

# SGB

ISSUE 1404  
JANUARY 27, 2014

# WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY



# RUN WITH CONFIDENCE THIS WINTER



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## MOVERS & SHAKERS

**Coolcore**, the maker of chemical-free cooling material, promoted **Kevin McCarthy** to CEO and appointed **Donna L. Flood** as COO.

**Skins Compression**, the maker of gradient compression sportswear, hired **Robin Barsantee** as the brand's new national sales director. Prior to joining Skins, Barsantee held positions at Titleist, Polar, Zoot and most recently, Timex.

**GU Energy Labs** hired **Adam Chamberlain** to join the company as VP of marketing after having spent nearly seven years at Black Diamond Equipment.

**The Clymb**, the online retailer of outdoor and active lifestyle gear, is bolstering its executive team with the addition of chief marketing officer, **Tom Vogl**. Vogl worked in top marketing positions for Dell, REI and Redfin.

**Wally Barker** has taken over as managing director of **Five Ten's** worldwide businesses while retaining his current title of chief financial officer. **Laura Sanders** has been reinstated to lead Five Ten's global marketing efforts.

**Petzl America** appointed **Oliver McLeod** to the new Petzl Technical Institute manager position.

**Kamik**, a division of Genfoot, Inc., appointed **Michel Benoit** as its chief marketing officer. In his role, Benoit will oversee product development, sales and marketing initiatives from Kamik's Montreal office.

**Icebreaker** said **Dion Taylor** would be joining the company as general manager for Europe. He was formerly CEO of a specialist ski clothing & equipment retailer, Snow+Rock.

**Rocket Dog**, the maker of women's and children's footwear, hired **Scott Weaver** as its VP of sales.

**Accell North America** named **Steve Chapin** as director of marketing for Raleigh and Lapierre bicycles.

**2XU** ("Two Times You") has hired former tennis professional **Randy Becker** to head sales operations in the tennis and golf markets in the U.S.



The 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) is a national collaborative effort to put America's youth and veterans to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America's natural and cultural resources.

## SECRETARY JEWELL SOLICITS \$20 MILLION FOR EXPANDING CONSERVATION CORPS

Speaking at the Outdoor Industry Association's Industry Breakfast before the start of the annual Outdoor Retailer Winter Market trade show at the Salt Palace in downtown Salt Lake City, UT, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell outlined her goal to raise \$20 million from private partners by 2017 to support the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC).

The 21CSC, launched by the Obama Administration as part of the America's Great Outdoors program, is a national collaborative effort to put America's youth and veterans to work protecting, restoring, and enhancing America's natural and cultural resources.

Already an initial group of nearly 100 organizations have been approved as 21CSC partner organizations that can provide work opportunities through supervised crews or small teams. In the coming months, the 21CSC National Council, made up of eight federal departments and agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, will focus on recruiting additional member organizations.

Jewell first outlined her youth initiative in a speech at the National Press Club in October where she emphasized the need to bridge the growing disconnect between young people and the great outdoors. The goals of Interior's youth initiative for the next four years include:

- **PLAY** - Interior will develop or enhance outdoor recreation partnerships in a total of 50 cities over the next four years to create new, systemic opportunities for outdoor play for more than 10 million young people.
- **LEARN** - Provide educational opportunities to at least 10 million of the nation's K through 12-student population annually. In addition to welcoming students into nature's classroom, developing and strengthening new online education resources, to reach more students.
- **SERVE** - Engage 1 million volunteers annually on public lands, effectively tripling the numbers today. It is known that many more people are interested in volunteering at national parks, wildlife refuges, and public lands; but there are often insufficient staff resources to coordinate them. In order to achieve the volunteer goal, a renewed emphasis will be placed on volunteer coordination and management.
- **WORK** - To develop the next generation of lifelong conservation stewards and ensure our own skilled and diverse workforce pipeline, Interior will provide 100,000 work and training opportunities to young people within our bureaus and through public-private partnerships. As part of this effort, the Interior aims to raise an additional \$20 million to support the youth work and training opportunities.

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## NOTRE DAME SWITCHING TO UNDER ARMOUR



Under Armour Founder and CEO Kevin Plank joined University Vice President and Director of Athletics Jack Swarbrick to formally introduce the alliance.

The University of Notre Dame and Under Armour announced a new 10-year partnership at a press conference on the school's Indiana campus, ending Adidas' 17-year sponsorship agreement. Under Armour Founder and CEO Kevin Plank joined University Vice President and Director of Athletics Jack Swarbrick to formally introduce the alliance.

As part of the 10-year agreement, Under Armour will exclusively design and supply the footwear, apparel, and equipment for training and game-day uniforms for each of the university's men's and women's varsity athletics teams.

