

SCGB

ISSUE 1511
MARCH 16, 2015

WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE MARKET

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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,
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 **SPORTSONESOURCE**

1075 E. South Boulder Road • Third Floor • Louisville • CO • 80027
SportsOneSource.com



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ON THE COVER: Jeff Phillips, Fleet Feet Sports CEO & President, stands outside of the brand's new 12,000-square-foot headquarters and 4,000-square-foot flagship store in Carrboro, N.C. Photo courtesy of Fleet Feet Sports



THIS PAGE: Photo courtesy On.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

CW-X added elite runner **Carlos Trujillo** to its lineup of endorsers.

Escalade, Inc. said **Robert E. Griffin**, its Chairman and former CEO, would retire from its board of directors, effective April 24.

Fox Head, Inc. appointed **Paul E. Harrington**, formerly CEO of Easton-Bell Sports, as CEO.

Gander Mountain hired **Jay Tibbets**, formerly at ATK Sporting Group, as VP of Hardlines Merchandising.

Loudmouth President **Dennis Green** will add the title of CEO.

Nike, Inc. plans to appoint **Michael Spillane** as VP and GM of Global Footwear, effective June 1. **Angela Dong**, currently CFO in Greater China, will succeed Spillane in his current post as VP and GM of Greater China.

PrimaLoft, Inc. promoted **Victoria Lee** to Manager of Creative Services, which extends her global creative and branding duties across the organization.

Puma appointed **Nina Graf-Vlachy** as Head of Global Strategy for Strategic Projects and said her predecessor **Arne Freundt** assumed the position of Director Global Retail and E-commerce.

Saxx Underwear Co. hired **Erik Darby**, formerly Director of Sales at Oakley, as U.S. Sales Director.

SD Sport Innovators (SDSI), a non-profit business accelerator that connects and drives growth of Southern California's sports and active lifestyle economy, said **Bob Rief**, CEO at OTZ Shoes, has joined the organization as its Executive Director.

Under Armour, Inc. named **Kip Fulks**, one of the original founders of Under Armour and previously COO and President of product, as President of Footwear and Innovation.

Vestis Retail Group, LLC, which owns Bob's Stores, Eastern Mountain Sports and Sport Chalet, appointed **Susan J. "Sue" Riley** to CFO.



FITSOK

ADDS LIMITED EDITION PERFORMANCE SOCKS

Fitsok, one of the fastest-growing brands of high performance technical socks for runners, is introducing new Limited Edition F4 and CF2 colors. Available now, each three-pack contains a pair of Coral, Berry and Aqua. The Limited Edition F4 and CF2 colors are available now at specialty running shops nationwide, online running destinations and Fitsok.com.

Designed to meet the demands of competitive athletes, the F4 utilizes compressed venting and moisture wicking with Sorbtek, channeling moisture away from the foot. Anatomical left-right foot construction allows for precise fit, and a unique cushioning system provides comfort in specific pressure areas.

Utilizing the high performance capabilities of Shadow Yarn, the CF2 transports moisture and heat from areas of highest to lowest concentration for a comfortable, thermally balanced sock. Microban, an antimicrobial product, fights the growth of odor-causing bacteria.

Fitsok Brand Director Jeff Bull said, "We wanted to create a limited edition program that has the same features and benefits as our core line, show off our great products, and have a little fun in the process. And when they are gone, they are gone."



SOUND PROBIOTICS LAUNCHES ENDURANCE SPORT FORMULA

For the first time, a company is introducing the digestive and immune system benefits of probiotics into a supplement for performance and endurance athletes.

Sound Probiotic's eight probiotic strains target the unique needs of those who train and race regularly, thereby increasing the risk of GI tract issues and upper respiratory illness. They've also included Beta-Glucan to the formula, which is a critical "prebiotic," working as a catalyst with the other strains, while adding its own natural health benefits.

The founders behind Sound are competitive athletes and brothers, and say they are focused more on the long haul – "making sure you remain healthy enough to continue training so you can maximize your efforts and excel at your chosen races, events or personal goals." Their motto is: "You can't stand on the podium if you're not in the race."

Co-founder and ultra-endurance, multi-sport competitor Dr. Mark Stephany, an internal medicine physician, said, "Training and racing is a

double-edged sword – we become better physically in so many ways, but our immunity can suffer – and when you add in work, travel, etc., it just adds to this tremendous amount of stress. We've all sacrificed so much for training and racing over the years, and no one wants to miss a day of training, let alone a race, because of illness."

"There are many different strains of probiotic out there," said co-founder and multisport age-grouper Ted Stephany in a statement. "They all offer different benefits in the body. We've selected the eight best strains, in the optimal dosages, for endurance athletes and enthusiasts alike, that bolster nutrient absorption, amino acid uptake and Vitamin B production. And they all aid in reducing GI upset and respiratory infections."

According to the company, about 70 percent of the immune system is located in the digestive track. When you exert great physical effort, blood is diverted from the gut, and toxins "leak" into the bloodstream, weakening the immune system and increasing inflammation. Probiotics provide a barrier so fewer toxins can leak through.

Sam Schultz, 2012 Olympian and U.S. National Champion in Mountain Biking, said, "I've been loving the Sound probiotics. They got my gut working properly way quicker than I expected. I am definitely more confident in my training, specifically in my consistency." Visit soundprobiotics.com.

