 350 influencers, stylists, editors and retailers to hipster central, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, to get a peek at its new brand direction and "Best Then. Better Now." marketing campaign. Leading up to the campaign, Timberland held several smaller events for tastemakers in New York and LA.

These events supported the marketing campaign, paying homage to the 40th anniversary of the launch of Timberland's iconic "yellow boot" and its authentic outdoor roots. The campaign's print and TV ads feature dramatic sunrises, beautiful mountain scenery, and other rustic outdoor elements, giving a subtle nod to Timberland's New England roots while style remains the primary focus. The brand's reputation for craftsmanship is also played up with close-ups of the brand's signature quad-needle stitching, and background swatches of leather and canvas.

But the campaign also brings out rising young Hollywood talent – Justice Joslin, Marlon Kates and Kassidi Batt – to speak to the new stylish side of Timberland seen in a wide range of versatile new collections that fuse the brand's classic styles with a contemporary aesthetic.

The effort also trumpets the relaunch of Timberland apparel in an overall effort to better capitalize on the brand's potential as a head-totoe outdoor lifestyle brand that also translates smoothly to city dwellers. The range includes a heavy emphasis on leather jackets and waterproof outerwear as well as plaid work shirts and denim bottoms. Timberland's apparel business was licensed to Phillips-Van Heusen for many years. When VF Corp, the parent of The North Face and Vans, acquired Timberland in September 2011, they reacquired the license and aided in the redesign.

To reach the Millennial consumer, Timberland is partnering with a global set of diverse trendsetters and influencers to get the message out. Those efforts include, "Into the Trees," a mini-magazine and film short curated by The Rig Out's Glenn Kitson, featuring fashion blogger Mordechai Rubinstein and photographer and artist Noah Kalina. The digital pieces tell the history of Timberland in a visually stunning way, juxtaposing urban life and the rugged New



England wilderness.

Timberland is also launching "Mark Makers," an initiative that connects the brand with style-forward tastemakers – including bloggers Christina Caradona and Natalie Suarez and artist Richie Culver – who bring their personal style to the fall 2013 collection via video and imagery. Digital content has already started running across Timberland's social media channels.

Jim Davey, VP of global marketing, Timberland, said the new campaign was informed by more than two years of consumer insight into the brand and basically serves as an invitation for consumers to rediscover the Timberland brand.

"It reminds people that the 40-year heritage behind our original yellow boot is here to stay, but also surprises them with a fresh, new, fashion-forward direction," said Davey. "We'll always be inspired by our heritage, but this campaign puts the spotlight on the new Timberland."

Here, Davey discusses the evolution of the campaign with *SGB* and Timberland's emerging style.

CAN YOU ELABORATE ON WHAT YOUR RESEARCH TOLD YOUR TEAM ABOUT THE TIMBERLAND BRAND? Consumers have an extremely high emotional connection around the classic elements of the brand. That's quality, authenticity, outdoor heritage, toughness, ruggedness, etc. We get so much credit for that. It comes up again and again. But what they wanted to see more of was style - more relevant, trend-right style that still was consistent with our DNA. And they just wanted to see the brand out there. They hadn't heard from us enough and they wanted to see the brand portrayed in more ways than simply the 'yellow boot' and things they might need when the weather got bad.

WHAT TYPE OF PRODUCTS? For the Fall 2013 season, we're introducing boots for men, women and kids that take cues from our classic silhouettes, but offer a modern look, eco-conscious fabrics and performance innovations. Our



new apparel line is also a big part of our advertising. One of our consumer insights was that they love us as a boot brand but when we showed them all the new head-to-toe things we're doing – we call it toe-to-head-from boots and great outerwear to sweaters, hats belts and bags, it changed their view on what the brand could be. And they said, 'Hey, we want to see more of this because this is a brand that could fit into our daily lives."

We're also focusing on our women's collection, which shows a new face of the brand. We have great tall leather boots that perform and look great in or out of the city.