"Notre Dame is the standard-bearer of excellence in collegiate athletics and is one of the most recognizable and admired universities in the world," said Plank. "It's an honor and privilege to have the opportunity to dedicate our passion and innovation for making athletes better into this game-changing partnership."

"In as much as this represents the largest financial commitment ever made by a brand to a university, it will provide the critical resources we need to enable our student-athletes to compete at the highest levels," said Swarbrick. "But perhaps what makes me most excited is the overall level of commitment and partnership as reflected in what may be the most wide-ranging overall relationship anywhere in college athletics. That is demonstrated in both the terms of the agreement and the unique feature that makes Notre Dame a shareholder in Under Armour, It is reflected in a shared desire to collaborate in areas such as sport technology, product development, and athlete performance."

The brand also plans to integrate the university into its wide-ranging story-telling efforts, including global marketing campaigns, social media initiatives, in-store promotions and grassroots activations.

Notre Dame is Under Armour's thirteenth Division 1 all-school partnership.



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## VOORMI RETAIL CONCEPT

Voormi, innovator of domestically sourced precision blended wool, unveiled the details of its innovative new “hybrid mobile” retail strategy for Fall 2014.

The unique approach is designed to address challenges independent brands face in today’s retail climate, combining the “experience-based benefits of pop-up retail” with the “local support, accessibility and expertise of specialty retail.”

The Voormi hybrid pop-up approach will be based on matching real-time demand and supply, beginning at the 2014 SIA Snow Show in Denver, CO. Voormi will be opening their 2014 event schedule, seeking forward-thinking retailers interested in hosting its brand-new converted sled trailer throughout the year.

“If there’s one thing we’re convinced of, it’s that the specialty retail environment is going to change pretty dramatically over the next 10 years. Consolidation, mono-brand retail, the continued evolution of online and mobile shopping platforms, and the increasing pressure to drive earlier and earlier buying decisions are all putting pressure on the smaller, more localized retailers and brands this industry so badly needs to thrive,” said Tim Smith, director of brand marketing for Voormi. “Our goal here is to find yet another way to promote specialty retailers as the hub of a more localized, cutting edge, and independent movement”

“For Voormi, this strategy allows us to leverage the quick-turn benefits of our domestic/small batch approach to manufacturing, tell the unique story behind our brand and offer relevant products as they become available, not as traditional buying cycles would dictate. For the retailer it addresses some of the key pain points of inventory and long lead decision-making. We hope it sets the stage for specialty retail to become a direct conduit to smaller, more local brands.”

Headquartered in Southwest Colorado, Voormi’s mission is “to simplify and streamline performance apparel and outerwear for backcountry travel” with precision blends of domestically sourced fine-micron wool in combination with synthetic fibers to push the boundaries of technical clothing. Made in the U.S., the Fall 2013 product collection features base and mid-layers engineered to meet the demands of high-elevation mountain pursuits and backcountry adventure. ■



Voormi Trailer  
Photos courtesy  
Voormi



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# Best Practices for the Retail Floor

Build, create and discover urgency to help close a sale.

By William H. Kendy



## Building Urgency

Anyone who has ever sold - be it in retail or on an outbound basis - knows the importance of closing a sale. You can be the nicest person in the world, know how to build rapport, know your product inside and out, and the selling process... but if you can't ink a deal, you are just a professional conversationalist.

Part of the process of closing is to build urgency. You need to get the customer "off the dime" and make a decision. Obviously, we all want to hear a "yes" If we hear a "no" that allows us the opportunity to track back, make sure we know what is important to the customer, and re-position our offering. The last thing we want to hear is, "I need to think about it," "I need to discuss this with my wife, mom, best buddy, long lost Uncle Joe," or "I'll be back"

Don't kid yourself. Not many people are really going to think about your proposal or product and certainly won't agonize over whether they buy your product or not. Out of sight, out of mind.

Sure, some cautious, indecisive customers will actually think about it and a few may come back and buy, but most won't. Getting an "I need to think about it" response is basically getting a camouflaged "no" and it limits your options.

## Why Do Customers Respond This Way?

In some cases it is simply because they honestly do have a hard time making and justifying a buying decision. These are people that are constantly on their cell phones looking for affirmation from a third party. Millennials are constantly on their cell phones to get opinions and re-assurance.

Then there are people who have difficulty and are uncomfortable saying no to anyone. They will make up excuses not to be the bearer of bad tidings, put you off and hope you will forget about the whole thing.

In other cases they will "fib" instead of telling you truth. It may be that they don't want to hurt your feelings or come right out and tell you your product doesn't fit the bill. We're all guilty of this.