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AS SEEN IN *Esquire* CNN Forbes The New York Times **OUTDOORLIFE**

BY THE NUMBERS

-9%

Accell Group N.V. reported its North American revenues declined 9 percent in 2014 as part of its decision to halt Raleigh sales to mass merchants and integrate its parts and distribution businesses.

+4%

Brown Shoe Company reported earnings on an adjusted basis were up 45.5 percent in the fourth quarter, to \$9 million, or 20 cents per share, compared to reported net earnings of \$6.2 million, or 14 cents, in the fourth quarter of 2013. Comps at Famous Footwear rose 4 percent, driven by continued steady improvement in athletics and boots.

+6%

Capping off a challenging year, **Adidas AG** significantly widened its fourth-quarter loss, to €140 million (\$155 million), compared with a loss of €10 million for the same period the year before. Currency-neutral (c-n) sales increased 6 percent in the quarter. Sales of TaylorMade-Adidas Golf fell 24 percent on a c-n basis but Reebok gained 1 percent and Adidas Brand grew 11 percent. For the current year, Adidas expects to increase c-n sales at a mid-single-digit rate in 2015 and net profit from continuing operations to increase at a rate of 7 to 10 percent.

+10.2%

Foot Locker, Inc. reported fourth-quarter earnings rose 18 percent to \$146 million, or \$1.01 a share, eclipsing Wall Street's target. Comparable store sales jumped 10.2 percent. The company's annual sales and profits were at their highest level as an athletic company, and marked the fifth consecutive year with double-digit earnings increase per share.



MIZUNO

EXPANDS PARTNERSHIP WITH BACK ON MY FEET

Mizuno is extending its commitment to non-profit Back on My Feet, becoming the official national running shoe provider for the organization dedicated to helping the homeless.

Based in Philadelphia, Back on My Feet utilizes running to help those experiencing homelessness and other challenges achieve independent living, employment, housing and education, and job training opportunities. Mizuno will give a new pair of running shoes to every new Back on My Feet member as they run toward independence and self-sufficiency.

“Mizuno is a true believer in the transformative power of running, and we are honored to provide Back on My Feet residents with a proper pair of running shoes that meets their specific needs,” said Kim Hoey, division brand marketing director, running, Mizuno USA. “Quality running shoes are a critical piece of gear for runners and can play a big role in the personal journeys of the Back on My Feet residents, as each and every mile empowers them and moves them closer to a better quality of life.”

Back on My Feet operates in 11 cities across the U.S. Starting this year, exclusive Back on My Feet branded Mizuno apparel will also be available for purchase by visiting the nonprofit's online store at backonmyfeet.org.

“Back on My Feet is honored to have a partner like Mizuno that is committed to our core belief that running can truly change lives and communities,” said Mary K. FitzGerald, CEO of Back on My Feet.

SUUNTO

BRINGS NEW AMBIT3 FOR RUNNERS

The Suunto Connected Family with Ambit3 that launched in September 2014 is expanding with the launch of the Suunto Ambit3 Run GPS watch – as well as bringing new colors for the Ambit3 Sport and the Smart Sensor belt. All Ambit3 watches will receive updates this spring with additional functionality surrounding workout planning and recovery analysis.



Suunto Ambit3 Sport GPS watch

The **Suunto Ambit3 Sport GPS watch** (for multi-sport performance athletes) is now available in Coral.

The Ambit3 Run, \$300, is a Bluetooth Smart enabled GPS watch designed for runners with a new emphasis on style, fit and functionality that acts as a running partner, coach and guide. Ambit3 Run has full GPS navigation so users can plan routes online and download their routes. It offers 100 hours of battery life in GPS mode (at 60 second fix rate).

According to Suunto, the new Ambit3 lets you create and follow detailed interval workouts with the

Suunto Movescount App, including voice coaching. The workout planner will be made available through software updates to Ambit3 watches and App this month. The 2.0 software update coming later this spring will introduce the ability to compare running performance to a 30-day average and analyze recovery using a “quick recovery” or “sleep recovery” test (powered by Firstbeat). Advanced running functionality includes GPS, speed, pace, cadence, heart rate, GPS altitude, route navigation, and trackback.

The Suunto Smart Sensor, \$79, belt will now also be available in Lime, Blue and Coral. The black version is now available in three sizes. The Smart Sensor records and stores heart rate (HR), transferring the data wirelessly to an Ambit3 watch or the Suunto Movescount App on a smartphone.

When not wearing the watch, users can put the belt on, leave the watch or smartphone aside, and after a workout, HR data transfers wirelessly to the watch or smartphone. The Smart Sensor is fully compatible for swimming. It can be attached to compatible sports apparel.

The Suunto Movescount App

Using the Ambit3 with the **Suunto Movescount App** will let users access a feed to follow friends’ activities. It allows sharing of “Moves” and the ability to receive call and text notifications on the watch. Suunto Movie turns a route into a playable video file. The App is currently available for iPhone/iPad and becomes compatible with Android in April, supporting Android 5.0, 4.4 and 4.3. Moves can also now be synced to TrainingPeaks after uploading to Movescount in a new partnership. TrainingPeaks online service offers advanced training advice for endurance athletes. It’s also compatible with Strava, FirstBeat, MapMyFitness and Charity Run. It also allows users to take photos with automatic data overlay and share on the go.



