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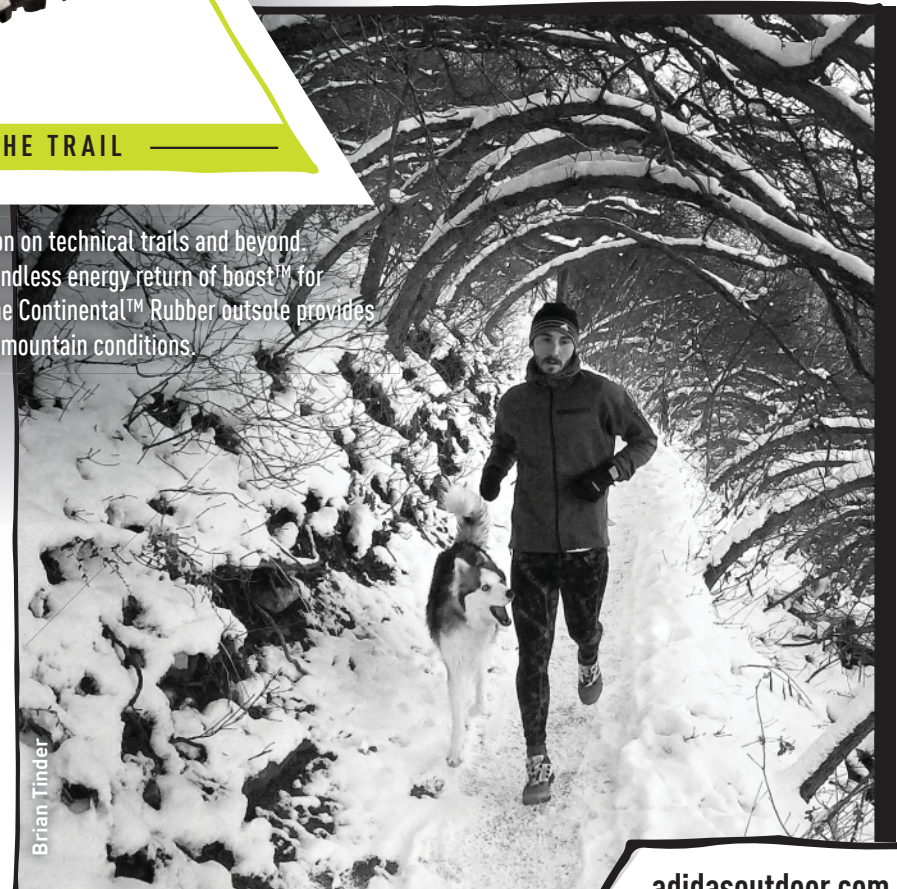
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RUNNING INSIGHT

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THE RUNNING EVENT 2016 RECAP

IT WAS A MEMORABLE TIME IN THE SUNSHINE STATE AS ORLANDO'S ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER hosted The Running Event trade show and conference Nov. 29-Dec. 1. This year, TRE attracted the second largest retail attendance in its 11-year-history. Run specialty stores, manufacturers, race directors and sports media convened for four days of educational seminars, networking and buying, making a city best-known for its allegiance to a certain cartoon mouse, the temporary home of North America's \$4.5 billion running industry. TRE 2016, organized by Formula4 Media, publishers of this magazine, hosted major footwear and accessory brands; 70 first time exhibitors; and a fun Indie 5K run through Disney World's EPCOT Center that recorded a few near Olympic-caliber times.

Event Draws Second Strongest Retail Attendance in its 11-year History





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TIME TO PLAY



The Running Event 2016 Recap (continued)



Scenes from the show floor in Orlando. More than 2,500 industry professionals attended The Running Event 2016, which will return to Austin in 2017.

TRE '16 STATS

870
BUYERS

1,250
RETAILERS

21
COUNTRIES

2,540
ATTENDANCE

TRE also hosted a record-breaking treadmill endurance record; honored the top run specialty retailers in America; and inducted four industry veterans into the Running Specialty Hall of Fame.

Usually held in Austin but relocated this year to Orlando due to a scheduling conflict, TRE attracted 870 buyers representing 1,250 retail storefronts from 21 countries, placing it close to the record buyer attendance at TRE 2014. TRE will return to Austin in 2017.

Total attendance in 2016 was 2,540 industry professionals, versus 2,705 in 2015.

The overall exhibitor count was down slightly to 278 suppliers in 2016, from 307 the previous year, and exhibitor square footage was flat. This was a reflection of the consolidation on the supplier side, according to show director Troy Leonard of Formula4 Media.

“Many thought this one-time change in venue would affect attendance, but this is a resilient business. Buyers want a mix of content and commerce, with opportunities to unwind after hours. And the strong retail attendance shows that retailers support our concept,” Leonard said.

John O’Neill, manager of The Colorado Running Company agrees, “Even though the

(running) industry has seen a slight downward trend, it is not seeing the decline of other channels dealing with sport.

“I believe one reason is TRE. The ideas shared not only in formal meetings but in the hallways lead to great discussion. Those who stop to listen and learn are the stores that will survive. Relationships are what is keeping us moving in the right (profitable) direction,” O’Neill said.

International retail attendance was the highest ever. Attendees from Argentina, Australia, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Sweden, Taiwan, and the UK all attended this year as exhibitors used TRE as a platform for global product launches and marketing campaigns.

Said Gary Muhrcke, owner of the Super Runners Shop in Huntington, NY, and winner of the first New York City Marathon in 1970, “TRE is the single most important event anyone in the running business should attend. There’s nothing else like it. If you’re not here, you’re really not in the running business.”

Around the Aisles

- *Treadmill Record Set* – Altra elite athlete Jacob Puzey, 34, from Calgary, ran an average pace of 5:56 per mile to set the new world



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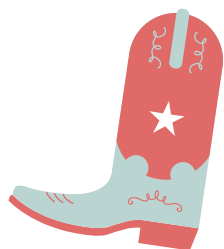


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The Running Event 2016 Recap (continued)



TRE Returns to Austin, Texas

Nov. 28 to Dec. 1, 2017.

And TRE is scheduled to be in the Texas capital in 2018 as well.

record for fastest 50 miles run on a treadmill with a time of 4:57:45, shattering the previous record of 5:57:31 by an hour. His marathon split time was 2:38. Puzey stayed hydrated with soft drinks and electrolytes and fueled with potato chips, stopping for a bathroom break only once.

- *Fit and Bronzed* – New Balance athletes Emma Coburn and Abbey D’Agostino posed for photos, Emma with her 2016 Olympic bronze medal around her neck.
- *Store of the Year* – Every year, *Competitor* magazine partners with *Running Insight* to identify the 50 Best Running Stores in America. Charm City Run of Bel Air, MD, was named the 2016 Running Store of the Year during an industry dinner Dec. 1 at Disney World’s EPCOT Center.
- *Racing Through the House of the Mouse* – The times at the Indie 5K were blazing fast (see page 92). Jorge Lopes, 53, a sales rep for CW-X from Linden, N.J., who finished 77th overall, joked, “There was a lot of talent out there. I call it a ‘not so fun fun run,’ especially considering the 6:45 a.m. start time.”
- *Hall of Fame Recipients* – The Running Specialty Hall of Fame held their induction

ceremony, honoring: Johnny Halberstadt, Boulder Running Company; Dianne Etheridge, Phidippides; Jeff Phillips, Fleet Feet; and the legendary founder of the New York City Marathon, Fred Lebow.

- *On a Roll* – Retailers tried an 8-speed ElliptiGO Arc elliptical bicycle on an indoor test track.
- *Bright Ideas* – Night Runner 270 displayed LED shoe lights and a video of their recent win on Shark Tank; Brilliant Reflective sampled safety strips powerful enough to reflect a flashlight from across the convention hall.

TRE returns to Austin on Nov. 28 to Dec. 1, 2017, and is scheduled to be in the Texas capital in 2018 as well.

New from Formula4 Media in 2017 is the Sportstyle conference and trade show, June 14-16, 2017, including the RIA Style Summit (Running Industry Association members only), and a consumer expo on June 16 at the Ft. Lauderdale Convention Center.

For more information about the Sportstyle Show, contact Jeff Nott, jnott@formula4media.com, (516) 305-4711; or Troy Leonard, tleonard@formula4media.com, (352) 624-1561, or visit the website: www.sportstyle-show.com. ■



Left: test-riding ElliptiGO at TRE 16. Right: On the show floor, Jacob Puzey set the new world record for fastest 50 miles run on a treadmill with a time of 4:57:45.





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IT COMES FROM BELOW

“ RETAIL OUTLOOK 2017



“Consumers want to see stores that are in their local community doing things there.”

**BRIAN NASUTA,
CHARM CITY RUN**

By Jennifer Ernst Beaudry & Bob McGee

Running retailers are cautious, but optimistic about the prospects for a sunnier 2017, store owners told *Running Insight* in interviews during and after

The Running Event trade show in Orlando. But showing growth in a tough retail environment is going to mean doubling down on retail basics, trying new concepts and brands without fear, grounding even further into the local community and reaching out to new consumers, shop executives said. Apparel buying is less aggressive for the moment in many parts of

the country due to excess inventory caused by slower-moving sales. And retailers are also increasingly fed up with brands discounting from their own websites.