## Is It The Right Fit?

If customers only want to spend a certain amount of money and you are advocating something more expensive, chances are that they will use the "I have to think about it" excuse to get off the hook.

You have to dig deeper to find out what they really want and that may not necessarily be what you think is the right solution. If you want to stay the course and sell that customer something more expensive, you have to create value and a desire to take action now.

## Not Enough Value

There is a true distinction between price and value. A \$15 hammer may be priced fairly but if it is only worth \$12 in the eyes of the customer, they won't buy it. You can sell a higher priced item if the customer perceives value. Creating value means taking product features and converting them to benefits and explaining how those benefits are important.

Features are what are on the box, what the product is made of, how it is made and all of the other specifications. Material, size, weight and manufacturing processes are all features.

Benefits are what features mean to customers, specifically the customer you are trying to sell.

If you are in the backpacking business the features of a premium backpack include high-tech durable fabric, top-quality construction, light weight, multiple pockets and fasteners, state-of-the-art hydration system and other amenities that may not be available on other packs. The benefits are that the fabric is puncture proof and sheds water like a duck. The real benefits to the individual customer is that they can go through the toughest cover and terrain, the worst torrential downpours, and not have to worry about the pack coming apart or survival gear getting wet putting them in a precarious if not life threatening situation.

Furthermore, they have room for gear they don't need, will never go thirsty and, because of the light weight, they can trek forever and get less fatigued than if they were carrying a heavier pack.

That all culminates in customer peace of mind.

Lastly, they can be the first of their group of backpacker buddies to have the newest and coolest backpack available on the market. Bragging rights come with the sale. People buy by emotion and justify by logic.

## Creating Urgency

Shopping in your store should be a pleasant, non-pressure experience for customers. Still, if you want to keep the doors open, you need to move those customers to action. You can't pay bills based on "Be Backs" and you need to insert a little pressure.

One of the first things to establish is that customers like and want the product. Then it's a matter of finding out why they are hesitating to commit.

One of the best ways to address this is to reiterate everything that they said they wanted back to them. "You said you wanted an ultra-light weight pack...right?" "You wanted something that was tougher than nails?" "You required a hydration system... correct?" "You said that you needed a ton of pockets for all of your gadgets..." and "You said you wanted this in time for the trip you are taking in April...right?" Then comes the question, "What is missing from this pack that is preventing you from buying it?"

This really isn't being pushy; it's just "nudging" your customers a little bit. Retail consultant and author Ron Martin defines nudging as a gentle push to help customers make a buying decision.

"People don't mind being nudged in a direction they want to go," said Martin. "Nudging your customer should only be done when you are sure that they want the product."

At the very least, a nudge will expose the customer's real objection and it gives you a point of reference. If the customer says it costs more than he wanted to spend today, you have an opportunity to ask questions to define his objections.

How much "more" is it? You may be able to value-add the sale by including some high margin collateral or inexpensive incentive items. Or perhaps there's a lower priced pack you can show them.

And what does he or she mean by "today?" Can (and will) he buy it next week when he gets paid? A small deposit could hold it. Can he put it on layaway? Does he qualify for special in-store financing?

Distinguish between Situations and Conditions. A situation is something that you can affect, while a condition is not. It is a situation if a customer can't afford something today but can on payday. It is a condition if the customer is unemployed or has a set amount of money they have been given by their parents for this product. You can't do much about that.

Try to create excitement and fun by getting customers involved in the moment, painting a picture in their mind of how they are going to use and enjoy the purchase. Use third party endorsements, published articles as credentials, and experiences of other customers who used that product.

Honestly stack the balance sheet on the purchase side.

Get some momentum going and remember that if someone is consistently saying yes it is hard to switch gears and say no.

There are entire books written on effective sales closes but none of them are worth anything if you are not in the urgency frame of mind and recognize that urgency is the driving force behind your customer's decision to buy.

Nothing is really going to change in the next few days regarding someone's ability to purchase. If you've established that they like and want the item, and they are qualified to purchase it, there is no time like the present.

We can't necessarily create urgency, but we can discover it. ■

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# Gizmos and Gadgets

When it comes to gizmos, gadgets and accessories there is no lack of offerings for retailers. From optics to cooking, to lightweight clothing and accessories to portable energy devices, there's a plethora of very cool stuff available.

By William H. Kendy

## Charging Into The Wild

For those cold weather enthusiasts who want to get away but stay connected, running out of juice in the outdoors can be aggravating and inconvenient. To stay charged up and wired in the "off-the-grid" backcountry there are some options.

