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ISSUE 1441
OCTOBER 13, 2014

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SportsOneSource Publications

Print Magazines: SGB, SGB Performance

Digital Magazine: SGB Weekly

Newsletters: Sports Executive Weekly,
The B.O.S.S. Report

News Updates: SGB, SGB Apparel, SGB Footwear,
SGB Outdoor, SGB Sportsman's, SGB Team Sports,

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Brand Strength Report, OIA VantagePoint,
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SPORTSONESOURCE

2151 Hawkins St. • Suite 200 • Charlotte • NC • 28203
SportsOneSource.com



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Cover Photo Courtesy Icespike

REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

Academy Sports + Outdoors will open a new store in Topeka, KS on October 24.

Better Baseball has plans to expand in the Atlanta metro area opening its second retail space located at 3220 Cumberland Drive, Chamblee, GA.

Dick's Sporting Goods opened its 19th store in Richmond, IN on October 10 at Richmond Village with a three-day grand opening celebration that ran through October 12.

Eastern Mountain Sports announced the opening of its store at MarketFair Mall in Princeton, N.J., which was remodeled to accommodate a bike shop, children's department, kayak and paddleboard rentals, and an exterior entrance from the mall parking lot.

Field & Stream, owned by Dick's Sporting Goods, announced the grand opening plans for four stores – Horseheads, NY; Altoona, PA; Rochester, NY; and Miamisburg, OH.

Flight 23, a partnership between Foot Locker's Footaction chain and Nike's Jordan brand that sells only Jordan merchandise, will open a 36,000-square-foot retail store in Chicago.

L.L. Bean is scheduled to open its first store in Colorado by mid-November 2014.

McFly Outdoors will open its third location in Bridgeport, WV in 2015. The new retail space will be in The Village at White Oaks located off Jerry Dove Drive in Bridgeport.

Orvis will open its second store in Huntsville, AL next month.

Outdoor Equipped, which operates outdoorequipped.com, will open its first store at 272 N. Front Street in downtown Wilmington, NC next month.

Under Armour is scheduled to open a Brand House store in Philadelphia according to a report published by the *Baltimore Business Journal*.



TIMEX

LAUNCHES 800-MILE CHARITY RELAY FROM CHICAGO TO NEW YORK CITY

Timex announced the launch of the Timex ONE Relay, an 800-mile, 22-day journey featuring more than 100 runners. The route spans two of the most iconic marathons in the world, Chicago and New York City and crosses Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and New York.

All relay participants will be outfitted with the Timex Ironman ONE GPS+, which will serve as Timex's version of a baton and will be passed from one runner to the next upon completion of each relay leg.

One of the first fitness smartwatches to offer phone-free connectivity, the Timex Ironman ONE GPS+ includes live messaging and tracking capabilities that enable consumers everywhere to follow the relay and the runners' progress in real-time and, more importantly, communicate directly with the runners by sending messages of encouragement. The full runner experience is brought to life at onerelay.timex.com, a site dedicated to the Timex ONE Relay. It includes an interactive route map that tracks the Relay's progress, runner profiles, and a message center enabling followers to send personalized notes to runners as well as photos and videos from the relay.

"Our goal for the Timex ONE Relay is to identify and empower a special group of runners as they hit the pavement to support the causes that matter most to them as we try to change the world one mile at a time," said Sam Martin, brand director of Timex Sports. "We're especially excited to elevate this program by connecting runners from around the world and allowing them to play an active role via social media, all of which will be made possible by the new Timex Ironman ONE GPS+."

The Timex ONE Relay launched on October 9 at the AT&T Michigan Avenue Flagship Store in Chicago at 6 p.m., where Bart Yasso, Chief Running Officer of *Runner's World Magazine*, kicked off the experience with a fun run, and gear clinic. All consumers are invited to join the relay at various destination points by visiting designated retail stops, many of which will be running specialty and select AT&T retail stores along the route. The Timex ONE Relay will conclude with an inclusive group run designed to celebrate the completion of the journey on October 30 in New York City.

The Timex Ironman ONE GPS+ has been developed in close collaboration with Qualcomm Connected Experiences, Inc., a subsidiary of Qualcomm, Inc.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Chrome Industries, a San Francisco-based company that designs and manufactures useful and durable gear for urban mobility, named **Chris Silverman** as its new president. He most recently led the global expansion for Australian-based Volley footwear.

Cindy Davis, president of **Nike Golf**, plans to retire from Nike. Davis joined Nike Golf USA as general manager and has served as president of Nike Golf since 2008. A successor has not yet been named

Craft Sportswear North America announced the hiring of **Ming Tan** as its sales rep for Northern California.

Flylow, a Colorado manufacturer of technical backcountry and resort ski clothing and accessories, hired **Kirby Laughlin** and **Matt Henry** as its newest sales reps.