Suunto Movescount App

Suunto was born in 1936 when Finnish orienteer and engineer Tuomas Vohlonen invented the mass production method for the liquid-filled compass. Suunto's headquarters and manufacturing plant is in Vantaa, Finland, employing more than 400 people worldwide. Suunto products are sold in more than 100 countries. The company is a subsidiary of Amer Sports Corporation.

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Photo courtesy Newton Running

ROAD RUNNING FALL 2015 PREVIEW

By Thomas J. Ryan

The buzz in the road-running category continues to be around “maximalist,” represented by Hoka One One and other vendors dabbling with the ultra-cushioning trend. But the overall focus by footwear vendors for Fall 2015 is finding the right balance between too-much and too-little cushioning.

Running’s more enduring trend in recent years continues to be shoes in ever-lightweight packages; and even more weight comes off with many updates for Fall 2015. The upper is perhaps seeing the most innovation with no-sew construction and materials such as open mesh helping with fit and comfort as well as reducing weight. More attention is also being paid to the forefoot, not only around the importance of toe splay, but also proper toe-off to support an efficient gait.

Here’s a roundup of launches and updates from some of the key running vendors:

BROOKS

At Brooks, the Glycerin 13, \$150, in the neutral category, further extends 3D Fit Print on the upper to provide seamless structure and movement, according to Brooks’ Associate Product Line Manager Jena Winger. The new Dynamic TPU Saddle captures and adjusts to the arch of a runner’s foot throughout the run. A full-length segmented crash pad spreads across the medial and lateral side of the foot to create a “nice smooth transition from heel to forefoot” along with a premium plush experience, Winger said.



Brooks Glycerin 13



Brooks Ghost 8



Brooks PureGrit 4

Brooks' "go-to" shoe in the neutral category, the Ghost 8, \$150, also adds welded, no-sew overlays to the upper to eliminate virtually all seams for a sock-like fit. Said Winger, "We engineered this mesh so the shoe can be nice and open and airy where we need it to be flexible and breathable, and then tighter where we need it to be more structured. This is a completely new aesthetic for us." It

also features the full-length segmented crash pad.

The PureGrit 4, Brooks' lightweight trail shoe, continues with the tooling from its award-winning PureGrit 3, which was inspired by insights from renowned ultrarunner Scott Jurek. A hex lug outsole offers maximum traction and protection, a forefoot propulsion plate maximizes energy return on a variety of surfaces, and a BioMoGo DNA midsole adapts to each runner's unique step. Like the Glycerin, the big enhancement is infusing 3D Fit Print to eliminate seams in the upper to hug the foot more closely. The updated upper also incorporates the hex lug pattern from the outsole into high wear zones.

ASICS

The Gel-Kayano 22, \$160, adds a sleek new FluidFit upper built with stretch mesh underneath, stretch reinforcements, and then seamless construction throughout, said Clara Kerley, Asics' product specialist, running footwear. A re-engineered Heel Clutching System offers a more secure and adaptive fit. On the interior, the model continues with the ComforDry X-40 sock liner that has 40 percent more bounce back and 40 percent more durability than a standard Ortholite sockliner, but also adds ComforDry lasting, on top of a FluidRide platform. Said Kerley, "It's all built for the overpronator so we wanted to provide a better fit but also better stability while still delivering that plush, luxury feeling that the Kayano is known for."

The Gel-Cumulus 17, \$120, likewise features seamless construction in the upper for a sleeker fit with less potential for irritation. This 17th version also sports a new FluidRide midsole and ample rear-foot and forefoot Gel Cushioning units to support a smooth ride for underpronators to mild overpronators.

The GT-1000 4, \$100, is updated with a new upper built with engineered mesh yet supportive overlay reinforcements. The bouncy SpE-VA midsole has been engineered to provide a smooth, cushioned ride, while the DuoMax System and Guidance Trusstic System supports mild and moderate overpronators. Said Kerley, "If you're an overpronator with \$100 to spend, there's literally nothing else on the market."



Asics Gel-Kayano 22



Asics Gel-Cumulus 17



Asics GT-1000 4



Asics Gel-Super J33 2

The Gel-Super J33 2, \$100, adds FluidAxis, dialed to the specific needs and foot geometry of mild to moderate overpronators looking for an ultra-lightweight ride.

NEW BALANCE

New Balance is introducing its new Vazee platform, starting with the Vazee Pace, \$110. Drawing inspiration from Team New Balance athletes such as World Champion Jenny Simpson, American record holder Emma Coburn, and reigning World Champion triathlete Mirinda Carfrae, the Vazee Pace finds the ultra-responsive REVlite midsole re-configured from arduous wear testing for greater responsiveness and speed. Engineered on the VL-6 last, a highly flexible blown rubber forefoot helps with deflection and spring without interruption to whatever pace applied.



New Balance Vazee Pace

The New Balance design team studied the human foot at various speeds to create a second-skin like fit in the upper to complement the under-foot experience. A deconstructed heel counter meant to contain but not constrict contributes to a no-fuss upper with a bootie construction and make-up that wraps the arch and allows the toes to splay.

"Our Vazee line-up is built on the notion of running fast and not being timid or afraid to do-so," said New Balance running product manager Claire Wood.

Updates include the 880v5, \$120, which gains more inherent stability specifically at toe-off as well as an enhanced upper. Ample blown rubber in the forefoot compliments the responsive cushioning of this neutral cushioning shoe.