Bushnell Outdoors offers the PowerSync line of nine lightweight portable power products that include both solar and battery devices. Each product is housed in a durable, rubber-armored case built to protect the solar panel and onboard high-capacity lithium-ion battery. The line has advanced amorphous silicon thin film solar technology that performs in less-than-full sunlight, and features a rollable or foldable design offering more solar surface area at less weight. Redundant wiring throughout the solar panel allows each cell to collect energy independently, meaning a damaged cell won't diminish the overall performance.



Bushnell Outdoors PowerSync SolarWrap

The PowerSync battery line includes four products - three featuring high-capacity lithium ion batteries and one that includes four rechargeable AA batteries.

The Power Charger has two USB ports and a field light for nighttime use. Available with a dual battery and two USB outputs or a single battery and one USB output.

The five solar products range in price from \$60 to \$300, and the four battery products cost from between \$55 and \$100.

Industrial Revolution has partnered with Swedish company myFC to distribute the myFC PowerTrek, a portable fuel cell charger, in the U.S. myFC PowerTrek charges smart phones, cameras and other USB-compatible devices quickly through a clean-energy process triggered by ordinary water. It never needs to be plugged in to recharge.

"Like solar, it actually generates power, yet it does it on demand. This makes myFC PowerTrek a better fit for



Industrial Revolution myFC PowerTrek

emergencies or in locations or times of the day when solar is less than optimal," said Graeme Esarey, Industrial Revolution's director of marketing and product development.

The myFC PowerTrek is fueled with power generating "pucks." Water is poured into a section of the puck to activate the clean-energy hydrogen conversion process, with no harmful emissions. Within minutes, the unit is ready to produce power for USB-charged devices - smart phones can be powered up from zero to full charge just as quickly as they would be if plugged into an outlet. A single puck charges the myFC PowerTrek for approximately 2.5 to 3 hours. It also includes a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, which can be initially charged through an outlet, a USB computer port or the unit's fuel cell with the use of a puck. It comes with cables fitted with three different tips: micro, mini-USB and an Apple compatible tip. Retail for \$230 and a three-pack of pucks costs \$13.

Goal Zero provides portable solar power systems that power a variety of USB, AC and DC devices anywhere and at anytime including full solar energy systems, solar panels, power packs and accessories; each designed to work in concert with each other.

The Sherpa 100 Power Pack represents the latest in efficient battery technology wrapped into a portable, lightweight package. Designed to power all the gear in your kit, the Sherpa 100's array of ports include ultra-fast, smart USBs

Goal Zero Sherpa 100 Power Pack



for phones and tablets, a 12V port for lights, an innovative port specifically for laptops, and a detachable AC inverter for DSLR cameras. The device recharges from the wall or car - and combined with Goal Zero's portable line of solar panels, it recharges from the power of the sun. The Sherpa 100 Recharger retails for \$350 and the AC Inverter for \$50.

## Do You See What I See?

Nikon's new Aculon T01 Binocular is compact, bright and portable and weighs less than seven ounces. It combines Nikon's quality optics with a sleek new look to create a binocular that can be easily taken anywhere. It is available in 8x21 and 10x21. The 8x model comes in white, blue and orange, while the 10x model comes in black and red.



Nikon Aculon T01 Binocular

Each binocular is built with multilayer-coated, Eco-Glass lenses for images that are bright, crisp and full of detail. The ergonomic design features turn-and-slide rubber eyecups that make it possible for the user to position his or her eyes at the correct eye-point and the large central focus knob makes it easy to locate the object being viewed. Retail \$70.

## You Are What You Wear

The Montane Tourbillon Gaiter utilizes lightweight nylon-faced, 3-layer eVent and Granite Stretch waterproof material and is patterned and built to create a gaiter that not only has stretch articulation, but also breathability and water resistance. It features reinforced Raptor UTL kick panels around the rear upper heel to create a tight seal around the boot top and offers a 'hockey stick' front Velcro closure system that reduces excess fabric across the top of the boot for comfort. Available in black and weighs 7.4 ounces and is priced at \$99.



Montane  
Tourbillon Gaiter

With a wireless remote, cordless battery and built-in thermostat, ThermaCell Heated Insoles provide continuous warmth for up to five hours and can be used in most footwear and even waders. The water resistant insoles can be customized to fit any shoe size from women's 4.5 to men's 13, and are available in small to xx-large.

The high-tech wireless remote gives fingertip control between medium heat (100°F), high heat (111°F), and no



ThermaCell  
Heated Insoles

heat, all while feet remain comfortable through the use of a built-in thermostat. Each remote features a uniquely coded, highly reliable radio frequency transmitter that is paired to one set of insoles and has a range of seven feet. It can easily attach to zippers and belts or stored in a pocket. The insoles can be recharged in a car and retail for \$130.