Gap, Inc. announced that **Art Peck**, the president of its Growth, Innovation, and Digital division who has guided Athleta and Piperlime, was selected by the board of directors to succeed **Glenn Murphy** as the company's next CEO effective February 1, 2015.

Hillsound Equipment added **Orno Group** as its newest sales agency. Partners **Greg Danziger** and **Luisa Harkins** will represent the brand in the Rocky Mountain region covering Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico.

Patagonia added **Corey Simpson** to its Ventura-based public relations team as its PR & communications coordinator.

Respect Your Universe, the performance training and fitness brand with origins in MMA, hired **Juliet Korver** as product design director. Korver's past roles include stints at Lululemon, O'Neill, and Filmar.

The Adidas Group appointed English-born **Karen Parkin** as chief HR officer, effective November 1, 2014. Currently, Parkin is responsible for the global supply chain function within the Adidas Group. Jan Brecht, chief information officer of the Adidas Group, will take over this function in addition to his responsibilities as CIO.

USA Swimming suspended **Michael Phelps** for six months forcing him to withdraw from next year's world championships and taking away his funding from the sport's national governing body as a result of the Olympic champion's second DUI arrest.

Wolverine Worldwide appointed **Melissa A. Howell** to the position of SVP of global human resources. Howell has more than 24 years of experience in human resource management with General Motors Company, one of the world's largest automobile companies with well over 200,000 employees in over 150 countries.

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SOFTSCIENCE

ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL BRAND LAUNCH

Two footwear veterans, Scott Seamans, a Crocs founder and chief designer, and John Duerden, former president and COO of Reebok and a former CEO at Crocs, have launched a new brand, SoftScience, that promises to take "comfortable, casual footwear to an entirely new level."

"We set out to create a shoe that not only takes an uncompromising stand on comfort, but is stylish and fun, in a funky sort of way," said John Duerden, SoftScience president and CEO. "Shoes that, from both technical and style standpoints, are distinctive and work. We think this is the most comfortable shoe anyone will ever wear."

With two distinct styles – a lace up and a slip-on that can also be worn as a clog - both men and women can experience the comfort each style offers even after long hours on their feet.

"We began by designing a shoe which allows the foot to relax, is highly cushioned, stable, and lightweight. A shoe which provides immediate relief from those common foot discomforts which we can experience at all ages," continued Duerden. "We heard from athletes wearing them as a recovery shoe, golfers grateful for an ultra-light walking shoe, folks who work on their feet all day, and from podiatrists whose patients were finding pain relief by wearing our shoes."

Both sailing enthusiasts, Duerden and Seamans made sure their shoes were ideal for water use and effective on slippery decks – making their debut in this year's prestigious Newport – Bermuda sailing race.

At the core of the shoes' construction and personality is a proprietary closed cell foam called Trileon.

"Scott developed Trileon over many years," continues Duerden. "The use of Trileon in the footwear's removable and odor-resistant insoles and outsoles creates an impact-absorbent, stable shoe. They are also ultra-lightweight, weighing just six - ten ounces each."

The "science" in SoftScience is in the Levelast Universal Comfort Platform (UCP), the footbed form critical to the design. Featuring minimal elevation changes from heel to toe, the shoes keep the foot level to disperse body weight evenly across the sole. The durable, yet simple, design minimizes the need for adhesives and layers of material. Wearers can expect a roomy and relaxed fit, a stable platform, shock absorption inside, and an outsole that is slip resistant and non-marking.

The SoftScience Footwear collection is initially available in three styles - Casual, Boating and Fishing. Developed for men and women, styles include the Drift, an espadrille slip-on that can also be worn as a clog; and the lace-up Cruise, featuring a classic boating collar and laces to customize the fit. The third style, the Fin, features a self-draining system and a mesh upper to keep wearers on their feet while in the water and comfortable on land.

Incorporating a sense of fun, the collection infuses distinctive styling and a range of available colors, from popular khaki and black to electric orange and lime. Artist Jackson Pollack inspires the "Drift in the Painter" classic slip-on motif.

A man in athletic wear (a green and black long-sleeved shirt, black leggings, and a black beanie) is running on a paved path. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with trees, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall tone is warm and motivational.

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Photos courtesy National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD)



GIVING BACK

Sports Authority Partners with the National Sports Center for the Disabled

By Thomas J. Ryan

Sports Authority partnered with the National Sports Center for the Disabled (NSCD) in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Throughout the month of October, all Sports Authority locations nationwide will be collecting point-of-sale donations with the goal of raising at least \$150,000 for the NSCD. All proceeds will go

toward benefiting the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

Started in 1970 as a one-time ski lesson for children with amputations for the Children's Hospital of Denver, The National Sports Center for the Disabled has become one of the largest outdoor therapeutic recreation agencies in the world. Each year thousands of children and adults with disabilities take to the ski slopes, mountain trails, and golf courses to learn more about sports - and themselves. With specially trained staff and its own adaptive equipment lab, the NSCD teaches a variety of winter and summer sports and activities to individuals with almost any physical, cognitive, emotional, or behavioral diagnosis.