The Apparel and Lifestyle Opportunity

Brian Nasuta, GM and VP of footwear for Baltimore-based **Charm City Run**, which was named Store of the Year for 2016 (see story on page 20), said the pending sale of the **JackRabbit** stores shows the specialty channel that their locally owned business model is what shoppers are looking for.

“Consumers can see through it: they want to see stores that are in their local community doing things there — this is an opportunity for stores to get back into the community,” he said.

Nasuta said the five-store Charm City



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Retail Outlook (continued)



“We expect good things from Saucony and Mizuno this spring. We’re also taking a look at Under Armour. They have good stuff in the pipeline.”

Burke Beck, Red Coyote Running

“We’re going to market and merchandise our store to give it the space that we need for the lifestyle part of the business to grow.”

John Clark, Skinny Raven

“Apparel is just a nightmare. Vendors have an endless supply of it.”

John Rogers, Fleet Feet Maine Running

chain would be remodeling its original store in Timonium this winter, with more shop-in-shop spaces and a lounge area that can service the many training groups that meet in-store. And in terms of product, he said, there’s an opportunity in trend-right, “less technical” running product to appeal to not only the core runner but to a different customer as well.

“We’re going to experiment and try a couple of styles,” he said.

Red Coyote Running and Fitness in Oklahoma City, OK, will shortly open a second location in nearby Edmond, OK that will have a more lifestyle focus and include offerings from **Under Armour** and **Skechers**.

“Burke is an early adopter,” said co-owner Jon Beck of his wife, the store’s co-owner and apparel buyer. “A lot of things may take a little time to catch on,” he said of the anticipated merchandise mix at the new 3,400 square foot location. The shop is also eliminating a few “stagnant” footwear SKUs at the main door and bringing back the **Altra** brand after a two-year hiatus thanks to customer demand. Smaller, niche apparel brands are being added to replace two larger ones that are being dropped.

“We expect good things from **Saucony** and **Mizuno** this spring,” Burke Beck said, adding, “We’re also taking a look at **Under Armour**. They have good stuff in the pipeline, but we haven’t pulled the trigger yet.”

Skinny Raven in Anchorage, AK, is taking the lifestyle opportunity seriously, buyer John Clark said— including planning a reset of the store to better present the merchandise.

“We’re going to market and merchandise our store to give it the space that we need for that part of the business to grow,” he said.

That includes figuring out new ways to merchandise not only the hybrid styles, heritage looks and special makeups, but also finding new ways to tell a complete story, that connects road, trail, hiking and lifestyle running product, he said: “We’re

going to further emphasize that we are a leading running and fitness business in Anchorage.”

At **Fit TRI Run** in Galveston, TX, co-owners Kimberly Bachmeier and Steve Whitcher are preparing to open a second store focused on lifestyle and athleisure products, despite a down 2016 they attribute to issues with footwear availability and slow-moving apparel sales. Under the banner “RELAX,” the store will feature **Altra**, **Chaco**, **Saucony**, **New Balance** retro product, **prAna**, **Lolé** and other yoga and fitness apparel. The store will open on the Strand, across from the city’s cruise ship terminal, in February.

“We have way too much apparel right now. Our [apparel] sales were down significantly this year so for the entire month of November, we offered 20 to 30 percent off, but it didn’t work,” Bachmeier said. “Also, a trunk sale offering 40 percent off was stagnant and two ‘Ladies Nights’ didn’t work.”

But Bachmeier says the couple is confident they can “run a better business in 2017, make smarter decisions and be more profitable.”

Ben Sigle, co-owner of **Manhattan Running Co.** in Manhattan, Kansas, echoed Bachmeier’s sentiment: “Apparel is a tough business. We’re cutting back to pretty much **Nike**, **Brooks**, **New Balance** and some **Mizuno** winter [apparel].”

“We were pretty much up through September, but October, November and the first part of December brought us back to flat because we haven’t moved much winter apparel,” Sigle said.

Fleet Feet Maine Running’s John Rogers’ was blunt in assessing the category.

“Apparel is just a nightmare. Vendors have an endless supply of it, and they have commoditized it to the point where you can get it just about anywhere,” he said. “And many consumers don’t realize the difference between a \$20 item and one that retails for \$55.”

But some shop owners affirmed that there’s opportunity — with the right pieces.



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Retail Outlook (continued)



“We have not just runners but gym-goers and others and we want to make sure we’re reaching out to them.”

Angie Phillips, Geneva Running Outfitters

“Years like this aren’t all bad. They’re a chance to refocus on the things you may not have paid attention to otherwise.”

Jeff Phillips, Fleet Feet Inc.

“We’re optimistic about 2017, more than I was going into 2016.”

Ross Martinson, Philadelphia Runner

“We’ve noticed that guys were still shopping for shorts in October and November, even as we’d scaled down and introduced the fall apparel lineup,” Angie Phillips, manager at **Geneva Running Outfitters** in Geneva, IL, said. “We’re going to make sure we have **Nike** and **Craft** shorts, in the longer lengths like 5- or 7-inch in grey and black. We have not just runners but gym-goers and others and we want to make sure we’re reaching out to them.”

Focus On Fundamentals

Jeff Phillips, CEO of **Fleet Feet Inc.**, said he doesn’t think the fallout from all the closures of the past year is entirely in the past, with the end of the discounted merchandise still filtering through a percentage of customers who have stocked up and are out of their normal buying cycle. But that doesn’t mean he’s completely bearish.

“Years like this aren’t all bad,” he said. “They’re a chance to refocus on the things you may not have paid attention to otherwise.”

That’s the plan at the four-store **Philadelphia Runner** chain, said owner Ross Martinson.

“We’re optimistic about 2017, more than I was going into 2016. We’ve relooked at our customer service model, doing a lot of getting back to videotaping, things like that,” he said. “We’ll be having a multi-sport event where we’ll partner with a bike shop and a couple of tri coaches. And our training groups have been successful — we’ll be doing more to bring in beginners and to keep people coming in.

Matt Helbig, owner of the St. Louis-based **Big River Running** shops, says the store was slightly up in 2016 — thanks to hard work that pushed average sales up 20 percent even as the store was down double-digit in transactions.

“I don’t see it getting any easier, probably ever, but at least not in the near-term,” he said.

That’s meant refining their selling

technique, and adding insoles into the fit process, he said.

“We’ve been a lot more disciplined than we ever have on training, working on each employee to refine their sales skills and technique.”

It’s also meant being pro-active at bringing new shoppers in, he said. As part of the brand’s marketing around its 10th anniversary in August, Helbig said **Big River** invested in its first billboard, as well as radio and print ads. For 2017, the store is considering laying in some digital ads to further target 20-something shoppers.

“We’ve got a pretty aggressive advertising plan budgeted,” he said.

Tortoise & Hare Sports in Glendale, Arizona, said that following a robust 2016, it will continue to focus on community events and key footwear models to drive store traffic.

“**Brooks** and **Saucony** are leading the way,” said co-owner Nathan Hohenstein. He also called the **NB 1080** a “breakout” hit for the store and said the **Topo** brand, not currently available in the Phoenix market, will be a new addition for 2017.

Looking To Accessories

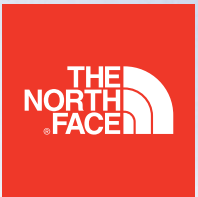
Fleet Feet Maine Running’s Rogers believes accessory items, including those focused on injury prevention, are becoming increasingly important to run specialty because “these higher-margin products can help make up the lost margin on apparel.”

And Phillips of **Geneva Running Outfitters** said nutrition has played an increasing part in her merchandise mix — even after fall marathon season.

“The customer has changed — more so than grabbing a couple of **GUs**, they want to have the whole box,” she said.

And even footwear can serve as an accessory, she said.

“**OOFOS** sandals, we need to have them into the winter,” she said. “You’d think that nobody wants open toe, but they love them around at the pool or at the gym, and it’s nice to have things like that as add-on sales.” ■



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Maryland's Charm City Run is named the Store of the Year for 2016.

Charm City Run Named Store Of The Year



Charm City Run of Maryland was named the 2016 Store of The Year. Charm City won out over three other finalists: Fleet Feet Nashville, Hanson's Running Shop of Michigan and Tortoise & Hare of Arizona.

"It's an honor to be mentioned in the same breath as those stores," said Josh Levinson, the founder of Charm City along with his wife Kara, when he accepted the award at The 50 Best Awards dinner in Orlando. "The phrase 'community' is so overused in

today's world, but in the case of run specialty it's true. We have that community with our customers but we also have it with other store owners."

The week after winning the award, Levinson said he received a bottle of Champagne from Naperville Running Co., which won the award twice, and an Edible Arrangement from Red Coyote Running, the 2015 Store of the Year.

Like many other run specialty store owners, the Levinsons decided to open



ULTRAFLY



The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

**50 BEST
4 FINALISTS**



Charm City Run
Maryland



Fleet Feet Nashville
Tennessee



Tortoise & Hare
Arizona



Hanson's Running Shop
Michigan



Charm City in their hometown because they loved running and because they found other career options unsatisfying.

In 1995, the couple was living in Austin while Josh was attending business school at The University of Texas. There they frequented Run-Tex, the run specialty store that was at the heart of Austin's run community. "It was a magical place," Josh told *Running Insight*. "Whether you were an elite runner or just getting started, everyone was trying to improve themselves. It brought runners together to talk and train and we loved being there."