SO HOW IS THE MARKETING MESSAGE CHANGING? We're always going to be a brand that goes hiking and we're always going to be a brand for work. But what we're thinking through is how do we do that with this filter of an outdoor lifestyle brand? On retail shelves, we definitely want to be portrayed as a brand that you can take on the trails and handle the tough chores in. But at the same time we're also looking through it to make sure it has a great style and an all-day versatility quality to it. In other words, you can certainly do all the stuff you always expected with Timberland but there's a new look and a new style. So if you show up in the city after a long day doing work or on the trail or whatever it is you do outside, you don't have to change. We've got the kind of lifestyle products that can get you through the whole day instead of just being so functionally oriented as in the past.

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Timberland Earthkeepers®

Tenon Bomber

WHAT DID YOUR RESEARCH TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR CONNECTIONS TO THE URBAN COMMUNITY? That audience will always be a hugely important piece of the brand, particularly with the yellow boot. And that continues to be a focus for us. But what we found as we looked at all the different communities that have connections with Timberland – whether it's hikers in Europe, the hip hop community in the U.S., hipsters in Manchester, or the kids in Tokyo – they're all looking for the same thing. And that's authentic, outdoor gear that can get them through any occasion, whether the weather is awful or they just want to look fantastic on a night out or during their day. Ultimately it comes down to that authenticity that folks are looking for.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE APPAREL RELAUNCH? It was under a licensed agreement for the past few years, so we took a year off and are relaunching in fall 2013. We've got a much clearer Timberland brand positioning now in terms of what we want to stand for in being both an apparel and footwear brand and what it should deliver in both style and performance as well as in green elements. So that was one reason we felt it was the right time. Our International Design Center in London has always done a great job developing a strong apparel business overseas to show us its potential here. And we also



Mortise Bomber Jacket



Front Country Hiker Jacket



Wilmington Long Snorkel Jacket



Trailspar Cargo Shirt







Ryker Waterproof Boot

McIntyre Mid Waterproof Boot

Chillberg Waterproof Mid Boot

have the support and leadership of VF on our side now, and they're one of the biggest, apparel makers in the world in terms of sourcing and manufacturing – there's no one better. So those three things told us it was time to now add that to the Timberland look and become a true head-to-toe brand.

WHERE IS IT LAUNCHING? It's a limited collection launching in higher-end independents. We've also got a two-year exclusive with Nordstrom at the department store level. We're starting really tight from a very premium place. But what we're finding is when consumers see the new apparel collection, it immediately changes their mind about what the brand could be and how it can fit into their lives. So it certainly is going to be a great business for us but also in terms of what the brand looks and feels like, it's hugely important to all the marketing that we're doing.

CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THE DIGITAL EFFORTS AROUND THE CAMPAIGN? There are two elements to it. One is that we can't be the only ones telling our story, especially when it comes to style. We haven't always been a brand people look to first for style trends, and we see these partnerships as an opportunity to shift that. So it was important that we collaborate with some folks who have a real point of view on style and can take their equity and combine it with what we stand for. The second element is to come up with a new story for consumers, which is what we did with "Into the Trees" and "Mark Makers." "Into the Trees" is a minimagazine and a film short created by The Rig Out, which is a UK-based magazine and blog. It tells the story of Timberland and it juxtaposes urban life in the rugged New England wilderness to offer a great microcosm of "Best Then. Better Now." It brings out the idea of the rugged and the almost gritty lifestyle that Timberland has been known for but also brings it out in a way that enforces the new style and talks to you about the idea that we could be a brand for the city and for the country. And again, they have great social networks to get the story out and to tell people as well.

WHAT ABOUT MARK MAKERS? That's going to do a lot in how we show up with women. When we're talking to influencers, bloggers and stylists, they take our product, style it, and integrate it into their own outfits in a way that we could never do ourselves. The results are these fantastic looking styles that provide a sense for women of how Timberland can be integrated into their everyday looks. Again, it's not only great content but they already have great digital and social networks that we can tap into.