Part of the New Balance running line-up, the 1260v5 stability shoe, \$150, adds N2 Burst technology in the forefoot, which is designed specifically for the moderate overpronator and configured with the intention to balance protection and flexibility when following through.



New Balance 880v5



New Balance 1260v5

HOKA ONE ONE

Hoka's big surprise was its move into the hiking category with the launch of its MTN collection. Broken into two categories, MTN Trek and MTN Run, the new collection covers five new styles that range from high-top hiking boots to lightweight mountain runners, mountain trekkers and casual hikers with prices ranging from \$130 to \$230.

On the MTN Run side, the Speedgoat, \$130, was designed with input from legendary ultrarunner Karl Meltzer and built for the most technical trails. It features a Vibram rubber outsole with four-millimeter lugs and trail-specific flex grooves.



Hoka One One Speedgoat

The no-sew upper provides support through the forefoot, and a ground-rubber toecap offers critical toe protection. The new silhouette provides lightweight traction and stability all within a package that weighs less than 10 ounces.

Also in the MTN Run category, the Mafate 4, \$170, is the brand's most cushioned and supportive trail running shoe to date. Meta-Rocker geometry plus deep longitudinal and lateral flex grooves in the outsole provide superior stability. A TPU toecap adds protection and a wide toe box supports ample toe splay.

The flagship of the MTN Trek series is the Tor Ultra Hi WP, \$230, which combines Hoka's signature running shoe cushioning and Meta-Rocker geometry with Vibram Mega-Grip outsole rubber with five millimeter lugs to provide traction over varied terrain; and an eVent waterproof, breathable membrane.

"Hiking shoes are a natural brand extension for us as our midsole technology translates perfectly into hiking product," said Hoka President Jim Van Dine.

"The new MTN collection will allow hikers of all abilities to experience the advantages of our lightweight cushioning and Meta-Rocker geometry."

The brand is also releasing updates to some of its most popular styles for fall, including the Clifton 2, Stinson 3 and Stinson 3 ATR. The Clifton 2 improves upon the award-winning original by introducing a padded tongue for increased comfort and additional structural overlays to improve midfoot support; while the Stinson 3 and Stinson 3 ATR now feature a more balanced Meta-Rocker for improved forefoot support, along with light padding on the tongue for increased comfort.



Hoka One One Tor Ultra Hi WP

SAUCONY

At Saucony, the popular Ride 8, \$120, sees a major change in the forefoot. Borrowing from the Kinvara, it now features a no-stitch FlexFilm upper that brings the shoe down to under 10 ounces. Patrick O'Malley, SVP of global product at Saucony, said the popular, neutral cushioning shoe "packs many of the features people have fallen in love with over the years," including full-length ProGrid foam and an 8mm offset. Added O'Malley, "It's really lightweight, really flexible, and has great cushioning."

The Kinvara 6, \$100, sports new open and breathable mesh and a re-engineered Pro-Lock lacing system for an enhanced midfoot fit. It keeps a 4mm offset and PowerGrid cushioning in the heel. Said O'Malley, "While people have moved away from minimalist models, the Kinvara has stayed on the wall and the reason is because it allows the foot to work naturally but it still gives you all the protection you need."



Saucony Ride 8



Saucony Kinvara 6

In the motion control category, the Redeemer ISO, \$150, features an Isofit upper and Pwrgrid+ platform. Said O'Malley, "Isofit technology was first launched with the



Saucony Redeemer ISO

Triumph and it creates a socklike fit to a shoe. No matter what shape your foot is, you get a customized fit. It also comes in a 4E width for that runner who might have this wider foot."

MIZUNO

From Mizuno, the Wave Enigma 5, \$150, features the brand's new midsole foam technology, U4icX, which is a lighter and softer iteration of U4ic.



Mizuno Wave Enigma 5

"U4icX is introduced on top of a redesigned Parallel Wave Plate and full-length U4ic midsole to achieve a pillowy sensation and our softest and most responsive midsole cushioning," said Charles Hauck, assistant business unit manager, running footwear, Mizuno USA. "The new midsole design, along with the addition of blown rubber to the outsole, offers a soft, underfoot feeling while providing runners the responsive Mizuno 'ride' they love." The upper surrounds the foot with premium, soft materials while the EVA strobil board adds to the enhanced underfoot feeling.



Mizuno Wave Sayonara 3

The Wave Sayonara 3, \$110, sees its midsole profile modified to 10-20mm (from 9-19mm) to enhance the underfoot feel. The midfoot has also been sculpted to offer more of a pure neutral ride. Blown Rubber has replaced G3 in the forefoot and X10 has been added to the midfoot lateral side for greater durability for midfoot runners. The upper features soft internal straps to hold and support the foot.

The underfoot of the Wave Paradox 2, \$135, has been enhanced by the addition of an EVA strobil board, while the upper has been designed with internal strapping for increased hold and support. The outsole pattern has been redesigned in the midfoot and forefoot to improve durability and flexibility without sacrificing support. The heel design has been modified, putting more foam under the plate, allowing for more cushioning on impact.