On a return visit to Baltimore over the holidays, the couple was out for a run when Kara said to Josh "Baltimore really needs a Run-Tex." Josh returned to Austin and began working in Run-Tex for free on Saturdays to learn the business. He approached Run-Tex owner Paul Carrozza about franchising Run-Tex and Carrozza encouraged him to open on his own.

In 2002, the Levinsons opened the first Charm City store in Timonium, MD just north of Baltimore in a 2200 square-foot space. Today that location has nearly doubled in size and Charm City has five stores

in the Baltimore area. In addition, they own a women's active boutique called Vita and they are closing on the purchase of If the Shoe Fits, a run store in Fredericksburg, MD. Charm City Run has 15 full-time employees, 50 in total. They also own a separate event company that manages and times more than 90 events annually.

"The business today is more of a grind than it's ever been," Josh told *Running Insight*. "But that makes it more rewarding, too."

The 50 Best Running Stores in America Awards is sponsored by Competitor Group, Gatorade Endurance and *Running Insight*. ■

**MORE
BIG
WINNERS**

The Just Do It Award
Presented by Nike:
Burke Beck, Red Coyote
Fitness, Oklahoma City

The Ubuntu Award
Presented by Balega Sports:
Naperville Running Company

**The Never Stop Exploring
Award Presented by
the North Face:**
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IRRC/RBIC
Store of the Year:
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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Just Do It Award Winner Burke Beck with Brad Hledik of Nike.

JUST DO IT AWARD

Just Do It Award

Presented by Nike to an outstanding woman executive in run specialty retail.

Winner: Burke Beck, Red Coyote Fitness, Oklahoma City, OK

(Excerpts from remarks by Brad Hledik of Nike.)

“The Just Do It Award recognizes women in the Running Specialty channel whose leadership serves as an example for all of us to follow. In an era where female runners are fueling participation and our industry’s growth, the need for female leadership is greater than ever. And it is no surprise that the list of female leaders is stronger than ever – and growing. Tonight, it is a privilege to

recognize one very special leader who has raised the standard for leadership through her contributions in the community, as business owner, and role model.

This year’s winner found her way to running when injuries derailed her career in team sports. Running quickly became her new passion, where her competitive nature allowed her to excel on her high school teams and later become a national caliber runner in college. Before long, her passion led her to a job managing a running specialty store, where she and her husband soon began crafting a plan to open their own store, driving them both to pursue their dream.

Community involvement quickly became a cornerstone of that plan. She spearheaded outreach programs that attracted new runners by the hundreds, and formed partnerships with local small businesses to promote healthy lifestyles and events. She served on numerous local boards, including launching the local Girls on the Run chapter, where she helped it grow from 80 to more than 450 runners this past year. Tonight is not the first time her leadership has been recognized, as she has been named to multiple 40 Under 40 lists, and she was recently the only female selected to participate on her state’s Young Entrepreneur Advisory Panel.

Her efforts in the community have translated into business success as

well. Her social media savvy and marketing strategies have created a voice and brand that have exploded the local running scene, regularly attracting over 200 Runners to Thursday night pint nights. Her vision for training programs has expanded to include all distances, and in six years, has trained more than 5,000 participants. And, despite an economic recession, she and her husband are fueling the local economy through the opening of a second store later this winter. He admires her strength, independence, and recognizes her as the “voice of reason” and driving force behind their growth. It comes as no surprise that their store has been recognized as a Top 4 Running Store several times, recently earning the title of Store of the Year.

The competitive fire that brought her success as a young runner continues to burn bright. Whether it is pushing her two sons in a massive dual stroller while her husband struggles to keep up on a run, or drawing motivation from the surprised look on a customer’s face when they find out that indeed SHE is the store owner – yes, women can own running stores, too! These moments fuel her desire to be her best, and to empower her team to achieve their goals.

But perhaps her most lasting contributions will come as a result of her efforts to mentor and facilitate the next generation of

In addition to the Store of the Year and the 50 Best Awards, four other major awards were presented.



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

The Ubuntu Award is presented to a store that makes a tremendous difference in its community.

UBUNTU AWARD

The Naperville Running crew was honored by Balega Sports.

female leaders. Today, her leadership team is comprised of a majority of women, and when she steps down from a board position, she always recommends a female successor to take her place.

This year's winner embodies many of the qualities that make the Running Specialty experience "special" and an essential part of the sport of running. She is a competitor and role model, community builder and business leader, and driving force behind the growing bench of female leaders in our industry. She sets an example for all of us to follow. Please join me in recognizing the winner of the 2016 Just Do It Award, Burke Beck of Red Coyote Running and Fitness!"

Ubuntu Award

Presented by Balega Sports to a store that makes a tremendous difference in its community.

Winners: Susanna Gotsch and Kris Hartner and the team at Naperville Running Company

(Excerpts from remarks by Chris Bevin, Balega.)

"We are experiencing interesting times in the world of specialty retail these days. There are challenges coming at us from all directions at an ever-increasing pace. While we all try to react as quickly as possible to things that can adversely affect our business, we also need to continue

to concentrate on those things which differentiate and define us – those things that our competitors either can't do or don't see the value in doing.

Our biggest advantage is the impact, which we can bring to bear on the communities we serve.

That ties into the ethos of this award and the brand presenting it.

The culture of Balega comes from the strong belief in community. We draw a lot of inspiration from the beliefs espoused by the concept of Ubuntu, "I am because we are."

Ubuntu is a humanistic philosophy focusing on people's allegiance and relationship to one another.

It is that relationship to our communities that resonates throughout what you as store owners do every day in your home towns. Changing lives, helping to improve the lives of those living in our communities.

Several years ago, Balega embarked on the journey to celebrate those stores that have truly demonstrated the spirit of Ubuntu by giving back to their communities.

While most of what we do every day focuses on improving the health and wellness of our community through programs revolving around wellness, there are those that go the extra mile, leaving an indelible mark on the communities





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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Varsity Sports won the Never Stop Exploring award.



Runner's Soul took home the Canadian Store of the Year award.

NEVER STOP EXPLORING AWARD + CANADIAN STORE OF THE YEAR

they serve. The folks we would like to recognize tonight certainly epitomize that belief.

Through the creation of a substantial endowment fund directed at developing social entrepreneurship, students are able to obtain start up funding for an enterprise with social impact. In addition, through their generosity, an academic program, “Social Impact Entrepreneurship”, will be introduced at North Central College... through

their actions they epitomize the spirit of UBUNTU.

This year’s Ubuntu award goes to Susanna Gotsch and Kris Hartner and the team at Naperville Running Company.”

Never Stop Exploring Award

Presented by The North Face to a store that is extraordinary in getting athletes to get out and experience running in the outdoors.

Winner: Varsity Sports, Louisiana

(Excerpts from remarks by Jacob Uhland, Director U.S. Specialty Wholesale & Latin America for The North Face.)

“The Principal behind this shop is a strong runner who qualified for Olympic trials on three occasions. She was once considered a top 20 runner in the world. The shop was founded in 2000 in a community not widely recognized for running. The company motto is “Run Hard, Live Easy.” And all three of their stores are converted historic homes.

This store is very involved in youth running programs. They co-branded technical running shirts for 300 underprivileged kids in the Youth Run Nola and donated 50 pairs of barely worn returned shoes to the kids. Details of the program were featured in a recent *Runner’s World* article.

They have also worked very closely with Girls on the Run, a transformational

learning program for 8 to 13 year-old girls. They teach life skills through dynamic, conversation-based lessons and running.

This store has been a supporter of Girls on the Run South Louisiana since inception in 2009 and they have helped the local program grow from 24 girls in 2009 to 1800 girls in 2015.

They have so many great programs and I’d like to highlight just a few.

- The “Buy One, Pass One On” program created by Varsity - donated one pair of Brooks shoes to a GOTR girl for each pair purchased in the store. This resulted in more than 100 pairs of shoes for girls in need.
 - Sponsored several events raising in excess of \$20,000 including Wine Walk event donating local high school track
 - Donated over 1,000 shoes and socks to victims of the huge flood in Louisiana that affected 80 percent of the homes and businesses in Livingston Parish and 40 percent in Baton Rouge
- The 2016 Winner of the Never Stop Exploring Award presented by The North Face is Varsity Sports: Jenni Peters and Bud Weiss, owners. Jimmy Wiggins is the manager.

Canadian Store of the Year

Presented by New Balance to Runner’s Soul of Lethbridge, Alberta.

Owners: Shawn and Erin Pinder ■

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Criteria: The 50 Best Explained

FAQs

How is the list of stores determined?

This is a four-step process that begins with the consumer nomination process via competitor.com

Once a store is nominated, it is further vetted through three separate steps.

First, stores are asked to fill out a questionnaire that asks about business history, community involvement, outstanding employees and essentially what qualifies that store to be rated as one of The 50 Best.

Once that data is reviewed, a select number of stores are then mystery shopped by Franklin Retail, the top merchandising company in the sports retail business. Trained Franklin mystery shoppers go into the stores, buy a pair of shoes or a piece of apparel and then fill out a 20-question report, rating the stores on customer service, merchandise selection and the checkout process. The report criteria were developed in conjunction with the Running Industry Association and are updated every year. For a look at the criteria, see page 34. This year more than 120 stores were shopped.