WHY THE DIGITAL FOCUS? More than ever before, we're focused on digital engagement to speak to and connect with today's millennial consumer. We've found that most of our brand stories work well across countries and cultures, so digital also helps us create a globally consistent brand message. And the main place that we're finding a lot of engagement is in the social media world. In the last year we were on Facebook and a little of Twitter. Now we're on all the big platforms with specifically curated content, whether it is Pinterest, Tumbler, Vine or YouTube. Wherever the Millennials are getting information about brands and connecting with people online, that's where we want to be.

HOW IS TIMBERLAND APPEALING TO MIL-LENNIALS? Timberland has 83 percent brand awareness across the U.S., which is fantastic. That's behind only Nike and Adidas when you look at footwear brands. So everyone knows the brand, they just don't know our new story. They know the classic story of the yellow boot and the outdoor, rugged heritage and the quality. And they probably remember it from their high school years or different times of their life. But they haven't seen that head-to-toe brand that's based on a new style and a versatility that can get them through their day. And so they know us but they may not know our new story yet.

Timbertand (%)

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THE NORTH FACE LOOKS **FASTER**

By Thomas J. Ryan

When The North Face views emerging opportunities in the outdoor space, "it's a lot faster, there's a lot more color, and it's a lot more fitness driven," according to Todd Spaletto, president

of the brand's Americas business.

In a recent interview, Spaletto stressed this doesn't mean that the traditional outdoor categories that were relevant three years ago aren't still an opportunity. But he noted, "There's just a much broader landscape for us as outdoor retailers and manufacturers to go after."

Showing the ongoing strong appeal of the trail running and running categories North Face already has a strong foothold in, Spaletto noted how the The North Face Endurance Challenge will have more than 13,000 participants in the five races it holds across the country in 2013.

But Spaletto also noted that more runners are turning to strength programs in gyms to become

better runners. People are also increasingly doing Crossfit, participating in Tough Mudders and going out for their cross-country high school team to often find their first path into the mountains.

The North Face won't be looking to "put our brand stamp" on a Crossfit or a Tough Mudder, preferring "more of those authentic places" like trail running, hiking or the North Face Endurance Challenge races. "However, we do think that our brand connects to those consumers and there's a commercial opportunity for us to be

a part of," he added.

Spaletto said The North Face continues to benefit from its focus on its Activity Based Model (ABM) to design and deliver products across four outdoor activities: performance, action sports and youth. The performance category, including running and training, has stood out for The North Face in recent years, with running continuing to see the fastest growth for the brand.

"It's not the biggest but it's the fastest growing," said Spaletto, with the category led by its Better Than Naked series that's reached 400 running specialty stores.

Training, which Spaletto estimated to be a \$10 to \$12 billion global market opportunity, is a bigger challenge because it's not naturally "authentic"

to The North Face brand's outdoor and snow sport roots. Noted Spaletto, "We're not a maxing out on a bench press or run on a track kind of brand."

But Spaletto feels The North Face has found a home in the category with its Mountain Athletics collection, debuting January 2014 and centered on outdoor athlete training. The North Face





noticed that many of its athletes, including Mike Wolfe, Daniel Woods and Jimmy Chin, all worked out at Mountain Athlete gym in Jackson, WY. While rain sometimes took them indoors to train, they were increasingly turning to box jumps, lunges, air squats as part of their training routine. The strength and conditioning programs are providing another edge in helping them excel at their outdoor conquests, whether skiing/snowboarding, rock/ice climbing, mountaineering or ultra running.

In the same vein, all outdoor enthusiasts would likewise benefit by getting on a training program to improve their performance. Added Spaletto, "If I set a goal for myself to climb Mount Rainier, the difference between me being dropped off and ending up miserably out of shape at the end, or truly thrilling in the experience is my training."

The brand partnered with Mountain Athlete to inform product development for the Mountain Athletics line of apparel and footwear that's built to withstand the rigors of climbing ropes, lifting sandbags or hauling weighted pallets.