Each year more than 3,000 children and adults with disabilities participate in year-round sports and recreational NSCD programs. NSCD has facilities in Winter Park Resort and at Sports Authority Field at Mile High.

"We truly believe in the mission of the NSCD and are proud to partner with such an outstanding organization to help raise awareness and resources for a great cause," said Michael E. Foss, chief executive officer of Sports Authority. "We believe in celebrating the good in sport and the NSCD does a tremendous job of providing therapeutic sports and recreational programs for people with disabilities. We are excited for our employees and customers to come together in support of this great cause."

"We are grateful to have Sports Authority's support throughout the years. They have been a wonderful partner helping us raise awareness about our organization and providing financial support to the NSCD," said Becky Zimmermann, President and CEO of NSCD. "With October being National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we are especially thankful to have Sports Authority's help in enabling the human spirit through therapeutic sports and recreation." ■



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SGB Q&A

PAMELA GELSOMINI

President, OrthoLite

By Thomas J. Ryan

Founded in 1997, OrthoLite has quickly become the leading supplier of open cell foam insoles used by over 150 brands including Asics, Carhartt, New Balance, Merrell, Nike, Puma, Vans, and Timberland. However, while well known by brands in the OEM space, OrthoLite has launched a new “It’s What’s Inside” campaign to raise its level of awareness close to the same level with consumers. It also continues to push the envelope with an expanded range of technologies including soon-to-come scented insoles, the launch of a more consumer-friendly website; and a planned push into the burgeoning after-market insole market.

Pamela Gelsomini, president, talked with *SGB* about OrthoLite’s evolution and its next steps.

How did OrthoLite get its start? In the beginning, we worked closely with a chemist in Asia on the creation of a foam that brought a unique combination of benefits to the interior of the shoe. Traditionally insoles were not breathable, compressed over time, didn’t have any sustainable story, etc. OrthoLite was the first insole to combine the benefits of breathability, moisture management, anti-microbial function with long term cushioning in one foam. Now, OrthoLite open-cell foam technology is in more than 165 million pairs of athletic, casual, dress, work, and outdoor shoes each year. Working

with the brands, we have now created OrthoLite formulations that offer a multitude of performance properties in addition to the original cooler, drier, healthier, long-term cushioning story. Designers and developers can now choose from foams with high rebound, slow recovery/memory, eco-content, cutting technologies, custom fit, scents, etc.

How do you work with brands? We offer a tiered strategy to the brands so that they can use OrthoLite in all price points of shoes. For example, we offer all of our foams in sheet form so they can simply die-cut and place a flat OrthoLite insole into any shoe for a nominal increase in cost over traditional EVA material which does not breathe and will break down 50 to 70 percent over a short period of time. In higher end product, we can develop single or multi-density molded insoles to meet specific needs and price targets. Because we now have such a large range of foams (over 25 base formulations) it is easy for the customer to customize their comfort story and hit price targets; which are always a concern. We find that often the brands spec OrthoLite into a few shoes and then the business grows organically when they see the positive feedback from the consumers and retail. We believe OrthoLite is the easiest way for any brand to make a significant upgrade in comfort performance with a nominal increase in

price. The growth of the OrthoLite brand is due to the fact that the product works and as soon as someone puts it in their shoes, they get it.

Any new brand partnerships you want to elaborate on? In 2014 alone we furthered our partnership with major brands like Nike, Asics, Adidas, Clarks and also launched new partnerships with over 25 new brands including Airia, La Sportiva, Speedo, Allen Edmonds, Arcteryx, Globe, Huf, and Härkila. In January, we announced our continued relationship with Asics America and featured our insoles in the Asics Natural33 collection furthering over a decade-long partnership. In March we announced a new co-branded partnership with Swedish shoe brand Airia and included our X40 insoles in the Airia One running and marathon shoe. We also announced a new co-branded partnership with La Sportiva and have our insoles in the brand's



Spring/Summer 2014 men's and women's Mountain Running styles. In May, we announced a new two-year partnership with Speedo USA that features our technology in the FST, a cutting-edge new all-terrain shoe specially engineered for triathlon, trail running, and any activity in and around the water; the centerpiece of Speedo USA's expanded Footwear collection for 2014.