After the stores are mystery shopped, they are anonymously rated by vendors, based on their credit and their ability to partner with vendors. Any store that receives a failing grade on credit is disqualified from receiving an award. Credit scores also factor into a store's overall rating. For example, if a store does very well on mystery shopping and community involvement, but receives a low credit score, it may make the list, but not make the Four Finalists or win Store of the Year.

Can I see my mystery shopping scores?

Yes. We encourage stores to review their scores and they are made available each year for a fee of \$150 after the Awards have been presented. Many stores like to reward employees who did well and helped the store make the list. Stores also say they learn from where they did not score so well and work to improve. Stores interested in buying a copy of their Mystery Shopping report can contact Marianna Rukhvarger at mrukhvarger@formula4media.com.

Do I need to advertise with Competitor to win an award?

No. Stores that win the award receive special rates to advertise with *Competitor* to promote their awards, but it is not a requirement. Only 10-15 percent of all the 50 Best advertise with *Competitor*.





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FALKE



The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

We added awards for stores that aced their community scores...



... and stores with Perfect Mystery Shop scores.



I feel these awards are biased toward the RIA. Must I be an RIA member to win an award?

No. The RIA membership includes more than 200 stores, many of which are good stores and have been in business for many years, so many RIA members make the list. But each year there are 12-15 non-RIA stores that make the list.

I feel too many Fleet Feet stores make the list. Why is that?

There are about 1300 running stores in the United States, 170 of which are Fleet Feet Stores (that number has grown by about 40 percent over the past five years) so by mathematical logic, Fleet Feet should have about five stores on the list every year. Fleet Feet stores are subject to the same analysis as any other stores. The franchisor lands an average of 8-9 stores per year on the list. Fleet Feet has many long time operators who have been doing this for a long time and are highly regarded and that is reflected in the list each year.

My store is great, everyone says so. Yet I have never won the award. How can that be?

There are many reasons a store doesn't make the list. First of all, you may not be nominated, so encourage your customers, sales reps and industry colleagues to do so. And send us a thorough report when we request it. Secondly, you may have had a bad mystery shop or received a bad credit rating from a vendor. There are many great stores out there. Your store may indeed be great, but according to our analysis it may be the 51st or 60th best store in the country. It is extremely competitive to make what is designed to be an elite list. You may run a PR of 2:20 in a marathon, but if 50 runners finish ahead of you, you'll come in 51st place.

I believe that the awards are fixed, that they go to friends of TRE and Competitor. Is that true?

If after reading all the answers to these questions you still feel that way, we can probably never change your mind. Suffice to say, we take a great deal of pride (and spend a fair amount of money) in trying to create a list that is objective. There are plenty of "top store lists" out there. We want ours to have meaning and value.

Why only 50 stores? Why don't you add more?

We want this list to focus on the top stores and the list of 50 essentially narrows it to the top three percent of all stores in the country. We believe that if we expanded the list to 200 or 250, it would lose meaning and be more like a participation medal than a meaningful recognition. This year, we added special awards for stores that did very well on their community scores and nailed their mystery shop with a perfect score. Those lists appear on page 34. ■

Any stores with questions or suggestions about The 50 Best should e-mail: msullivan@formula4media.com

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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

Data Requested From Each Nominated Store

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Store Name. 2. Number of Locations 3. Please list the address for each of your location. 4. If we were to secret shop your store, which location would you prefer us to shop? 5. What shoe brands do you carry? 6. What apparel brands do you carry? 7. What accessory brands do you carry? 8. How many employees do you have?
Full time
30+ hours per week
Part time 9. What is the average number of years each employee has worked at your store? 10. What is the total number of years each employee has worked at your store? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Please give us one example of when an employee of yours went above and beyond expectations in providing service to a customer or the community. 12. What employee benefits do you offer? (ex. Health Insurance, 401K, Vacation, etc.) 13. Please check off the store services you provide. In the space provided, give us details on how the service is done in your store.
<input type="checkbox"/> Runs
<input type="checkbox"/> In Store Clinics and Events
<input type="checkbox"/> Training & Coaching Programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Other 14. How many races do you sponsor per year? Tell us about the most popular race your store sponsors. 15. What charity groups is your store involved with? 16. What is the most important single aspect of how your store makes a difference in its community? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Tell us about an event your store sponsors that is unique to your store. Please limit your response to 3-4 sentences. 18. Please check off which outreach methods your store uses.
<input type="checkbox"/> Blog / URL
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Email blast campaign
<input type="checkbox"/> Other 19. Facebook URL
Number of likes 20. Twitter URL
Number of followers
Number of tweets 21. Instagram URL
Number of followers
Number of posts 22. Yelp URL
Number of stars in overall rating
Number of reviews 23. Store Website URL |
|--|--|--|

Perfect Mystery Shopping Scores

The following stores recorded perfect scores on their Mystery Shopping Evaluations:



Best Community Scores

The following stores had the highest community score rankings of all the stores evaluated.



- Big River Running
- Fleet Feet Fort Wayne
- Fleet Feet Nashville
- Hanson's Running Shop
- Run 816
- Runner's Corner
- Tortoise & Hare Sports
- Track Shack, Orlando

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Charles River Running | Metro Run & Walk |
| Charm City Run | Pacers |
| Dick Pond Athletics | Three Rivers Running |
| Fleet Feet Baltimore | Tortoise & Hare Sports |
| Fleet Feet Maine Running | Universal Sole |
| Fleet Feet Rochester | West Stride |
| Marathon Sports | Whirlaway |



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

50 Best Running Stores in America

THE NORTHEAST



The 50 Best Stores in America list for 2016, broken out here into four regions, includes a “Customer Quote” from the nominations submitted online to *Competitor*.

Photos left to right: A Running Start, Charles River Running.

A Running Start

705 Penn Avenue
 West Reading, PA 19610
 610-320-9097

Customer Quote

“A Running Start is more than a great running specialty store, it’s a place to share stories, good and bad, about a common passion! The staff is always so positive and encouraging, no matter the skill level. They know their customers, personally. And they more than know **RUNNING!**”

Charles River Running

679 Washington St.
 Norwood, MA 02062
 781-349-8341

Customer Quote

“This store does an incredible job of pulling together the community to participate in races and other fun events. They are friendly and extremely welcoming, making the events and store approachable for all levels/ages. They also do a great job of keeping the community posted with an engaging newsletter.”



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ON THE MARKET



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Charm City Run, Fleet Feet Baltimore, Fleet Feet Maine Running

Charm City Run

2045 York Rd.
Timonium, MD 21093
410-561-3570

Customer Quote

“CCR’s dedication to the Baltimore community goes beyond the basics of selling shoes and putting on races. They truly embody their motto of ‘Live. Give. Run’ and they empower the community around them to do the same through training, races, information sessions and charitable events. They are changing Baltimore!”



Fleet Feet Baltimore

1852 Reisterstown Rd.
Baltimore, MD 21208
410-484-6565

Customer Quote

“They are the best! Everyone in the store is helpful and answers any and all questions. They are not just there for the ‘fast runners’ but for runners and walkers of all types. They have helped me become more confident in myself and I have seen it in others too.”



Fleet Feet Maine Running

309 Marginal Way
Portland, ME 04101
207-773-6601

Customer Quote

“Not only does Maine Running support our community, they built my community! Their training programs and clubs are what make my days brighter. The staff is passionate about making us feel welcome and special and it is contagious! They are so much more than a running store!”

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CALORIES



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos clockwise from left: Fleet Feet Roanoke, Fleet Feet Syracuse, Fleet Feet West Hartford.

Fleet Feet Roanoke

4347 Franklin Road
Roanoke, VA 24018
540-777-1166

Customer Quote

“This store is well-managed. Just look at the repeat customers. They do wonderful things for the community, not just with running activities. They make everyone feel welcome—they’re all inclusive. They place a huge emphasis on all types of wellness in the community.”

Fleet Feet Syracuse

5800 Bridge Street
East Syracuse, NY 13057
315-446-1444

Customer Quote

“Fleet Feet Syracuse has a friendly, well-educated staff. Everything is nicely organized. They take time to really help

customers. They always hold early packet pick up for local races, which is a BIG help. The newsletter is fantastic at keeping people up to date on things happening in the area and has good tips and blog posts!”

Fleet Feet West Hartford

1003-B Farmington Ave
West Hartford, CT 06107
860-233-8077

Customer Quote

“FF West Hartford is the best shopping experience ever. Experienced, professional, well trained staff who go far and beyond the expectations of any customer. More importantly, they are always giving back to their community through various events, and donating thousands of shoes to those who need them most!”



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: MedVed Running and Walking, New England Running Company, Potomac River Running Store.

MedVed Running and Walking

3400 Monroe Avenue
Rochester, NY 14618
585-248-3420

Customer Quote

“MedVed has such a friendly, patient, and knowledgeable staff. I always find the right pair of shoes there and I have wide feet! They sponsor races, partner with local running and helped put Rochester, NY on the trail running map. I drive an hour to shop here. Worth it!”

New England Running Company

43 Enon Street
Beverly, MA 01915
978-922-8870

Customer Quote

“NERC has great customer service, with employees going above and beyond in every transaction. The store also generously opens its doors for weekly group runs. They are a non-stop promoter of local running events, supporting many with water stops, packet pick-ups, etc. NERC has a loyal following for good reason!”