ALTRA

Altra is bringing a new shoe, Impulse, \$110, to the light stability category that's suited for long distance racers and triathletes. The Impulse's Stabili-Pod platform widens the shoe's sole at the natural tripod of the foot: the first metatarsal near the Great Toe, the fifth metatarsal near the fifth (pinkie) toe and the outer calcaneus, or the outside heel.

"Instead of shoving dual-density foam under the arch, or widening the entire perimeter of the shoe so it looks and moves like a brick, we created a slightly wider foundation, but only where you need it," said Golden Harper, founder of Altra. "The resulting shoe is grounded and stable, yet lightweight and flexible." The Impulse also features drain holes and offset lacing.

The Lone Peak 2.5, \$120, brings back the mesh used in the original Lone Peak, Altra's most popular seller, for quicker drying while keeping it "insanely durable and really light," said Harper. A lighter midfoot compound brings the model 1.5 ounces lighter than the Lone Peak 2.0. It also features an improved lacing system, firmer midsole and stickier outsole compound.

Altra is also introducing the Lone Peak Neoshell, \$149, that features Polartec's Neoshell performance fabric and eliminates the traditional boot construction for waterproof shoes.

“A traditional waterproof trail shoe has it backward to our way of thinking,” Harper said. “The exterior of the shoe isn’t waterproof, so the shoe can gain significant water weight and you run with ‘heavy feet.’ Then, because the inner boot is waterproof, it gets hot, wet and sweaty in there, which are perfect conditions for a long list of foot problems.”

Harper believes the push toward “insane amounts of cushioning seems to be peaking.”



Altra Lone Peak Neoshell

a platform that is 4mm wider, aimed at those looking to transition into Newton for the first time or who want a less aggressive ride on easy days. It also features Action/Reaction technology in the forefoot and heel, a 6mm drop, and an engineered mesh upper.

Heisner said that in 2014, Newton introduced more product than the brand had in its entire six years as a company. In particular, it introduced its 5-lug program, three different POP (Point of Power) platforms addressing different runner experiences, and lower price points to reach a wider audience. It also simplified its message by focusing less on proper form and more on about encouraging consumers “to put Newton on and just go run.” That messaging continues with the “Feel” campaign this year. Said Heisner, “I think we’ve lowered the anxiety of how to sell our product.”



Photo courtesy Newton Running

ON

On, the Swiss running shoe brand that turns five this year, is introducing the Cloudcruiser, \$160, which promises to “make concrete easy.” With a re-shaped high-impact version of the CloudTec outsole, the Cloudcruiser offers robust impact protection. A soft, padded collar surrounds the ankles for comfort. A progressive lacing system evenly distributes support over the bridge of the foot. Finally, a light, technical mesh weave of the Cloudcruiser’s fabric assures freedom of movement in the forefoot and superb ventilation.



On Cloudcruiser

NEWTON RUNNING

Newton Running is building on the success of the Boco Sol trail shoe with a winter version called the Boco AT, \$129. The Boco AT features the same tooling as the Boco Sol but adds a water resistant upper that’s also warmer. The Boco Sol features more of an open mesh, noted Craig Heisner, Newton’s president. Multi-directional lugs provide strong ground feel and traction. Boco stands for Boulder, CO, the brand’s hometown and the area’s coordinates are on the logo. Said Heisner, “It’s been a really awesome trail shoe for us.”



Newton Running Boco AT



Newton Running Aha 2

Representing an addition to its new POP 3 platform, the Aha 2, \$110, features a seamless upper with breathable mesh. It also includes Action/Reaction technology in the forefoot and heel, a biomechanical metatarsal sensor plate, an open ground surface EVA in mid-stance, and a durable s.h.a.r.c. (super high abrasion rubber compound) outsole composite in forefoot.

Also part of the POP 3 collection is Oh-Ya, \$110, a new light stability shoe. It features e.m.b. (extended medial bridge) for stability as well as

Photo courtesy On





Photo courtesy Topo

“We wanted to create a shoe that combines great comfort and protection in a light package,” said Co-Founder and 6-time Ironman Champion Olivier Bernhard. “We have developed high-impact outsole elements, a flexible Speedboard in the midsole, and a progressive lacing system to bring the very best of On’s technology to the Cloudcruiser.”

Regarding trends, Ted Goodlake, North American sales director, believes lightweight will continue to be a trend as long as there is cushioning and at least mild support. Basic colors are trending back “as color on color are becoming too busy,” he said.

Said Goodlake, “The true sweet spot is somewhere that lands between minimal and maximal footwear that will have legs to stand on for years to come. This is where On technology comes into play.”

TOPO

Topo, which first came to market in 2013, introduces the MagniFly and Tribute, a neutrally cushioned and minimally-cushioned style, respectively. Both feature Topo’s proprietary fit, which focuses on three principles: ergonomic shape, ultra lightweight construction and materials, and a neutral platform to promote natural movement.

The Magnify, \$110, is engineered for runners who appreciate more underfoot cushioning paired with a natural shape. The flexible platform and lightweight allow for more natural gait function, while the 5mm drop (25mm to 20mm) platform and dual density midsole delivers improved zonal cushioning and response.



TOPO Magnify



TOPO Tribute

Built for faster training and running purists, the Tribute, \$100, features Topo’s signature fit on a featherweight, 16mm, 0-drop platform. Ultra-breathable mesh, heel-to-toe flexibility and optimal responsiveness encourage a fast, natural ride.