LL Bean's Power Stretch Gloves for men are lightweight, breathable and form fitting. Made of Polartec Power Stretch polyester fabric, they are wind and water resistant. The gloves feature patches on the palms and fingers and double layer cuffs and are machine washable at \$30.



LL Bean's Power  
Stretch Gloves



Metolius 3/4-Finger  
Glove

For the dyed-in-the-wool technical climber Metolius offers a new lightweight 3/4-finger lightweight climbing glove. Made of goat hide leather, this stitched glove is soft and sensitive and provides excellent dexterity and rope feel which allows the wearer to have better control repelling or belaying. The corded nylon back is form fitting and offers a four-way stretch and retails for \$27.

Sherpa Adventure Gear felt it made no sense to throw out perfectly good yarn that remained after making hats so they utilized the material to produce hand-



Sherpa Adventure Gear  
Rimjhim Handwarmers  
and Hat

knit, colorful Rimjhim Handwarmers and Hats. Both are made from 100 percent wool yarn and lined with a soft, itch free 100 percent Polarfleece polyester lining. The "wristlets" weigh 3.6 ounces and the hat comes in at 3.8 ounces and retails for \$25.

The hats and are hand knit in Nepal, providing employment for women and their families and the sale of every Sherpa Adventure Gear product benefits the education of Sherpa children.

### Just For Safety's Sake

ICEdot, an emergency ID and notification service for athletes and outdoor enthusiasts, and HzO, creators of WaterBlock technology which waterproofs electronic gadgets from the inside out, have partnered to bring WaterBlock technology to the ICEdot Crash Sensor - a small safety device that mounts onto any helmet. When paired with the ICEdot



ICEdot  
Crash  
Sensor

app on a smartphone, the system can detect sudden motion changes, forces or impacts, notifying emergency contacts about a potential accident and sending the owner's GPS coordinates, if its built-in alarm is not turned off manually.

With the addition of HzO's WaterBlock technology, the ICEdot Crash Sensor can be transported to any outdoor destination without fear of damage from rain, snow or rapids and retails for \$149.

"Outdoor enthusiasts such as snowboarders and kayakers are continuously exposed to water. Our partnership with HzO and the addition of WaterBlock technology to the ICEdot Crash Sensor ensures all athletes are protected, no matter the environmental elements they encounter," said Chris Zenthoefer, CEO of ICEdot. ■



# Super Bowl of Retail Hits NYC

By Thomas J. Ryan

With the arrival of New York's first Super Bowl, local retailers joined several iconic sports brands in heralding the occasion.

LIDS Sports Group partnered with Macy's to open the world's largest NFL Shop, spanning 36,000 square feet of retail floor space. Located on the fourth floor of Macy's Herald Square, the shop features a Custom Zone to personalize Super Bowl apparel and accessories along with AFC and NFC zones featuring the caps, tees, hoodies, jerseys, and jackets from the championship and all 32 teams that will outfit the most faithful and fashionable fan. Brands include Nike, New Era, '47 Brand, Touch by Alyssa Milano and others.

The NFL Shop at Super Bowl opened on January 19 and will remain open until February 4. The hoopla included a green carpet roll-out of one-of-a-kind, interactive fan experiences, player appearances, video presentations, team trivia and a countdown clock to Super Sunday.

"LIDS Sports Group is proud to once again bring its sports retail expertise to Super Bowl fans," said Ken Kocher, president of Lids Sports Group. "Over the past few years we have provided NFL fans and shoppers an elevated retail experience and our operation in New York City will undoubtedly live up to and exceed the standard we have set."

The Macy's Herald Square store lies adjacent to Super Bowl Boulevard, a four-day festival starting January 29 from Broadway between 34th and 47th street featuring local music; food and beverage; television broadcasts; interactive fan events, including a toboggan ride; NFL sponsor activations, and NFL player autograph signings and appearances.

Modell's Sporting Goods has converted four of its Manhattan stores - 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue, 42nd Street and Vanderbilt Avenue, Herald Square and 86th Street and Third Avenue - into Super Bowl Central, replete with massive game-day logos and fan merchandise presentations. Activities include Daily News sports writer Mike Lupica interviewing former players about the game, player appearances, street teams, raffles, game-day parties and a VIP/invitation-only party featuring Alyssa Milano, the face of the Touch line of sports apparel for women.

Bloomingdale's is also installing pop-up shops featuring merchandise from Nike, Junk Food, Smart Turnout and Freshman Cap. It also auctioning 48 football helmets designed by members of the Council of Fashion Designers of America with proceeds heading to the NFL Foundation. Saks will likewise be holding four days of events, pop-up shops, as well as a charity event.