Potomac River Running Store

11911 Democracy Drive
Reston, VA 20190
703-689-0999

Customer Quote

“PRR has some of the best coaches and training programs. The staff makes the extra effort to learn about your running habits and style. They are knowledgeable and keep up with the latest trends. They offer helpful clinics such as injury prevention and rehab tips.”



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Runner's Alley, Two Rivers Treads, Whirlaway.

Runner's Alley

104 Congress St.
Portsmouth, NH 03801
603-430-1212

Customer Quote

"They are very supportive of local runners, charity for races, and have in depth product knowledge about every item in their store. They offer clinics for injured runners and offer training groups for newbies up through half marathon. Runner's Alley is a legit 'one-stop' shop for all your running needs."



Two Rivers Treads

107 W. German St.
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
304-876-1100

Customer Quote

"Aside from helping runners of all levels find the perfect shoes, TRT is very involved in the community. They offer health and running clinics to help people progress in health and running. Dr. Mark Cucuzzella and his crew not only promote local community events but participate in them as well."



Whirlaway

500 Merrimack St.
Methuen, MA 01844
978-688-8356

Customer Quote

"Whirlaway unites runners from many communities through supporting runners of every stage (beginners to elites) with continuous respect and service. They continually support non-profit organizations. They give high school running teams discounts and get-togethers sharing team spirit. They offer the best prices for the best shoes, clothing, service, and knowledge."



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

50 Best Running Stores in America

THE SOUTH



Photos left to right: 1st Place Sports, Bull City Running.

1st Place Sports

3931 Baymeadows Rd.
 Jacksonville, FL 32217
 904-731-3676

Customer Quote

“A true runner’s boutique! 1st Place takes great care of their customers through knowledgeable staff, numerous convenient locations, and top moth merchandise. They also play an integral role in the communities around North Florida by sponsoring, directing and supporting racing events throughout the year as well as hosting free clinics.”

Bull City Running

202 W NC Highway 54, Suite 109
 Durham, NC 27713
 919-265-3904

Customer Quote

“Bull City offers reliable, friendly service from knowledgeable personnel, and has been a mainstay in assisting local schools and clubs in service and race sponsorship and/or timing.”

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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Charlotte Running Company, Fleet Feet Huntsville, Fleet Feet Nashville.

Charlotte Running Company

1412 East Blvd., Ste. G
Charlotte, NC 28203
704-377-8786

Customer Quote

“Great products, great service! People are always friendly and chatty, willing to help out with any problems. They do tons of great community runs and races and gatherings. They are very supportive of the local running clubs and middle, high school and college athletes. Their events are used to raise money for local nonprofits.”

Fleet Feet Huntsville

2722 Carl T. Jones Suite 2B
Huntsville, AL 35802
256-650-0763

Customer Quote

“Not only do they offer great service in the store, they help support numerous races varying from 5K to 50K. Their passion is running and helping others to enjoy it also. It does not matter if you just started running or have been running for twenty years they all treat you the same.”

Fleet Feet Nashville

330 Franklin Road, Suite 262B
Brentwood, TN 37027
615-373-1123

Customer Quote

“They are so much more than a running store. Their No Boundaries program has started countless number of runners down the path towards a healthier lifestyle. They are very active in the community sponsoring and supporting many races for charitable causes. Oh, and the staff rocks!”



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Georgia Game Changers, iRun Texas, Red Coyote Running & Fitness.

Georgia Game Changers

8872 Ford Ave, Suite 207
 Richmond Hill, GA 31324
 912-445-2163

Customer Quote

“Georgia Game Changers is not a running store, it’s a community of people helping the people of the community. From helping people with proper stride to outfitting people with the proper gear, GGC truly cares for the wellbeing and accomplishments of its customers.”

iRun Texas

20079 Stone Oak Pkwy, Ste 3120
 San Antonio, TX 75258
 210-494-7869

Customer Quote

“iRun has opened up the world of running to me and made me love something I used to hate. The passion of the employees and coaches to help you get the right training and right gear is contagious. My running has improved in ways I never thought possible.”

Red Coyote Running & Fitness

5720 N. Classen Blvd, Suite 1
 Oklahoma City, OK 73118
 405-840-0033

Customer Quote

“This store has changed my life, and has helped so many people get back into shape by their running classes. They are there to answer any question you have about running, and give you tips on how to run better. It’s not just a store, it’s a family.”



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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos clockwise from top left: Run For Your Life, Running Wild, Runner's Depot.

Run For Your Life

901 S. Kings Dr.
Charlotte, NC 28204
704-503-1105

Customer Quote

“Run for Your Life plays a very important role within the running community in Charlotte, NC as a retailer, organizer, and educator. Their stores are staffed with friendly, knowledgeable people and they’ve helped countless people get on their feet and run. Absolutely top notch.”

Runner’s Depot

2233 S. University Drive
Davie, FL 33324
954-474-4074

Customer Quote

“Runner’s Depot is a huge asset to our community. The support and love they give go far beyond their love of running. The knowledge they provide allows hours of pain free running. They are more of a family than a retail store. Runner’s Depot Rocks!”

Running Wild

3012 E Cervantes St
Pensacola, FL 32503
850-435-9222

Customer Quote

“Running Wild is full of resources for runners. They dedicate everything they do to connecting, helping, informing, and training runners of every level! They do it with the best smiles. They remember customers. They are about building community not just selling products.”

Rush Running

1600 SE J Street
Bentonville, AR 72712
479-464-7866

Customer Quote

“Not only do they have the best customer service and knowledge of products, but they are very involved in the community. Rush Running provides affordable training series, directs the best-organized events and encourages everyone to get out and run no matter their age, speed or ability.”

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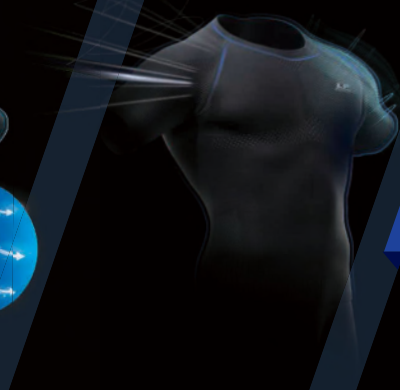
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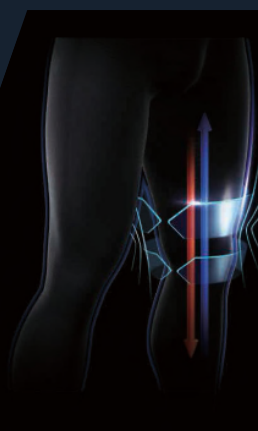
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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Track Shack Orlando, Varsity Sports, West Stride.

Track Shack Orlando

1104 N. Mills Ave.
Orlando, FL 32803
407-898-1313

Customer Quote

“Track Shack is highly involved in the community. They promote a healthy/active lifestyle. The Track Shack Foundation provides grants to support sports at various local schools, many of which include low-income children. The owners and staff are highly knowledgeable and willingly share insights in the sport of running.”

Varsity Sports

2055 Perkins Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225-383-8913

Customer Quote

“I am nominating Varsity Sports because they are the BEST! They have the best customer service and provide so much more than just running shoes, nutrition, and apparel... like hugs and endless encouragement. The marathon and half marathon training is super positive and fun... it has forever changed my life!”

West Stride

3517 Northside Pkwy
Atlanta, GA 30327
404-467-1010

Customer Quote

“As a novice runner I was clueless about what to wear... they provided outstanding personal service and outfitted me from head to toe in some of the best running gear on the market. West Stride is more than a running store. It’s empowering women to take control of their health by maintaining an active lifestyle all while building relationships with one another.”

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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

50 Best Running Stores in America

THE MIDWEST



Photos left to right: Ann Arbor Running Company, Big River Running.

Ann Arbor Running Company

2755 Oak Valley Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
734-662-2400

Customer Quote

“They truly support the running community. Instead of shoe ads on the windows, they have life size photos of local runners. They support all of the area races and have a great group of pacers. I won’t shop anywhere else.”

Big River Running

5352 Devonshire Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63109
314-832-2400

Customer Quote

“It makes a difference in our community because it is deeply embedded in everything about running in the community. The store offers great shoe matches, merchandise, weekly group runs, in-store classes from yoga to strength training, summer speed series, spring and fall group training for local marathons and half marathons.”



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MILE AS YOU MAKE
IT **COUNT!**

PERFORMANCE *AT ITS* BEST

The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Columbus Running Company, Complete Runner, Dave's Running Shop.

Columbus Running Company

6465 Perimeter Drive
Dublin, OH 43016
614-764-0855

Customer Quote

“The owners put the community and their employees first. Their commitment to improving their city—using their stores as a vehicle to do so—is unmatched. They help the local schools, support local 5K races and teach training for all levels of runners! These stores are very friendly and it is the only place I buy my shoes.”



Complete Runner

915 S. Dort Highway
Flint, MI 48503
810-233-8851

Customer Quote

“Old Newsboys of Flint has partnered with Complete Runner to take care of over 400 needy kids each year in the Flint area. Teachers ID needy kids without a decent pair of shoes. Complete Runner is amazing in the ways they give back.”