The Mountain Athletics line is anchored by the Kilowatt Collection, which features strategically placed durable stretch or knit mesh throughout, active-stretch fabrications, and stitch-free seam construction to avoid hot spots and chaffing. Mountain Athletics apparel also features the introduction of FlashDry-XD, a new standard in rapid dry-time and durability.

The Mountain Athletics launch is being complemented by the introduction of the Ultra Protection Series of footwear that's designed "to be lightweight, maximizing performance, without sacrificing protection," said Spaletto.

The Ultra Protection Series features impact control provided by Pebax, new outsoles from Vibram, CRADLE Guide, FlashDry technology for rapid dry time and Gore-Tex waterproof, breathable membranes to protect feet from the elements in any condition. Ultra Airmesh, an ultralight, breathable mesh, protects the upper from dust and debris.

A highlight of the series is the Ultra Fastpack, a run-inspired hiker "that's everything that a Hedgehog is but way faster." The series also features a trail runner (Ultra Trail), a featherweight trainer for pavement and smooth trails (Ultra Smooth) and a waterproof hiker (Ultra Hike GTX).

As part of the new Mountain Athletics collection, the Ultra Kilowatt represents the brand's first training shoe. Said Spaletto, "It features arch protection for rope climbing and a wrapped outsole for lateral movement but it's also super minimalist."

With the Ultra, Spaletto said The North Face footwear range "now has a continuum of product that we can bring forward into future seasons. That's a big step for us."

In outdoor apparel, ThermoBall, a synthetic down that can dry in 40 minutes even if soaked that won *Backpacker Magazine's* Editors Choice at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market, continues to

expand into new colors and new hybrid technologies.

In equipment particular attention was paid to improving the visual aesthetic of its sleeping bags and packs with an infusion of fabrics as well as colors and color blocking. Spaletto noted that the looks in equipment weren't "progressing as much as on the apparel side."

A final focus on the equipment side is better establishing a premium offering through the Banchee and Tadpole re-design. Separately, the brand is introducing a new Trailhead Collection to drive increased volume and AUR's in the Sporting Goods Channel. Spaletto noted that sporting goods' accounts have "done a nice job of growing their AURs on the apparel side, but we haven't quite seen it on sleeping bags and packs." He said the Trailhead sleeping bag collection, featuring 100 percent goose water resistant 550 fill power ProDown, is "meant to deliver a premium product to the sporting goods channel but at a more realistic price point."

Spaletto stressed that The North Face still sees opportunities in more traditional outdoor areas. In its Summit Series alpine collection, a highlight for Spring is the DNP Jacket, which features an innovative hybrid construction with a PrimaLoft One insulated core and stretch woven panels for added warmth, breathability and freedom of movement with minimal weight and bulk. But he added focus on the color, lightweight focus and push into training seen across its spring line will help reinforce The North Face brand's positioning as a "fast, young, athletic brand" with emerging outdoor consumers.

Moreover, he said many of the retailers he was talking to at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market were also eager to embrace many of these emerging trends and securing "renewed relevance" with today's outdoor consumer.

"If we think relevance is plaid woven shirts with convertible pants and cargo shorts and UPF 50+ sun hats, we're missing something," said Spaletto. ■



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REBEL AMERICANA

From left to right: U.S. Freesking hopefuls John Teller, Maddie Bowman, Aaron Blunck, Devin Logan and Tom Wallisch, helped to unveil the official 2014 U.S. Freeskiing Competition Uniforms to be worn by the U.S. Freeskiing athletes at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games during The North Face media even held last week in NYC Photos courtesy Associated Press

THE NORTH FACE UNVEILS OFFICIAL U.S. FREESKIING OLYMPIC UNIFORMS

At a media event held last week in New York City, The North Face unveiled its official 2014 U.S. Freeskiing Competition uniforms, which will be worn by United States freeskiing athletes when the sport makes its debut at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

The partnership with the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) also marks the first time The North Face has equipped an Olympic team with a uniform.