Beyond Nike's and New Era's omnipresence as the official licensees of the NFL, Under Armour, with deep roots in football, is opening a 12,500-square-foot interactive space to introduce its new holiday product line and showcase its SpeedForm Apollo running shoe, which was made in a bra factory and lands at retail on February 28. Visitors can try out the shoe while jumping on a treadmill or simulate catching a punt from an NFL kicker through a motion technique footwear zone. Several athletes will make appearances.

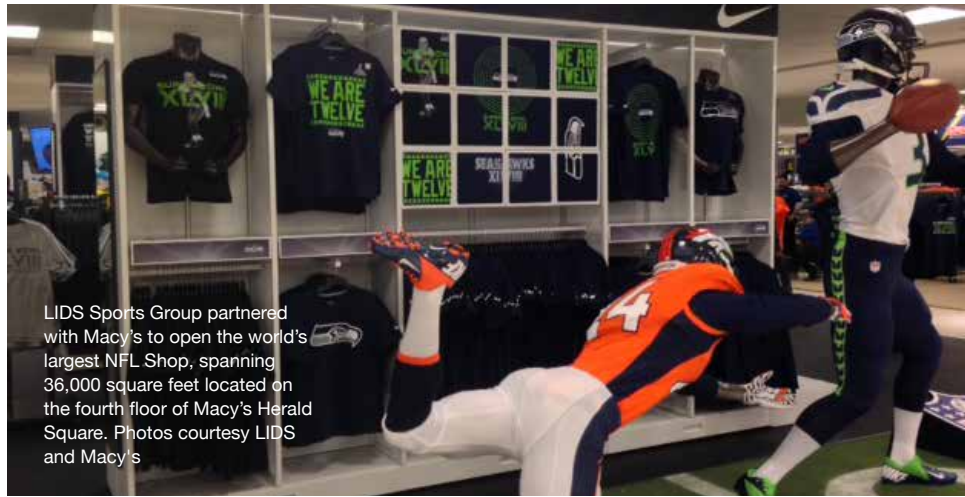
Starter, the iconic satin jacket that is being brought back through G-III Sports and the brand's owner, Iconix, has opened a three-week long "Starter Clubhouse" pop-up store at the brand's first-ever retail space at the Paramount Hotel at 46th Street.

The store will stay open from January 17 until February 9 and feature appreciation nights, celebrity DJ sets, celebrity poker tournament, professional athlete appearances, and live radio/TV/web broadcasts.

Products available for sale include a wide assortment of NFL, NBA and MLB team jackets as well as the Starter Black Label premium collection featuring collaborations with prominent streetwear designers. A special-edition Super Bowl XLVIII Jacket will also be showcased exclusively at the Starter Clubhouse.

"We are excited to work with the Paramount Hotel to celebrate the New York / New Jersey-hosted Super Bowl XLVIII and recognize the die-hard fans with the Starter Jacket - the most legitimate testimony of team loyalty," said Carl Banks, president of G-III Sports. "We couldn't think of a better location than Times Square to honor the brands' sports heritage and fashion tradition giving it premium positioning during Super Bowl XLVIII."

The game is expected to draw 400,000 visitors and raise \$500 to \$600 million in revenue for the New York and New Jersey region, according to a study conducted by the NY/NJ Super Bowl Host Committee. ■



LIDS Sports Group partnered with Macy's to open the world's largest NFL Shop, spanning 36,000 square feet located on the fourth floor of Macy's Herald Square. Photos courtesy LIDS and Macy's



Nike Aeroloft Summit Jacket Super Bowl Edition Photo courtesy Nike



Starter opened a three-week long "Starter Clubhouse" pop-up store at the Paramount Hotel located at 46th Street in NYC.

Starter Satin Jacket Photos courtesy Starter



Photos courtesy of Columbia Sportswear

## COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR UNVEILS 2014 INTERNATIONAL LINEUP OF OLYMPIC UNIFORMS

Columbia maintains its democratic principles while upping its game through 2014 Olympic uniforms.

By Aaron H. Bible

Although the brand name may be instantly recognizable - from anglers in Florida to skiers in Colorado and everyone who steps outdoors in the company's home state of Oregon - Columbia Sportswear, now 75 years old, is hanging its tag on a new line of apparel this winter: the official Olympic uniforms of Freestyle Ski teams from the United States, Russia and Canada. Columbia Sportswear Company unveiled the 2014 Olympic uniforms at the Deer Valley Resort's opening Freestyle World Cup press conference, January 8, 2014 and will produce uniforms for the following disciplines:

- » United States - Moguls, Aerials
- » Canada - Moguls, Aerials, Slopestyle, Halfpipe
- » Russia - Moguls, Aerials, Slopestyle, Halfpipe, Skicross

Columbia first tried its hand at Olympic-caliber apparel design with the highly successful Canadian freestyle ski team during the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver. And in so doing, the company said it took as much away from the Olympic uniform program for its future consumer products as it gave to the Olympians in existing Columbia apparel technologies.