Dave's Running Shop

5700 Monroe Street
Sylvania, OH 43560
419-882-8524

Customer Quote

“Dave's is a fantastic contributor to the greater Toledo community, through both solo efforts and partnerships with local clubs and organizations. They pioneered the group training program concept in this community and built it into almost year-round groups targeting key local races, reinvigorating participation in these events. Oh, and great stores and customer service.”

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 **swiftwick**

Swiftwick Athlete - Peter Maksimov, Photo - Alexis Courthoud

The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: Dick Pond Athletics, Fleet Feet Chicago, Fleet Feet Fort Wayne.

Dick Pond Athletics

26 W 515 St. Charles Road
 Carol Stream, IL 60188
 630-665-3316

Customer Quote

“Dick Pond has been around since 1969. It’s a small family owned business that helps local high school athletes, marathon runners, walkers and new runners by providing quality products with great service, and building community with their free running programs. They are great with kids, and teaching them the importance of taking care of themselves with their summer program.”

Fleet Feet Chicago

4762 N. Lincoln Avenue
 Chicago, IL 60625
 773-271-3338

Customer Quote

“My favorite thing about FF Chicago is the endlessly patient staff. I have difficult feet to shoe (long toes, high arches, half size difference between feet). It can take two visits and lots of time on a treadmill to figure out if a shoe will work for me. They deal with me every eight months with a smile!”

Fleet Feet Fort Wayne

5661 Coventry Lane
 Fort Wayne, IN 46804
 260-432-3270

Customer Quote

“This store brings a community together. They volunteer for so many different events around the city, but they have also grown me as a runner and through them I have met some great friends and achieved goals I didn’t think were possible.”

WWW.HICKIES.COM



YOUR RUN,
UNINTERRUPTED >

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LACING SYSTEM

The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos clockwise from left: Hanson's Running Shop, Geneva Running Outfitters, Lincoln Running Company.

Geneva Running Outfitters

221 W State Street
Geneva, IL 60134
331-248-0221

Customer Quote

“What I love best is their advice and encouragement for training and racing. I literally cried when I thought I wouldn't fit into a wet suit for my first triathlon. They found a suit for me, and built up my confidence. Priceless. Their service and product selection are great too!”

Hanson's Running Shop

3407 Rochester Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073
248-616-9665

Customer Quote

“Hanson's is invested in the running like

no other company I have ever seen. They take time, effort, money, and resources to provide better experiences for runners by hosting group runs, speed sessions, race, and community events. They have a passion for running, and they want everyone to enjoy it.”

Lincoln Running Company

1213 Q Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
402-474-4557

Customer Quote

“This is the best running store in the state of Nebraska-hands down! The knowledgeable and friendly staff is always willing to go the extra mile for everybody. The store hosts many running events that anybody from the community is invited to.”

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Introducing the New,

Aetrex Orthotics Sports Line for Running to Enhance Your Competitive Edge.

The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos clockwise from bottom left: Performance Running Outfitters, Manhattan Running Company, Run 816, Running Central.

Manhattan Running Company

1129 Garden Way
Manhattan, KS 66502
785-320-6363

Customer Quote

“This store not only provides excellent products, they provide motivation and encouragement. I’m not sure I would have ever signed up, or survived my first half marathon without their encouragement and help getting into the right gear!”

Performance Running Outfitters

2205 N Calhoun Road
Brookfield, WI 53005
262-784-7989

Customer Quote

“The store isn’t just a store... it fosters a culture that is inclusive to anyone even contemplating to begin to run. The programs are beginner friendly and allows for anyone to explore running & an approach that demonstrates running can fit into any lifestyle.”

Run 816

304 Westport Road
Kansas City, MO 64111
816-569-0106

Customer Quote

“They take a personal interest in their customers. I was amazed that after visiting the store once, the next time in they remembered my name and the shoes I bought. The personal touch and level of attention is awesome.”

Running Central

311 SW Water Street
Peoria, IL 61602
309-676-6378

Customer Quote

“After tearing my hamstring in August, they took over an hour to fit me last night to be sure I had the right fit and shoes post injury/therapy. I know a lot of the employees by name because they are consistent and have great retention.”

Momentum
Sports Bra
Style# 5529
Cups A-H



ACTIVE

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The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos top to bottom: The Running Well Store, Three Rivers Running, Up & Running.

The Running Well Store

6106 NW Barry Road
 Kansas City, MO 64154
 816-741-8800

Customer Quote

“The Staff is very attentive, and flexible in dealing with their clients. They have a culture of not only providing a product, but providing the support to make you consider a healthy lifestyle, no matter your skill level. I’ve always had an awesome experience here.”



Three Rivers Running

4039 N Clinton Street
 Fort Wayne, IN 46805
 260-496-8000

Customer Quote

“Everyone is always friendly and helpful. They are knowledgeable on any item I have ever bought there. And I love all the extras (classes, race sponsorships) they offer. I won’t buy running stuff anywhere else and routinely drive the 90 minutes round trip to visit.”



Up & Running

6123 Far Hills Avenue
 Dayton, OH 45459
 937-432-9210

Customer Quote

“This store is such an asset to the greater Dayton area. It is the only running store to offer custom, proper fits. All of the workers are SO kind and knowledgeable. So many physicians, podiatrists, and other medical professionals send their patients to the store.”

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Crew



TRAIL RUNNING
1/4 Crew



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drymaxsports.com

The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)

50 Best Running Stores in America

THE WEST



Photos left to right: A Snail's Pace, Fleet Feet Aptos/Monterey.

A Snail's Pace

8840 Warner Avenue, Suite 205
 Fountain Valley, CA 92708
 714-842-0352

Customer Quote

"A Snail's Pace contributes so much to the running community. This is where runners can always find the best advice on shoes and gear from knowledgeable and caring staff. Additionally, both their running club and their running academy foster strong camaraderie and a real sense of family."

Fleet Feet Aptos/Monterey

472 Alvarado Street
 Monterey, CA 93940
 831-662-0886

Customer Quote

"Two years ago, while looking for a fitness program, I found No Boundaries through Fleet Feet Monterey. I started my fitness journey with them. Five training sessions, seven races, and 92 pounds later, it's clear that Fleet Feet Monterey cares about the health and fitness of the community."



BETTER Vision, NEW Direction



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www.spira.com

The 50 Best Running Stores in America (continued)



Photos clockwise from left: Sole Sports, Runner's Corner, Tortoise & Hare Sports.

Fleet Feet Sacramento

2311 J Street
Sacramento CA 95816
916-442-3338

Customer Quote

"For the past 40 years Fleet Feet Sac has brought together the Sacramento running community as the running hub of our town. The store is the go to place for shoes, injury prevention, training and running advice. They are always there to help and give back so much to Sacramento."

Sole Sports

1006 E Warner Road Suite 104
Tempe, AZ 85284
480-522-2475

Customer Quote

"I love the feel of the store, and they always have great merchandise and very knowledgeable and friendly staff members. I had trouble with my knees and they got me into the right shoes and now I can run without pain again. They are awesome!"

Runner's Corner

835 South 700 East
Orem UT 84097
801-223-7010

Customer Quote

"Runner's Corner is one of the oldest stores in Utah and it's locally owned. They help with a number of different races every year, and donate money to charities. Great employees, very knowledgeable, they try to help you figure out what is the best thing for you."

Tortoise & Hare Sports

17570 N. 75th Avenue #605
Glendale AZ 85308
623-792-7900

Customer Quote

"I heard that they fit shoes better than anyone else. My feet are extremely hard to fit. They did it. This is the first time I've had a pair of running shoes that don't blister me. Plus, their One Fit Mama program is fantastic. Best of all the people are fabulous!"



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Snapshots from #TRE16

Social media was crackling with energy at #TRE16. There were photos and videos on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as well as a feed full of snapshots

on The Running Event's official App. From hotel room views and product previews to updates from conference sessions, the App proved to be both entertaining and beneficial for networking. On

this page are some photos posted on The Running Event 2016 App. Don't forget to keep up with us year-round on Instagram and Twitter (@therunningevent) and at Facebook.com/therunningevent. ■



via Joachim Saukel



via Stephanie India



via Spencer Martin



via Lee Karp



via Allison Cook



via Charlotte Walsh



via Patrick Keenan



via Scott Watson



via Tyler C. Shneider

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Reporter's Notebook

Seen & Heard on the Show Floor at #TRE16



Lily Trotters high-performance compression socks are designed to be both beautiful and functional. These made in the USA socks are fashion forward, keeping runners looking (and feeling) good on any outdoor adventure or during the daily routine. The socks have padded heels and reinforced toes. They are moisture-wicking and have antimicrobial finishing. The USA quality-tested 15-20 mmHg graduated compression has just the right squeeze. The thin yet sturdy socks are designed to be comfortably worn for hours on end.

Brilliant Reflective safety strips, which launched in August 2016, are a patented line of stick-on and iron-on reflective safety strips offering a simple solution for reflective safety. The strips can be adhered to just about anything, including clothing, bicycles, helmets, running shoes, backpacks, dog leashes and more. The colorized 3M Scotchlite reflective material reflects brighter than any other color reflective material on the

market, according to the brand.