Georgia Shaw, director of marketing, Topo, said, “Once brands stop chasing ‘extremes,’ such as minimalism and maximalism, the differentiating features will lie in fit, weight, and ride, which will have to be addressed through materials, compounds, and revised last shapes. There isn’t one product direction that works for everyone, we all have different needs, tastes, and workout routines that necessitate different product requirements.”



Skora Tempo AW

SKORA

Skora will be following its spring launch of the Tempo, a neutral/cushioned road shoe, with an all-weather version, the Tempo AW, \$150, for fall. While embracing the zero

drop and anatomical design signatures of the three-year-old brand, the new Tempo is enhanced with low profile, responsive cushioning. It features no-sew construction with asymmetrical lacing. A one-piece mesh upper is supported by an internal archband, and the outsole flex grooves mimic the movement of the foot. The all-weather version adds Power Shield Pro fabric from Polartec.

“More than ever, we’re seeing an evolution of materials and a thoughtfulness to the use of technologies to improve the running experience,” said Skora CEO and Founder David Sypniewski. “Keeping the runner comfortable (drier, warmer) helps get you out the door. Super-breathable air mesh is great, but not in all conditions. That’s where we see Tempo AW responding to real runner’s needs.” ■

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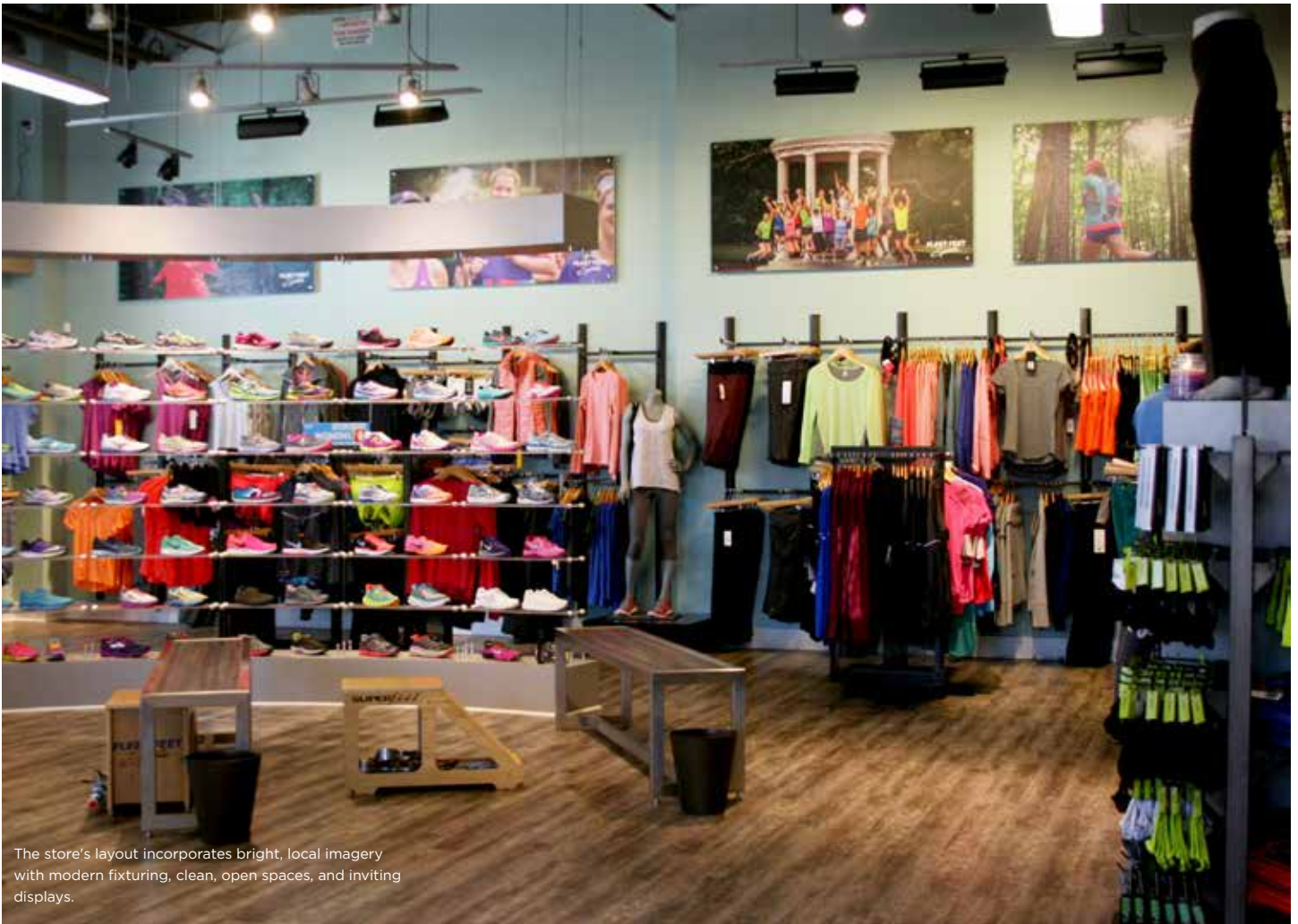
AVAILABLE FALL 2015



FLEET FEET SPORTS Opens New Headquarters and Flagship Store

By Aaron H. Bible

Fleet Feet Sports, leader in franchising and developing community-oriented specialty retail stores for runners, walkers and fitness enthusiasts, held an official grand opening for its new corporate headquarters and new flagship store last Wednesday evening, March 11.