The uniforms were tested by top free skiing athletes, including Tom Wallisch, Maddie Bowman, Devin Logan and John Teller, throughout the research, design and development process. Wallisch, Bowman and Logan, who are all members of The North Face global athlete roster, provided both technical and style-related input.

"These athletes know better than anyone what they need to feel and perform their best during competition, and because style is such a key part of freeskiing, we wanted to make sure we were not only addressing key technical aspects of the uniform, but also the confidence and inspiration that comes with stand-out style," said Aaron Carpenter, VP of global marketing for The North Face.

In partnership with the athletes, The North Face established a specific style guide for the uniforms developed for all three freeskiing disciplines – halfpipe, slopestyle and skicross.

The North Face Action Sports Product Director Jasmin Ghaffarian at the event said that in developing the uniforms, her team wanted to focus on three factors: athlete culture, innovation and pride of country.

With an "athlete-tested, expeditionproven" mantra, The North Face continually taps into the athlete's culture and dedication. A number of its star athletes were on hand to showcase that commitment, including Scot Schmidt, the poster boy of extreme skiing in the '80s and '90s; Sage Cattabriga-Alosa, one of the best-known skiers in the skifilm industry over the last decade; and Conrad Anker, the world- renowned climber regaled for his breakthrough ascents, from the Himalayas to Antarctica and Patagonia.

But while training for the Olympics involves a "lot of suffering and doing a lot of hard work," Ghaffarian said the Freeskiing Competition uniforms played up the "fun" aspect around freeskiing culture that has brought excitement to the sport of skiing.

On the innovation front, The North Face used a variety of industry-leading approaches to R&D, including wind, color and product testing. A specific focus was on speed and aerodynamic efficiency. Ghaffarian pointed to how a "fraction of a second" can determine winning and losing in Olympic competition.

At the same time, her team conducted more than 1,300 hours of color block testing with the red, white and blue colors. Much of the color testing was aided by several of The North Face athletes in early 2012 at Mt. Hood, which allowed the brand to not only gather athlete feedback on initial sketches, but also have them test out different colored prototypes against the snow in both day and night conditions. Ghaffarian also noted, "How the judges view and see you can be the difference between a silver and gold medal."

Finally, the design team was inspired by a "Rebel Americana" theme to capture the

spirit of U.S. Freeskiing's rich history and rebellious, counter-culture attitude.

Unique details were also woven in to provide athletes with added inspiration and a deeper connection to each other and the competitive moment, including a piece of a Himalayan suit worn on an Everest expedition in the shape of a star, a nod to the rich outdoor heritage of The North Face, embroidered with the phrase "Bigger Than Me." Logos such as "Rebel Without A Cause" and "Old Glory" are also stitched into certain styles.



Additional details include laser-cut stars in the Velcro on the cuffs of each jacket and the uniforms' suspender system, a staple piece of apparel for many freeskiers on the mountain, which forms a peace sign if you were to place a circle around it.

The U.S. Freeskiing competition uniforms were designed and manufactured in the U.S. at a development center in Oakland, not far from The North Face headquarters in Alameda, CA. The company invested in the local development center to keep prototyping close to home and to celebrate the U.S. throughout the athlete uniform manufacturing process.

"There's a lot of pride that goes along with being able to produce the uniforms in our backyard and to work with people in our community to be a part of this process," said Ghaffarian. "With all the technical aspects and unique elements like the piece from our expedition-worn Everest Himalayan suit, we felt a lot of personal passion throughout the uniform process, and producing the outerwear in the United States adds an extra level of patriotic pride and ownership."

Carpenter said the development center served as inspiration for The North Face parent VF Corp's plans to open three in-

novation centers: a Technical Apparel Innovation Center will be in Alameda, a Jeans Center in Greensboro, N.C, and a Footwear Center will be in Stratham, N.H. All are expected to be operational during the first half of 2014.