Who are your competitors on the OEM side? OrthoLite does not have any competitors only commodity products like EVA or poured PU that have been used for many years due to low pricing with minimal or no long term comfort value. OrthoLite is found inside almost every

OrthoLite Insoles



EcoPlush Die-cut



EcoPlush Molded



Imperial Plus Die-cut



Imperial Plus Die-cut



Imperial Molded



Imperial Plus Molded

major footwear brand. In addition, OrthoLite is the only brand that the major footwear brands print on their insoles to market the technology to their consumers. Over 60 brands currently co-brand with OrthoLite on their insoles and even more brands use an OrthoLite hangtag or box sticker to market the OrthoLite technology at retail.

What inspired the "It's What's Inside" campaign? OrthoLite insoles are comparable to "Intel Inside" in a computer or Gore-Tex in your clothes and OrthoLite technology is an important component that consumers should be looking for. The "It's What's Inside" advertising campaign allows consumers to make the connection that OrthoLite is the brand that footwear brands trust, and a leading factor of why consumers are so loyal to the shoes they love. Our goal is for every consumer to walk into a shoe store with the mindset that, if the shoe doesn't have OrthoLite, then it's not comfortable.

Will "It's What's Inside" have a retail POP element? The "It's What's Inside" campaign is currently present in advertising. While plans for a retail launch are still being determined, the new campaign further elevates OrthoLite's position in the marketplace. We also work very closely with the marketing teams at each brand on various promotions. Much like our product is 'customized' for every brand so is the messaging they use internally and at retail. We provide the brands with educational tools, floor mats, insole samples, signage, and a variety of other tools to spread the comfort story. A few brands like Lacoste have created POP displays at retail that call out the OrthoLite performance features on foam slabs and have large foam alligators for the consumer to feel the foam as they try on the shoes.

So you see more of a need for OrthoLite messaging at the retail level? Some brands today still use EVA insoles which will break down overtime and then changes the fit of the shoe. When consumers look to purchase a shoe, they should be looking for ones with OrthoLite insoles. Our insoles will retain their structure and are built for comfort. We see this as an important opportunity to educate consumers face-to-face at consumer and industry events. We have made great strides in changing the way runners, for example, feel about the inside of the shoes. Historically most runners immediately pulled the insole out of a new pair of shoes and put in an orthotic or



aftermarket insole. Now, the brands are focusing on the inside of the shoe and incorporating OrthoLite technology so the runner does not have to replace the insole in their products.

How do sponsorships help in getting your message out? OrthoLite has had a successful year of partnerships and sponsorships in 2014, including the Boston Marathon Expo, the *Runner's World* Heartbreak Hill Half Marathon, and the 33rd annual Hood to Coast Relay. Sponsoring these running events were great opportunities to engage with and educate thousands of runners and fitness enthusiasts from around the country while generating product trial. We created custom insoles for participants of the *Runner's World* Heartbreak Hill Half Marathon and the Hood to Coast Relay, which featured each course map, and had great consumer feedback – no one had to worry about getting lost on race day! Most recently, we've signed a one-year partnership with the Mammoth Track Club in Mammoth Lakes, CA. The Club has produced excellent runners who train at a high-performance facility, and we look forward to hearing product feedback from these elite athletes. In addition, we have ongoing partnerships with the American Trail Running Association (ATRA) and the Level Field Fund (LFF). OrthoLite has been a major supporter of ATRA, a non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation based in Colorado, for nearly a decade. Founded in 1996, ATRA's mission is to represent and promote trail and mountain running. OrthoLite is the founding sponsor of LFF (Level Field Fund) a grant-giving program that strives to bridge the gap in funding to uniquely talented athletes. In addition to financial support, for every pair of OrthoLite insoles sold, one dollar is donated directly to LFF.

How did you get involved with the Level Field Fund? Our partnership began in 2010 and by combining our efforts with LFF, we can ensure that talented athletes across the country reach their full potential. The partnership benefits so many promising individuals ensuring the

opportunity to achieve excellence in sports is not limited by one's financial situation. Since 2002, \$437,000 was divided into 226 grants for 129 different athletes in 15 sports, and 12 of these athletes have competed in the Olympics. We are thrilled that our partnership with the Level Field Fund has benefited these talented athletes and helped them to reach their goals and performance potential. It has been exciting to see the success of all of the athletes including those who competed in Sochi.

How does OrthoLite complement the growing aftermarket insole category? OrthoLite OEM offerings are not specific to a certain foot type or solve a specific foot problem as they are simply built for comfort. But the aftermarket insole category is undoubtedly a growing market and OrthoLite envisions developing an extended retail offering in the near future. We have a plan for a much bigger launch with a multi-product offering in the next 12 to 18 months. We would see this retail launch as a compliment to OrthoLite's OEM offerings allowing consumers to have the comfort of OrthoLite insoles in all of their shoes. On the OEM side, OrthoLite will continue to work with brand customers to create shoe components that are unique and customized for their products.

What is the website upgrade about? This new site better positions OrthoLite as a leader in the space, including testimonials that show the caliber of brands that use OrthoLite in their products and why they have for so many years. The website also includes a separate section for brand customers and consumers.