One of the most prevalent technologies in the new Olympic uniforms is Columbia's proprietary Omni-Heat Thermal Reflective, a proven success

that the company continues to integrate into nearly every product from outerwear to baselayers to footwear. Coincidentally, the technology was first used in the Canadian Olympic uniforms at the 2010 Games, and then released in consumer styles in Fall 2010.

And that's the idea for the 2014 Olympic line as well. Leveraging its current lineup of technologies, and giving Olympians a few extras no one has seen yet, each country's uniforms were custom designed to deliver protection, style, performance and unique national aesthetics intended to be a lifelong keepsake for the athletes.

Customizable components like interchangeable shoulder patches, custom nameplates, and removable pockets allow the athletes to personalize the uniform without compromising the cohesive look of the team.

"This is a dream come true for a lot of us. To build these uniforms, to work with the athletes, a lot of us are pretty big fans of the sports, and it allows us to live vicariously through them," said Columbia Division Lead Designer for Outerwear, Debra Criss.

Based on extensive athlete input, Columbia's design team integrated innovative details such as a unique snow camouflage pattern to help mask body movement - a key judging component for moguls skiers. The uniforms also feature a patent-pending Columbia-designed low-profile



LightRail Zipper, which is bonded directly onto laser-cut fabric, eliminating the need for zipper tape and resulting in one of the lightest-weight waterproof zippers in the world.

According to Scott Trepanier, senior manager of PR and promotions at Columbia - and who has spearheaded this project since its inception - due to the global, multi-national nature of the project, as well as the nimble turn-around times required to complete the uniforms on time for three different countries and four different sports, Columbia chose to manufacture the uniforms at one of its top apparel facilities in Vietnam.

Trepanier said the company's close working relationship with producers there allowed them to jump the many political and time-line hurdles and make changes quickly to meet the needs of each team in time for the Olympics.

"Building world-class products that contribute to athlete success is our number one priority. While Columbia is based in Portland, OR, where it was founded 75 years ago, we're now a global brand, serving outdoor enthusiasts in approximately 100 countries. We are mindful of how our uniform production plans impact each of our sponsored teams, which comprise a variety of nationalities," said Trepanier in a statement to SGB.

"The U.S., Canadian and Russian uniforms, while customized for each nations' teams and athletes, are variations of the same primary underlying product designs. To ensure the highest degree of consistency and design fidelity, we designed and prototyped the uniforms in our U.S. headquarters, and produced them at a well-respected apparel factory in Vietnam, selected for its proven ability to manufacture premium performance outerwear in compliance with our Standards of Manufacturing Practices," said Trepanier. "We are confident that these uniforms will meet the incredibly high performance expectations of our sponsored teams." Columbia Sportswear is also a member of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition.

"For us, we love the sport," continued Trepanier. "What they need, what's distracting. That's the most important part of the process."

"We were incredibly impressed with the level of interaction we had with Columbia's design team," said U.S. freestyle mogul skier Heather McPhie. "They met with us several times and genuinely wanted to learn about what we needed. To be included in the design process like that was fantastic."

"We took a true collaborative approach. And the technology eventually makes its way to consumer product. We are 100 percent focused on building the best product. It wasn't marketed. It was sport and athlete built, and we got amazing feedback. It was everybody in the company sitting down," said Trepanier. Even the IOC was involved, carefully dictating logo placement and apparel regulations.

Trepanier also said the uniforms represent a coming-out time for Columbia Sportswear and the company's commitment to innovation, an "emotional rallying point for the company."

"It's the feedback. These athletes ski every single day, fly around the world chasing snow, training to achieve their dreams," said Trepanier. "As a result they're going to be testing our apparel and outerwear more than anyone on earth. It's an incredible asset for Columbia to have that as our feedback loop.



Team USA Olympic athletes: Moguls (Right) Heather McPhie; Aerials (Left) Dylan Ferguson

And these are folks who are not going to hold back on their feedback. They were actually blown away that we came out to the Olympic training center for their feedback. We want to be seen as ambassadors for the sport."

Not only does Columbia see itself as an ambassador for the sport of skiing, but also it's critical to them that they do so democratically.

"In the snowsports world, we're a democratic and utilitarian brand," said Trepanier. "The exciting thing about this sponsorship, and the reason we've continued this partnership, is that it's relevant to our customer. It's a direct connection. We have a team focus, a democratic approach."