The store's layout incorporates bright, local imagery with modern fixturing, clean, open spaces, and inviting displays.



The corporate headquarters occupies the second floor of the three-story building on East Main Street in Carrboro, N.C. The retail store operates on the first floor.

“This occasion is just a dream come true for Fleet Feet Sports, and one that really is a testament to what our passionate group of franchise owners, our staff, and our partners have been able to do for this brand.”

- Jeff Phillips, Fleet Feet Sports President and CEO

The 12,000-square-foot headquarters occupies the second floor of a property at 310 E. Main Street in Carrboro, NC; and the 4,000-square-foot flagship store occupies the first floor. The new headquarters replaces the company's previous headquarters, which was split between two buildings blocks apart along the town's main street – and nearly doubles its work space.

More than 250 industry guests, including vendor partners, owners and operators of Fleet Feet Sports franchises, company execs and local dignitaries were on hand to meet and greet with Fleet Feet Sports team members.

Fleet Feet Sports President and CEO Jeff Phillips spoke to the crowd at 7:30 p.m. “This occasion is just a dream come true for Fleet Feet Sports, and one that really is a testament to what our passionate group of franchise owners, our staff, and our partners have been able to do for this brand,” he said. “We have a space that our stakeholders are proud of, and that allows our franchise owners, vendor partners, and business partners to meet, work and drive the business forward.”



The Carrboro flagship store allows for collaboration and innovation in retail merchandising. A focal point: a floating "shoe wall," located prominently in the fitting area, offers a new take on displaying running shoes and allows space for a more compelling apparel story on the wall.



Collaboration between Fleet Feet, the town of Carrboro, property developer Main Street Partners, and Kalisher Art Production made the move possible. Fleet Feet Sports first established a presence in Carrboro with the 1994 opening of a retail location. Its corporate headquarters relocated from its original location in Sacramento, CA, to Carrboro in 2003.

As part of the consolidation to one building, the company will offer broader training opportunities for store managers and associates from the 142 Fleet Feet Sports locally owned and operated stores across the country, as well as current members of the brand's Operating Partner program, which trains and prepares future franchise candidates for store ownership, said Ben Cooke, vice president of retail operations.

Phillips also said that the increase in space has already allowed for the addition of in-house brand manager positions from some of the company's largest vendor partners - including Nike, Asics, Adidas and New Balance - and would continue to attract new talent to the area.

"Since the store opened in 1994, I believe Fleet Feet Sports has really had a hand in supporting and driving the healthy and active lifestyle culture that defines so much of this community," said Phillips. "This is where our families live, where our kids go to school, where our friends are, and where we've built really strong relationships with other local businesses. We're engrained in the fabric of this community, and I couldn't imagine being anywhere else."



Jeff Phillips, CEO & President Fleet Feet Sports with Joey Pointer, right, CFO Fleet Feet Sports



Left to Right - Luke Rowe, SVP Franchise Operations Fleet Feet Sports, Issac Alvear, Brand Manager Hoka ONE ONE, Jeff Phillips, and Tom Daley, Marketing Manager at Hoka ONE ONE



Richie Woodworth, left, President of Saucony and Jeff Phillips



Left to Right - Rob DeMartini, President and CEO, New Balance, Inc., Luke Rowe, SVP Franchise Operations Fleet Feet Sports and Jeff Phillips

“We’re able to prepare future owners for operating a store, as well as use this as a testing ground for new ways of merchandising, marketing and customer support. We can then share those best practices and learnings with our stores across the country.”

- Ben Cooke, Vice president of Retail Operations

“It’s truly our retail laboratory,” said Cooke of the flagship store, which moved from its previous location at 300 E. Main Street to the new space last November. “We’re able to prepare future owners for operating a store, as well as use this as a testing ground for new ways of merchandising, marketing and customer support. We can then share those best practices and learnings with our stores across the country.”

Fleet Feet Sports emphasizes a local ownership and community involvement model as it continues to look for more expansion opportunities. Twenty-four of its 142 stores are owned by Fleet Feet Sports corporate, while the rest operate as franchises. Fleet Feet Sports expanded into the important Portland, OR, market in November 2014 when veteran Fleet Feet Sports owners Alan Rice and Susan Zepernick purchased FitRight; and in February 2015 the company announced it had acquired GoRun Wichita, a run specialty shop with two locations in Wichita, KS, marking the brand’s entry into that state. ■

Photo on right: The flagship store showcases what’s at the heart of all Fleet Feet Sports locations - being a running community resource for information, inspiration, and news. The “Training Hub” installation provides the Carrboro community and store associates with an interactive starting point in the store.





I AM...SGB

Blair Clark

VP of Sales
GU Energy Labs

Blair Clark is one of the outdoor industry's most respected executives, joining GU Energy Labs' executive team as VP of Sales earlier this year. For the last 11 years, Clark served as Senior VP of Sales and Marketing for Smith Optics in Ketchum, ID. During his tenure there, Clark led Smith's expansion from its core business in goggles and sunglasses into snow-sports helmets and bicycle helmets. Prior to his time at Smith, Clark was General Manager and VP of Sales at Specialized Bicycles, and also spent six years at Giro, where he served in a variety of positions, culminating as President of the company. He currently serves as Chairperson of the Foundation Board for "People for Bikes."