What newer technologies are gaining traction? OrthoLite Imperial and Imperial + foams were inspired by the need for high levels of cushioning in thinner applications like dress shoes, low profile athletic shoes, and strobrel applications. The Imperial foams are denser (.22 and .30) than traditional OrthoLite foams so there is more material under foot creating maximum cushioning and a higher level of rebound under foot. However, unlike traditional PU, they still offer the breathability, moisture management, and anti-microbial properties inherent in all OrthoLite foams. These foams can also be used in applications where poured PU was traditionally used creating the same levels of cushioning but with lighter weight and cooler, drier, healthier performance. On the eco-friendly side, EcoPlush foam replaces 25 percent of the petroleum traditionally found in PU formulations with a bio-oil formulation made from castor beans. It offers a great plush feel with all of the long-term cushioning, breathability, moisture management, and anti-microbial properties in traditional foams but brings the eco story to new levels further reducing their carbon footprint. Finally, we're excited about OrthoLite scented insoles; which are currently in development now. There will be approximately 10 scents available to footwear developers including coffee, bubble gum, etc.

OrthoLite was acquired earlier this year. How does that help the company? In 2014, Blue Point Capital Partners, a private equity firm, acquired OrthoLite. The industry resources, strategic approach, and unique Asian capabilities that Blue Point Capital Partners brings to our partnership will provide a clear advantage in our efforts to diversify the company's product offerings and expand into new markets. They are the perfect partners for OrthoLite. Day-to-day, the business will continue to operate with the original management team in place so the brands will not see a change in the leadership or operation from that perspective. This new partnership will just allow us to further expand our capabilities and reach. ■



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Left: Lauren Fleshman, U.S. 5000m champion in 2006 and 2010

Below: Oiselle's CEO Sally Bergesen walks the runway at Oiselle's show during Nolcha Fashion Week New York Spring/Summer 2014 in September. Photo courtesy Brian Ach/Getty Images NA

OISELLE'S ATHLETES HIT FASHION WEEK

By Thomas J. Ryan

Last month Oiselle, the women's run apparel brand, showed off its spring 2015 collection at New York Fashion Week for the second straight year. But instead of a mix of fashion models and athletes like the brand did in 2013, the lineup strutting down the runway were Oiselle athletes only.

The elite runners included Lauren Fleshman, the U.S. 5000m champion in 2006 and 2010; Kara Goucher, a U.S. Olympian at both the 2008 and 2012 Games, and middle-distance runner Kate Grace; along with elite hammer thrower Britney Henry. Oiselle was part of Nolcha Fashion Week, a special showcase for independent designers.

Along with Under Armour's signing last month of supermodel Gisele Bündchen, Oiselle's arrival at the Fashion Week scene reflected the ongoing merger of fashion and athleticism and the overall ath-leisure movement, marked by more women wearing more leggings and yoga pants as a personal style for casual purposes. But Oiselle's CEO Sally Bergesen believes that it continues to reflect the growing acceptance of women as serious athletes, which served as her inspiration for founding Oiselle (pronounced wa-zell) in 2007.

Here, Bergesen talks about the fashion show, Oiselle's evolution, women athletes, and the burgeoning ath-leisure trend.

Why do you show at NYC Fashion Week? Because fashion needs sport and sport needs fashion. Athletic and active apparel is the direction the world is moving... and the options - in terms of fabrics, trims, design - is more exciting than ever before. It should be on the runway! The fact that the rest of the fashion world is trending athletic, validates our presence.

Athleta was at NYC Fashion Week, too. What's driving the athletic trend in fashion? I've heard it said that fashion influence comes either from the top or bottom. The top in the sense that fashion designers create novelty that radiates outward. Or bottom in that the street dictates the style and it works its way up through high-end fashion. Athletic is definitely one of those bottom-up trends. But the coolest part is that it's so much bigger than clothes. Sure track pants are exceptionally trendy right now. You can get them in satin and leather. But how about Being a track athlete. That's hotter. Muscles, sweat, fit, capable bodies. That's a trend that can and should never get old.



What was the inspiration of the Spring 2014 collection? Every season embraces the core of our brand - feminine fierce. But for Spring 2015, we discussed two themes in our development: architecture and science. In essence, taking an intelligent look at our world and what's around us and reflecting that through the line. The Koolhaas print, for example, is named after the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas who, among other things, designed the famed Seattle Public Library. His work is bold and unapologetic but also very beautiful.

Can you elaborate on your decision to use just athletes as models? We used a mix of athletes and models last year, and by far and away, our athletes wore our looks the best. They radiated athleticism, pure and simple. Meanwhile, back stage, the pro models were fussy and catty, buying time 'til their next gig. That's just not us. We wanted more. We wanted authenticity. And hello? Who better to get that from than our athletes...an amazing group of world class and elite women who exude strength, confidence, and femininity all at once.