Smell Well, a Swedish and Canadian invention, offers a solution to smelly shoes and sports equipment. The moisture absorbing and odor eliminating pouches slip right into shoes or other gear and deliver a fresh scent. The product lasts up to four months. The pouches come in a variety of fun designs.

Wiivv is a potentially game-changing product concept. The company provides custom 3D printed insoles that can be ordered from a smartphone. The insoles are designed to relieve plantar fasciitis pain, joint discomfort and general foot fatigue.

Theraworx Active is a new sports-specific line of topical solutions for the sports specialty market from Asheville, NC-based Avadim Technologies that was formed in 2007 to address how hospital-acquired infections are controlled. Theraworx is non-toxic and safe for both open wounds and excoriations.

Salomon will introduce its new Sense Ride trail running shoe (\$120 retail) for Fall 2017. It features the brand's Vibe technology to attenuate vibration, lessening fatigue and a proprietary foam, said to be half the weight of traditional EVA, that is used in the auto industry for dampening vibration.

MedZone, founded in 2001, offers a suite of topical products—ChafeZone, BurnZone and BlisterZone are but three—developed to help triathletes, runners and other athletes who suffer from Chub Rub sunburn, windburn, blisters or aches.

OMsignal, the Montreal company that developed the Polotech shirt for Ralph Lauren at the 2015 U.S. Open,

is moving forward with its OMBRA (\$169 retail) smart garment that offers biometric coaching and says it's developing a series of "smart" compression shirts for runners.

Lumo Run, launched in September, MSRP \$99.99, is a device for runners of all levels that coaches in real-time to improve areas of weakness. An iPhone app shows wearer specific exercises to improve form.



Shock Absorber bras are focused on delivering performance, comfort, and style. All of the brand's bras are tested at the University of Portsmouth in England where they specialize in breast health. Every bra Shock Absorber puts on the market must "reduce bounce" by at least 50 percent, and the brand's Run Bra and Ultimate Fly Bra (new in June) reduce bounce by 78 percent. The Fall 2017 Ultimate Fly Bra uses three different moisture wicking fabrics with cross control support to create a light bra that feels freeing while also reducing bounce.

Mizuno is rolling out its Cloud Wave midsole, the evolution of its Wave midsole technology. The new Wave plate is designed to be softer, but still supportive and responsive. The technology will debut in spring's \$150

The Newest Compression Sleeves

FEATHERWEIGHT



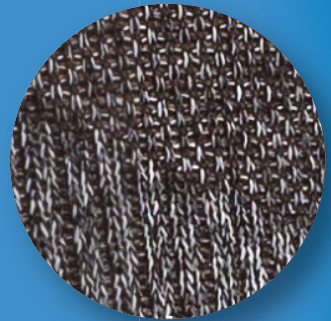
- **35% lighter** than other sleeves
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- Graduated compression
- Unparalleled comfort

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Specific shin & calf
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INCREASED DURABILITY
High-quality yarns maintain
elasticity through countless
workouts and washes



PERFORM WITHOUT LIMITS

Reporter's Notebook (continued)

maximum cushioning Wave Horizon style, set for a February release, and the \$150 Wave Sky, a neutral cushioning shoe set to replace the Wave Enigma. In July, the brand will debut the Wave Shadow, a \$110 performance trainer that will replace the Wave Sayonara.

Reebok, building on the success of its partnerships with Ragnar and Spartan Race, is looking to take off in the performance running world with a series of new shoes that will use its new Float Ride midsole material, a springy TPE that's 50 percent lighter than EVA.



CamelBak is out with two quick stow flasks, insulated or standard version (\$28/\$20), that may be stashed in a belt, vest or palm of your hand for easy hydration. Empty flask collapses and folds to fit into most pockets. BPA-free products have an easy dry hanger loop for easy drainage and drying.

The North Face has updated its road-to-trail Cardiac shoe for fall with the Ultra Cardiac II. Featuring a gusseted tongue and Vibram Megagrip outsole, the style also has a jacquard mesh upper with a cable system and TPU overlays for added stability. The \$120 style for men and women will start delivering in July.

Fleet Feet Sports announced that the husband-and-wife team of Paul and Cathy Rogers opened a new Fleet Feet Sports location in Myrtle Beach, SC. The store opened on Dec. 8. Paul and Cathy's son Shawn Rogers will join them as store manager.

Paul Rogers, a U.S. Military Academy graduate, spent four decades in the industrial and medical industry. Cathy Rogers has a master's degree in education and taught middle school

students for over 30 years. Shawn Rogers graduated from the University of Kentucky with a degree in marketing and has spent the last seven years in retail management.

Mizuno USA announced the hiring of footwear designer Indra Gunasekara as Creative Director of Global Performance Running Footwear. Working in partnership with Todd Lewis, VP of Running Footwear and Design – Running, Gunasekara will lead performance running footwear design globally, providing support to global footwear teams in Japan and the U.S. Gunasekara will be based in Portland at the Mizuno Performance Running Center of Excellence.

Gunasekara joins Mizuno with more than 20 years of experience and a keen sense for design and footwear innovation. Most recently, Gunasekara led priority performance footwear initiatives at Brooks Sports, Pure Project and Project Transcend as Brooks Senior Designer – Level 2.

Fleet Feet Sports and **Karhu** announced an exclusive retail partnership. Set to launch with Karhu's updated Fast 6 (MSRP \$140) and Fluid 5 (MSRP \$120) in February, the partnership makes Fleet Feet Sports the sole retailer of Karhu running shoes at its 170 stores as well as online at FleetFeetSports.com, and marks the first time Fleet Feet Sports has had an exclusive for all running shoe models of a brand.

ASICS and **the IAAF** announced a new multiple year partnership with ASICS becoming part of the group of Official IAAF Partners. As Official IAAF Partner, ASICS will be present at and involved in all IAAF World Athletics Series events including the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London in August, 2017 and the 2019 IAAF World Championships in Doha. As part of the agreement ASICS will outfit the

officials and volunteers at all IAAF World Athletics Series events with ASICS' footwear and apparel.

Brooks is exploring the stylish side of the run with the introduction of its new \$100 Revel shoe. The \$100



style, slated for July delivery, is what senior manager of global footwear merchandising Brice Newton calls "a blend of fashion and performance and style" that, while totally runnable, has the lines and looks of a running lifestyle shoe. Available for men and women, the shoe has an BioMoGo DNA midsole and internal bootie construction. Most intriguingly, it features the brand's first flat-knit upper, made with hot-melt yarns that resist stretching.

SAXX Underwear has garnered a major investment. Just as its ventilated, strike compression short is slated to hit specialty run shops in January, SAXX Underwear Co. has landed a nearly \$50 million private equity investment from Los Angeles-based Brentwood Associates. Vancouver-based SAXX, owned by No Limits Group since 2010, intends to use the cash infusion to broaden its product portfolio, enhance its digital presence and expand internationally. No Limits Group investors retain majority ownership in Saxx following the deal with Brentwood, whose other current and previous apparel investments include Allen Edmonds, Ariat International and Filson.

Tim Bartels, CEO of SAXX, a former Columbia Sportswear, Keen and Nike executive, welcomed the investment in the company, which in

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Reporter's Notebook (continued)

September was forecast to exceed \$40 million in 2016 revenues, calling SAXX's new product pipeline robust and suggesting customer support and enthusiasm for the men's active lifestyle brand has never been higher.

"We will continue to support the company (SAXX) in such areas as product innovation, targeted print and digital marketing, and operational excellence across its global distribution and fulfillment platform," said Eric Reiter, a partner at Brentwood.

SAXX, which has exceeded 75 percent annual revenue growth since 2012, counts World Series champion pitcher Jake Arrieta and surfer Mark Healey as both wearers of its product and endorsers. ■

RIA New Board

The Running Industry Association named its new Board of Directors at The Running Event. Based on recent election results, new board members are:

Burke Beck
Red Coyote Running & Fitness

Kathy Dalby
Pacers Running

Teague Hatfield
FootZone, Bend

Bob Kennedy
Movin' Shoes and Athletic Annex

Susie Stein
Up and Running in Dayton
(re-elected, incumbent board member)

Returning Board Members are:

Todd Dalhauser
Saucony

Donny Forsyth
Charlotte Running Company

Brent Hollowell
Nathan Sports

Cathy Pugsley
Potomac River Running

Megan Searfoss
Ridgefield Running Company

Nick Stanko
Ann Arbor Running Company

Susie Stein
Up and Running in Dayton

Rick Wilhelm
Brooks

John Benedict
Playmaker Sports, Acting Past President

Jeff Nott
Formula4 Media, Treasurer



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RUN Pain Relief Max



Women's **RUN** Comfort Max



RUN Comfort Max

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Running Around TRE

Shoe try-ons, fun runs and plenty of business, too.



Trying on some new Saucony shoes.

It was fitting that The Running Event 2016 came to Orlando, America's Theme park capital because Orlando indeed offered thrills, chills and excitement from start to finish.

The event's proceedings kicked off with a reception at Orlando's oldest running store, Track Shack and then rolled into two days of business sessions, conference speakers and plenty of impromptu discussions. In between all the business, retailers found plenty of time to run, relax and network.

Two of the favorite running activities this year: Saucony's Freedom Run and The Indie 5K race through Epcot.



Running in the Indie 5K.