In 2003, The North Face began sponsoring what is now known as the Freeride World Tour and in 2011 became a founding partner when the USSA announced the new U.S. Freeskiing brand and team. Earlier this year, The North Face furthered its long-time support of freeskiing with a broadened focus on both elite and development direction in the sport through the new U.S. Freeskiing Rookie Team.

The U.S. Freeskiing Rookie Team provides support and training with coaches for teen athletes looking to advance their skills and competition level in both halfpipe and slopestyle skiing with the goal of eventually making the U.S. Freeskiing Pro Team. Last month, The North Face also announced the fourth season of The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series (PPOS), which

was founded in 2010 and features slopestyle and halfpipe skiing competitions. As one of the only open-format event series in North America, amateurs have the opportunity to compete alongside top pros and advance their athlete rankings.

"The North Face is a brand that truly understands the freeskiing community and our athletes," said Mike Jaquet, CMO of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association. "They have once again demonstrated that with the new U.S. Freeskiing Competition uniforms and their unique approach in delivering not only top-of-the-line technical performance, but also keeping the athletes' individual styles in mind while still providing a cohesive look for the team."

CALENDAR For full year calendar go to sportsonesource.com/events

NOVEMBER

| 1-3 | NBS Fall Athletic Market Austin, TX | |
|----------|--|--|
| 5-7 | TAG Fall/Winter Show St. Louis, MO | |
| 15-17 | A.D.A. Fall Show San Antonio, TX | |
| 24-26 | Sports Inc. Athletic Show Las Vegas, NV | |
| DECEMBER | | |
| 2-4 | EORA SE Winter Market Asheville, NC | |
| 3-4 | WWSRA NW Early Preview Seattle, WA | |
| 3-5 | MRA December Market Lansing, MI | |
| 4-6 | FFANY New York, NY | |
| 10-11 | EORA FLA Winter Market Punta Gorda, FL | |
| 10-11 | WWSRA NorCal Early Preview TBA | |
| 11-12 | Atlanta Shoe Market Atlanta, GA | |
| JANUARY | | |
| 6-8 | ATA Show Nashville, TN | |
| 7-9 | MWSRA January Show Madison, WI | |
| 7-9 | WWSRA Rocky Mtn Preview Denver, CO | |
| 7-9 | WWSRA Northwest Preview Portland, OR | |

 9-11
 Surf Expo Orlando, FL

 13-14
 WWSRA Intermountain Preview Salt Lake City, UT

- 13-15 WWSRA NorCal Early Preview Reno, NV
- 14-17 SHOT Show Las Vegas, NV
- 15-18 NBS Winter-Specialty Market Fort Worth, TX

| 16-18 | Sports Licensing & Tailgate Show Las Vegas, NV | |
|----------|--|--|
| 17-19 | Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS) Long Beach, CA | |
| 21 | ORWM Demo Day TBA | |
| 22-25 | Outdoor Retailer Winter Market Salt Lake City, UT | |
| 30-2 | SIA Snow Show Denver, CO | |
| FEBRUARY | | |
| 3-4 | SIA On-Snow Demo Copper Mountain, CO | |
| 3-4 | SIA Nordic Demo Copper Mountain, CO | |
| 5-7 | FFANY New York, NY | |
| 5-8 | Sports Inc. Outdoor Show Phoenix, AZ | |
| 6-10 | NBS Semi-Annual Market Fort Worth, TX | |
| 9-11 | EORA SE February Show Greenville, SC | |
| 10-13 | Worldwide Spring Show Reno, NV | |
| 11-13 | MWSRA February Show Madison, WI | |
| 18-19 | MWSRA New Model Demo Hastings, MN | |
| MARCH | | |
| 4-5 | SFIA National Health Through Fitness Day Washington, DC | |
| 14-16 | Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS) Atlantic City, NJ | |
| APRIL | | |
| | | |
| 4-6 | Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS) | |

Orlando, FL

Phoenix, AZ

7-8

SFIA Litigation & Risk Management Summit

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Open Air Demo AUGUST 5, 2014