Can you discuss your recent decision to sign bigger athletes such as Fleshman and Goucher? Like so many women around the world, I am just a fan. I look up to them. I would do their laundry any day of the week (wait, I actually did for Kate Grace during her nationals showing in 2013). I knew that they would enhance and extend the Oiselle story, and that's exactly what's happened. They have truly catalyzed our brand.

With apparent demand in both fashion and athletic channels, what's Oiselle's distribution? We sell to run specialty because as a serious runner, that's where I learned to love the sport. And we sell on oiselle.com because it's the best way for us to be closest to our customers and community. We also sell through bigger premium retailers like Nordstrom and, this fall, Bloomingdale's because we are a premium brand that has both sport and style in its mission. The big box universe does not appeal to me.



Kara Goucher, U.S. Olympian at both the 2008 and 2012 Games

In the run space, Oiselle competes mainly with vendors in apparel; which are also prominent on footwear walls. Is that a disadvantage or advantage to Oiselle? Well, it's always been pretty clear that footwear brands are footwear first, apparel second. And that makes sense. The margins are better, and shoes can be tech'ed up in all the ways that guys like to do that (and it's all guys that lead these companies). Still, your feet are only like seven percent of your body and don't have as much of a potential for experience as far as styling and materials go. No one ever said, "Oh my god, I can't get enough of that shoe fabric on my feet!" But that's the kind of obsession we get over several of our fabrics.

What do you think about the arrival of many newbie women's-focused brands? I think it's exciting. The more the merrier. For us, we've been unique in the way we embrace the competitive spirit. I think it's too common for athletic brands, even women's ones, to say "Oh yeah, I just like going to the gym," and the emphasis is on appearance rather than setting and achieving goals. The latter is where we live.

I keep hearing that brands are doing a better job around fit and fashion in addressing the active women consumer. Do you agree? That makes sense. Huge improvements were needed. I'm sure we're not the only ones catching onto what women like, need, and care about.

The 'athleisure' trend is getting a lot of attention. It's even being blamed for the downturn in denim sales. Do you see America's wardrobe changing? Ha-Ha... long live athleisure! While the business side of my brain loves that it's a trend outside of whether or not people actually participate, I know in my heart that participation is where it's at. Having a sport, being an athlete, committing to a goal, moving toward positive people and activities in your life...the clothes are just the reward for those things. That's a positive reinforcement loop that doesn't just make a good business - but a good life. ■



Britney Henry, elite hammer thrower

GAINING TRACTION

While running on snow and ice this winter, traction devices for your shoes will help you dramatically improve your grip and stability.

By Thomas J. Ryan



Whether training for the spring marathons or just looking to get out and avoid the boredom of the treadmill, people are running during the winter. And they're increasingly looking to a wide range of traction shoes and accessories hitting the market to avoid any flops in the ice and snow.

Also helping the trend are a few winter running series that are now taking place in some regions across the U.S., but the overall increase of running trail off-road and OCR (obstacle course racing) events is likely a bigger factor encouraging runners to find a shoe that works best for them during the cold winter months. And long runs outdoor in harsh winter conditions are not only uncomfortable but can also be dangerous.

"Generally speaking, the feedback we receive from end users and retailers seems to show that people are running more in wintry conditions," said Steve Couder, VP of sales for Yaktrax. "However we do not have hard statistics to validate that claim."

The first removable winter traction device made specifically for runners, the Yaktrax Run, \$40, features a combination of removable spike plates with spikes placed at key strike points in the forefoot and the patented Yaktrax SkidLock coil design in the heel for added traction on stride. Featuring ergonomically designed left- and right-shaped footwear devices, the Yaktrax Run slips on easily and conforms to the shape of each shoe allowing runners to experience the best fit and comfort while maintaining their winter fitness routine. Plus, they offer a low profile and are lightweight so runners will barely notice they are wearing anything other than running shoes. A size medium weighs just 7.8 oz. per pair.



Yaktrax Run

"The Yaktrax Run were created specifically for runners and the unique challenges they face in icy conditions," said Couder.

Beyond runners, Yaktrax's range attracts a wide audience of hikers, dog walkers, suburban outdoor workers, postmen, delivery operatives, and car drivers

who have to make winter journeys. The bigger markets not surprisingly tend to be in the Midwest and Northeast markets marked by harsh winters.

Evan Wert, president of Icebug USA, also noted that Alaska is a “huge” market as well as the Midwest and the Northeast. Wert believes more people are looking to run more in the winter season partly because there previously were not many good alternatives to running without the risk of falling or developing bad running form without a good studded shoe. Said Wert, “People want to train year around and many marathons are in the spring, so it’s nice to be able to keep up training. Also with Icebug footwear you can run from ice to snow and back to dry pavement without worry.”