How did you get your start in the performance sports industry? At age 15 I started bike racing with my brother - a great way to explore the Santa Cruz mountain roads and gain independence. To support our habit, we worked in bike shops. That led to bike racing in college and a career managing a really nice pro shop in Los Altos, CA, where I met many industry insiders: Dick Burke from Trek, Mike Sinyard from Specialized, to name a few wonderful souls who shared a passion for fitness and cycling. I feared I was stuck earning no equity so I got an MBA and tried commercial real estate, then high tech, since I lived in Silicon Valley. Six years in high tech led me to an epiphany...I wanted to be back in the bike industry because I wanted to follow my passion. I took a job in Sun Valley as the GM of Scott Bicycles as the mountain bike boom began and within a year, I was given an opportunity to move back to Santa Cruz to work at Giro as the National Sales Manager. Within a few years Bell Sports bought us, and I became President. After a year or so, I was recruited to work at Specialized as the Managing Director for the U.S. business. It was a very hard time to be in the bike industry as Cannondale, Schwinn and GT had all just gone bankrupt. I learned a great deal, but the culture was pressurized with dysfunctionality. After three years, 11 days and four hours, I accepted a job at Smith working for Ned Post, my former boss at Scott USA. After 11 years and a world-class ride, both Ned and I left. I wanted to be back

in the Bay Area and I found GU Energy to be a very attractive culture because of its values of athleticism, innovation, collaboration, sustainability/longevity and love of simply doing the right thing...giving back.

What keeps you coming in every day? The heart, science and shared values of the team. GU pioneered the gel business and is still the leader of that category. Today GU has rebranded to reflect the strategic shift of offering an integrated nutrition system of hydration, energy and recovery products aimed at assisting, educating and inspiring people to reach their highest athletic potential. I found a home at GU and I am so proud that I'm afraid I've made my dearest friends and family jealous. GU is a strong culture but it respects a diversity of opinion too...our differences make us better as there's more than one-way to win. Starting at the top with Brian Vaughn our Chief Endurance Officer and Tal Johnson, President, and all the way down, people here are very smart and have great integrity.

Who inspires you? My wife Mimi for her soulful clarity, her compassion, her intellect, and her sense of humor. And Randy Komisar, a friend at Kleiner Perkins VC firm, whom I met about 20 years ago through Leslie Bohm at a Catalyst bike conference and we've been cycling pals ever since. Randy is, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, "one of the 20 most influential people in Silicon Valley," but you would never know it as he and his wife Deb, a Stanford professor, are completely unpretentious. And Chip and Dan Heath, authors of "Made to Stick," one of the best books I've read about marketing/sales communication. Also Tim Blumenthal and Jenn Dice at People for Bikes for their ability to make national changes in bicycle safety and awareness. Having moved back to the Bay Area from wilderness based living in Idaho, I am astounded at the progress of bicycle commuting and the urban bike culture. As well as Steve Rendle at VF Corp and Terry Lee at Bell/Giro for showing me that it's possible to be at the top and lead a balanced life of work/play.

What's the biggest challenge facing the Performance category today?

Performance sports/endurance sports are metaphors for life...it's hard work and it's rewarding, but youth today have so many alternatives. When I grew up, cycling or skiing were rare alternatives, and most kids participated in some form of mainstream "stick and ball" sports. Today, action sports offer a huge alternative to the Olympics as an inspiration; and remarkably there are even "teams" playing video games for tremendous financial rewards. For example, Riot Games, the company behind the popular "League of Legends" boasts 67 million active monthly players, bringing in \$1 billion in revenue. Recently a local Alameda, CA, team won over \$1M in a competition in Korea. You can suffer all of your life, risk being killed, win the Tour de France, and get just \$500K Euro.

What's your advice to the industry at large? The industry has to rally together. I find it refreshing in the short period of time that I've been at GU that the competition isn't vilified in the way that the leading brands in the bike, ski or outdoor industry treat each other. Gary Erickson at ClifBar and his team recently hosted a National Interscholastic Cycling Association fundraiser and we at GU, including Brian Vaughn our owner, could not have been happier to attend and show our respect for the people and athletes.

How about to young people coming up through retail or those hoping to work in the performance sports industry? For young people, get a copy of Randy Komisar's "The Monk and the Riddle." It will help you to crystalize your career choices of whether you want to be a missionary or a mercenary, and how to have a mission beyond just making money. ■

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14 SFIA/HFHS/NCAA Rules Meeting
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MAY

3-6 NSGA Management conference
and Team Dealer Summit
Austin, TX

JUNE

25-27 Sports Inc. Athletics Show
San Antonio, TX

JULY

10-12 A.D.A. Spring Show
Minneapolis, MN

AUGUST

13-15 Sports Inc. Outdoor Show
San Antonio, TX

SEPTEMBER

9-10 SFIA Industry Leaders Summit
New Orleans, LA

OCTOBER

29-31 A.D.A. Fall Show
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22-24 Sports Inc. Athletic Show
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t 303.444.3353
outdoorindustry.org

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Snow Sports Industries America
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snowsports.org

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A woman wearing an orange zip-up hoodie, black leggings, a black beanie, and sunglasses is jogging on a sandy beach. A white dog is running alongside her to the right. The background shows the ocean with waves under a blue sky.

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