"Given the global nature of the sponsorship it's amazing for the size of the team to get the approvals done and the timelines they are under. There's so many technical qualities to these pieces and we had to potentially change them at the drop of a hat... we needed flexibility from our factories to be able to pull that off," Trepanier said.

"Sheer scale; consistency; the global scale of the sponsorship, all played in to how we chose to develop," said Criss. "We did five or six versions of the art on the U.S. team pieces, and Canada had even more. Additionally, with each country, all the colors are red, white and blue...how do you make three uniforms totally different and still a nod to their countries? We spent as much time on color as we did on the design."

"In Freestyle skiing, how you look is as important as how you perform," said Zach Snyder, Columbia design director, graphics. "It was very important that when they first see that uniform that they're excited about it and they feel confident in it, and their confidence in it will translate into them performing well and doing their best."

From Snow Camo to specialized knee patches for mogul skiers, the uniforms are detail rich. Interchangeable arm patches are not only for customization but also for trading with other athletes. Custom zipper pulls and snaps further resonate with each country's history. And specialized features like reverse powder skirts (on the pants, not the jackets) and adjustable suspenders allow each discipline to tailor its own look.

On the inside, Omni-Heat Reflective plays off the screen printed logo artwork custom designed for each country. Intricate graphics speak to each country's heritage, from tattoo and motocross inspired U.S., to "True North Strong and Free" Canada, to orthodox and proud Russia. Each piece is not only sport-specific, but heritage specific as well. From disciplines as diverse as Skicross to Park and Pipe, and reaching across continents, each team has its own needs and expectations, a goal that Columbia hopes, and feels confident, that it met.

"We put so much energy into our sport, when we get the Olympic suit - it means everything," said Canadian ski team athlete Chloe Dufour-Lapointe. ■

# CALENDAR

For full year calendar go to [sportsources.com/events](http://sportsources.com/events)

## JANUARY

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

7-8 SFIA Litigation & Risk Management Summit  
Phoenix, AZ

27-30 NSGA Management Conference and  
Team Dealer Summit  
Indian Wells, CA

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Melbourne, FL 32935  
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f 321.242.7419  
[athleticdealersofamerica.com](http://athleticdealersofamerica.com)

**National Shooting Sports Foundation**  
Flintlock Ridge Office Center  
11 Mile Hill Road  
Newtown, CT 06470  
t 203.426.1320  
f.203.426.1087  
[nssf.org](http://nssf.org)

**National Sporting Goods Association**  
1601 Feehanville Drive / Suite 300  
Mount Prospect, IL 60056  
t 847.296.6742  
f 847.391.9827  
[nsga.org](http://nsga.org)

**Nation's Best Sports**  
4216 Hahn Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76117  
t 817.788.0034  
f 817.788.8542  
[nbs.com](http://nbs.com)

**Outdoor Industry Association**  
4909 Pearl East Circle / Suite 300  
Boulder, CO 80301  
t 303.444.3353  
f 303.444.3284  
[outdoorindustry.org](http://outdoorindustry.org)

**Sports & Fitness Industry Association**  
8505 Fenton St., Suite 211  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
t 301.495.6321  
f 301.495.6322  
[sfia.org](http://sfia.org)

**Snow Sports Industries America**  
8377-B Greensboro Drive  
McLean, VA 22102  
t 703.556.9020  
f 703.821.8276  
[snowsports.org](http://snowsports.org)

**Sports, Inc.**  
333 2nd Avenue North  
Lewistown, MT 59457  
t 406.538.3496  
f 406.538.2801  
[sportsinc.com](http://sportsinc.com)

**Sports Specialists Ltd.**  
590 Fishers Station Drive / Suite 110  
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t 585.742.1010  
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[sportsspecialistsltd.com](http://sportsspecialistsltd.com)

**Team Athletic Goods**  
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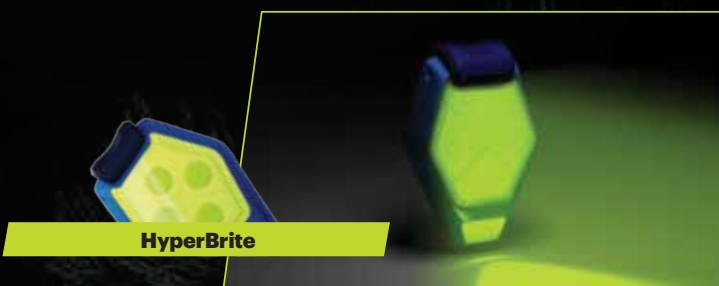
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