Designed with the serious winter runner in mind, Icebug’s Aurora BUGrip, \$180, features “weather shield” technology to keep feet dry in the snow and slush. Paired with Icebug’s BUGrip outsole with 19 carbide steel studs on the sole, the Aurora delivers traction and confidence in the iciest of conditions.



Icebug Aurora
BUGrip

Wert said Icebug was one of the first companies to develop a brand around traction and studded traction, and the devices offer multiple uses well beyond running and trekking. “We have always been committed to getting people outside to enjoy life and not worry about falling,” said Wert. “There are dog walkers, fitness walkers, commuters, police/fire, and those who work in the winter and in slippery conditions that need to use Icebug. It’s a growing category and one that customers are looking for products. They just need some education. We are also growing in the summer months with our RB9X rubber compound that gives great traction in wet conditions but also wears like iron. Great for rainy or wet conditions while walking, running, or working. Icebug is about traction no matter the season.”

Moreover, Icebug is finding that its product is being used increasingly in obstacle course racing and recently became the footwear sponsor of the first OBC World Championships being held this month in Cincinnati, OH. Said Wert, “Through our success in orienteering, racers are finding that Icebug works great on the OCR courses. That’s an emerging market that retailers need to embrace. The running market is changing and new events are popping up everywhere.”

Pointing to retail point-of-sale data compiled by SportScanInfo for OIA VantagePoint, Yoo Ra Kang, Hillsound’s marketing and sales coordinator, noted that total sales in the traction device category was 479,999 in 2012, up from 354,379 in 2011, and only 63,075 in 2010. Kang added, “With evidence of constant growth in the traction category, and the sales reports of 352,126 in the November 2013 to January 2014 season, we are confident that it will be another successful year for traction devices.”

Anecdotally, Hillsound is also clearly seeing an increase in the amount of people running and hiking in winter/icy conditions. “Up until several years ago, people ran and hiked in snowshoes during the winter, but with the advancement of traction technology, runners have discovered Hillsound products are easy to wear, super light and provide instant traction to keep the rubber side down while running or exploring on slick surfaces,” said Kang. “I think we can also credit this to the advancement of winter apparel and footwear. Products regulate body temperature more effectively and are more lightweight and comfortable for the winter adventurer.”

At Hillsound, a highlight is the FreeSteps6 a versatile, lightweight, easy on/easy off traction device for taking on icy trails or slippery sidewalks for \$40 retail. Durable stainless steel spikes offer secure footing no matter what the conditions or geography.



Hillsound
FreeSteps6



Hillsound Trail
Crampon Ultra

Made of high-strength stainless steel for durability and weight reduction, the Trail Crampon Ultra, \$70, features 18 spikes that offer aggressive traction on all icy surfaces and distribute pressure to withstand wear. Welded chains easily endure repeated torque, foot strikes, and abuse on ice and snow. Double-sided chains maintain a tight grip on shoes to prevent any shifting of the traction device. A larger heel plate provides secure traction and stability for descents and trail running.

Kang said Hillsound’s versatile traction products are designed for multiple sporting categories, opening up opportunities in different regions with varying climates. She added, “For instance, we can sell our Freesteps6 in the warmer south for fly-fishing in streams or in Jackson Hole for winter running on icy or snowy trails. At the same time there is a need in urban areas like New York for the Freesteps6 when sidewalks get slick during winter storms.”

Kahtoolá’s NANOsPikes, \$50, with 10 spikes per foot and a textured bottom, offer lightweight, trim, durable, and comfortable traction that easily slips over any running shoe making it possible to jog, sprint, train, and walk securely in any weather condition. A tapered and stepped cleat around a hard tungsten carbide stud allows the spike to be moved away from the foot creating shock absorption and a better bite on the ice. This two-part design makes for excellent stability and traction on all terrain. To ensure durability and reliability, the carbide stud is held in place with a lightweight aluminum anchor. A lightweight harness provides a uniform stretch over the shoes to improve comfort and maintain a secure feel.



Kahtoolá's
NANOsPikes

“People are much more active during the winter now thanks to advancing technologies in cold-weather markets (warmer coats, better snowshoes, sturdier equipment, GoPro, etc.),” said Hilary Childs, Kahtoolá’s marketing associate. “Our MICROspikes, which aren’t designed specifically for running but are a good option, sold out last year before winter was even close to being done and we’re anticipating great results from the new NANOsPikes with this surge.”

She added, “We also know people don’t really care for the treadmill but still want/need to train in cold/slippery conditions. Take Colorado for instance. Winter is long and marathon season is short, but people need to train all throughout the winter to make sure they’re in the best shape possible come marathon time.”

Other options for winter traction include a range of options from Due North Traction Aids, \$20 to \$35. Equipped with replaceable Ice Diamond Tungsten Carbide spikes, Due North Traction Aids’ webbed sole design adapts to the shape of the shoe working with most styles while its low



Due North
Traction Aids

profile fit makes it nearly invisible to the eye. When not in use, the compact design stores easily in small places such as a coat pocket, handbag, briefcase, or the glove box in a car.

From Salomon, the S-Lab Fellcross 3 was designed by the world's top fell racers for fell running, also known as mountain running and hill running. The S-Lab Fellcross 3, \$170, is lightweight with a low profile on top of an improved monster grip that claws easily into mud and won't let you slip. With more coverage, added protection and new fabrics and foams for better drainage this version boasts a lighter wet weight so you won't feel bogged down when your shoes get wet.



Salomon S-Lab Fellcross 3



Salomon Snowcross CS Trail Runner



Salomon Spikecross 3 CS Off-Road Racer

Salomon also offers the Snowcross CS Trail Runner, \$200, that features rubber spikes, a water-resistant upper, and a zip closure to keep snow from invading at the laces. A highly breathable Climashield lining offers protection against wet weather at the tongue and forefoot. The Spikecross 3 CS Off-Road Racer, \$170, also features Salomon's innovative Climashield construction and embedded metal spikes for grip on any surface.



Photo courtesy Icespike



Icespike

Avoiding straps, coils and chains, the Icespike, \$25, is a semi-permanent traction system that can be mounted on any running or walking shoe, hiking or work boot, quickly and easily. Each deluxe Icespike package includes 32-patented spikes

plus one precision Icespike tool. Each adult-sized shoe should be fitted with 12 spikes with eight additional spikes included as replacements for four heel spikes. (Heel spikes with normal use tend to wear faster than front spikes.) A step above hex head sheet metal screws that can be bought at hardware stores, Icespike is specifically engineered of cold-rolled, tool-quality steel to maintain hardness and integrity of grip ten times longer. A unique patented design provides expansive surface penetration and stability; which allows the user to feel at ease in conditions that would normally feel treacherous. An average runner can get up to 500 miles from a complete set of Icespikes. ■

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Jeff Rodgers, President, Pro-Tec Athletics

Were you always a sports enthusiast? Growing up on the coast of southern California I naturally gravitated to the beach related sports of surfing and beach volleyball. I was able to extend this lifestyle after college and competed professionally on the AVP beach volleyball tour. Reality kicked in when I realized, despite my excessive training and daily devotion to the sport, I was not going to be the Top 10 player I hoped I would be; hence, the impetus to start Pro-Tec Athletics.

How did Pro-Tec Athletics get its start? I decided to not go the route of “Going Big” quickly because that would have entailed investment groups, equity dilution, and reduced control. Instead, I bankrolled Pro-Tec with - believe it or not - beach volleyball prize money along with some family contributions (a few thousand dollars). My business partner at the time and I were able to slowly get that cash flow wheel rolling by selling one type of knee support to the volleyball market. Most successful businesses begin by recognizing an unfulfilled need. This situation was no different.

How did you get into running? Compared to volleyball, running was a more intriguing challenge. There was not a sports medicine company that specialized in running injuries. But based on the many new running stores emerging in the early 1990's, this market seemed poised for growth. So, utilizing my connections with various sports medicine professionals, I learned that the runner experiences a unique toll on the body compared to other sports. Most injuries develop as the result of repetitive strain or overuse compared to a football player who will more likely suffer from impact injuries or a soccer player that may experience issues that result from sudden turns, change of direction, or impact. I used this knowledge and worked with medical professionals to bring to market a product line that would address common injuries like runner's knee and plantar fasciitis

and, in addition, provided solutions for uncommon issues like back of knee pain and toe protection. If it was running related, our goal was to have the answer. The market recognized and embraced our specialized approach to running and our growth within the market excelled exponentially.

What advice do you have for selling injury prevention and recovery products at the store level? We offer a full range of injury and recovery information and also provide clinics (presented by our field reps, tech reps, and elite athletes) for sales staff and consumers. It is important that the retailer's sales team is comfortable conversing with customers on the subject.

What activities do you participate in today? Beach volleyball and any water sport is still my top choice but whatever I can get into at that time - be it ping pong, trail running or tennis, I'm always ready to go. I must admit, however, being a sports fan has almost surpassed my own interest in participating, and yes, that is in direct relation to being the Dad of two athletic boys and being part of the Seahawks 12th man. (And oh yeah, my age just might play into it a bit). I have also learned to appreciate the finer things in life, like a good book or nice dinner with my wife.

How would your friends describe you? I hope they would say I am of good character, trustworthy, and fun to be around with an occasional tendency to push things to the edge.

What do you like about working in the running industry? The people! The industry has a great energy about it and that is because of the people that make it up. For this reason, we have always made the running industry our top priority.

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