WHATEVER THE WEATHER
**EXPERIENCE
THE DIFFERENCE**



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Waterproof, Windproof, Breathable

Introducing GORE-TEX® Running Footwear with GORE® Invisible Fit Technology

TRE Highlights (continued)

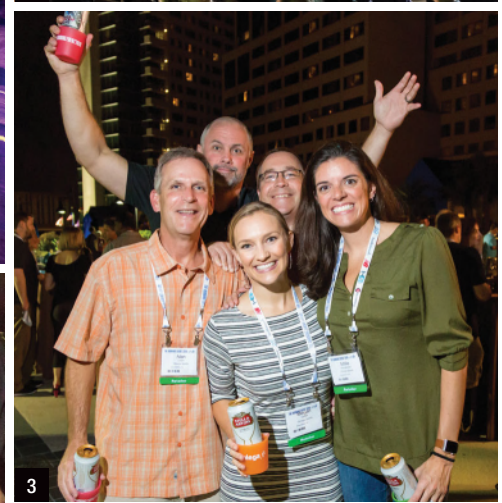
Balega's A-maze-ing Opening Night Reception



1



2



3



4

Balega created a maze that simulated how much yarn they use in making their socks. Retailers vied to see who could run the maze in the fastest time, with prizes for the most A-maze-ing contestants.



7



5



6



8

It was a fun night by the pool as Orlando hosted TRE's opening night reception. 1. Navigating the maze. 2. The Crowd at poolside. 3. The Omega team. 4. Meet the press; Jeff Blumenfeld (in green shirt) holds court. 5. Deedra Willaford of Fit2Run. 6. Silipint provided some unbreakable silicone cups at the Balega party. 7. Inside the Matrix-like maze. 8. Happy faces at the party.



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Step up to the next level in sock performance and give your feet the protection they deserve.





TRE Highlights (continued)

Saucony Fun Run



Early risers tried the new Saucony Freedom shoes for a sunrise run around the Hyatt Regency. “Feels like I’m flying,” said one retailer.



Happy faces and happy feet took part in the Saucony Fun Run. Saucony calls its new Freedom ISO shoe a “game-changer,” and it was indeed fun and games when they rolled the shoes out for a demo run during TRE. We spy ultra-runner Anton Krupicka (photo 2). And in photo 7, there’s a fresh pair of Saucony’s ready to be unwrapped.



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EVENT[®]
2017**

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TRE Highlights (continued)

Speaker's Corner



Speakers brought their A-game on topics ranging from Running Injuries to Marketing and PR.



1. Matt B. Davis moderates an OCR discussion. 2. The conferences sessions were packed. 3. Retail consultant Tom Griffen. 4. Paying close attention. 5. Gene Zelek discusses UMAP pricing. 6. Jim Dion offers tips on execution. 7. Data sharing was a major topic of discussion.

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- Foot determination
- Pressure distribution
- Shoe data base

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The UP-TO-DATE Fitting for Running Specialty.



TRE Highlights (continued)

Speaker's Corner



David Meerman Scott gets everyone going on social media with a super selfie.

“To have hundreds of running specialty store owners under one roof is such a unique opportunity to collaborate in the small groups of the conference,” said one retailer.

**Run harder.
Recover faster. In style.**

Designer high-performance compression. Many styles. Super-soft yarns. Marathon-strong weave.

- EASY ON and EASY OFF
- Cushioned heels
- Reinforced toes
- Moisture wicking
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LPTENT®



TRE Highlights (continued)

Networking Sponsors: Hickies, OS1st, On Running, AfterShokz



One store owner said “the TRE conference is extremely helpful. The back-to-basic financials is crucial to developing my business.”



In between conference sessions, retailers mingled informally with sponsors Hickies, OS1st, On Running and AfterShokz who all got a chance to talk about their products before the craziness of the trade show.

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TRE Highlights (continued)

The Indie 5K® Race



2016 INDIE 5K RESULTS

Male Retailer Winner:
DJ McMillan, Playmakers 15:45

Female Retailer Winner:
Julie Stackhouse, 1st Place Sports 17:37

Male CEO Winner:
Nick Walker, Forerunners 16:03

Female CEO Winner:
Kris Pearce, Run Hub Northwest 21:16

Retail Team Winner:
Playmakers

Manufacturer Team Winner:
Hoka One One

Male Manufacturer Winner:
Chase Coffey, Altra 15:28

Female Manufacturer Winner:
Dana Giordano, Reebok 17:31



Each year The Running Event's Indie 5K race is a showcase for retailers and manufacturers to show off their speed. This year was no different as the super-fast times listed on this page attest to. A record number 597 racers participated in the Indie 5K this year, held at Disney's Epcot. The race took place before the park had even opened.



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- Knitted massage zone in plantar fascia area for improved circulation
- Perfect fit and superior comfort for everyday use and for workouts and sports

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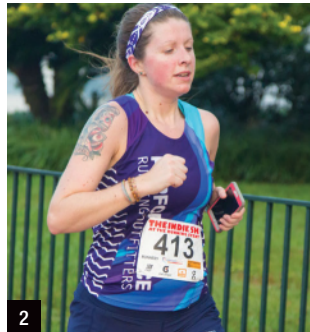
cepcompression.com





TRE Highlights (continued)

The Indie 5K® Race



A record number 597 racers participated in the Indie 5K in Disney's Epcot, before the park had even opened.

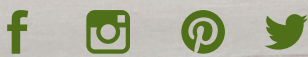


The Indie 5K lived up to its reputation as the fastest run at any trade show. This year the race took place in Epcot and featured nearly 600 runners who enjoyed the venue and the after race expo and festivities.



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PERFORMANCE

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TRE Highlights (continued)

The Indie 5K® Expo



There was no shortage of goodies with over 20 Indie 5K sponsors displaying product at the World Showplace Pavilion.



After the race, runners enjoyed the Indie 5K Expo. 1. Gatorade helped runners refuel. 2-6. Whether they were out for fun, individual glory or to bring home a team award, runners represented TRE spirit at the Indie 5K. 7. New footwear from On.

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TRE Highlights (continued)

The 50 Best Running Stores in America



Two new honors debuted this year: The Perfect Mystery Shop Award & Community Involvement Award.



1. Retail trophies. 2. Troy Leonard, Christina Henderson, Zan Neigoot and Jenny Swan. 3. Kim Overton from SPIBelt and Jessica Murphy from Runner's World. 4. Ellen Donahue, Fleet Feet, far left, and Keara Thomas, New Balance, second from right. 5. Jason Page and Kim Chapman of Bull City Running with Dustin Pearce of Run Hub Northwest. 6. Honors Await. 7. Enjoying the venue. 8. Nathan Hohenstein and son. 9. Mark Sullivan keeps things moving.



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for common running injuries

▼ New! Memory Foam
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TRE Highlights (continued)

The 50 Best Running Stores in America



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

1. Magical setting. 2. The Runner's Depot crew. 3. Track Shack team. 4. Jimmy and Jolyane from Le Coureur Nordique. 5. Cameron Schuler and Jared Bell of Nike. 6. Enjoying the party. 7. Hand painted awards for Indie 5K winners. 8-9. Retailers enjoying the pre-awards party.

Congratulations!



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Special Recognition to the Finalists

Fleet Feet Nashville / Tortoise and Hare Sports / Hanson's Running Shop

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TRE Highlights (continued)

Hall of Fame



The Hall of Fame breakfast honored four influential running industry forces, from race director to retail manager and owner.



The industry gathered to honor this year's inductees into the Running Specialty Hall of Fame. 1. Terry Schalow, RIA, speaks at the reception. 2. Brian Metzler from Competitor inducts Johnny Halberstadt. 3. Chris Weiller honors Fred Lebow. 4. It was standing room only for the Hall of Fame ceremony. 5. Tom Raynor inducts Fleet Feet's Jeff Phillips. 6. Inductee Dianne Etheridge, Phidippides. 7. Jeff Phillips, Fleet Feet, Inc.

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AVAILABLE JANUARY 1st



4.5" Diameter



3" Diameter



Record Breakers at the Trade Show

Excitement on the TRE Show Floor Centered Around More than Just New Product.



Jacob Puzey

Altra Elite athlete Jacob Puzey ran an average pace of 5:56 per mile to set the new world record for the fastest 50-mile run on a treadmill at The Running Event. Puzey finished 50 miles in 4:57:45, shattering the previous record of 5:57:31 by nearly an hour. His en route marathon split time was 2:38.

Fans from all over trade show packed the Altra booth to cheer Puzey on to the new world record. Puzey is an experienced ultrarunner who ran the entire 50 miles in the Altra Paradigm road shoe on a ProForm Boston Marathon Treadmill. Puzey stayed hydrated with soft drinks and electrolytes and fueled with potato chips, stopping for a bathroom break only once.



New Balance athletes Abbey D'Agostino and Emma Coburn.

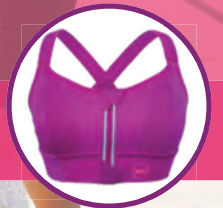
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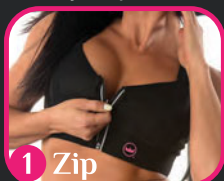
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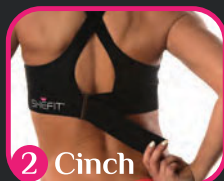
Support Your Girls • Support Your Goals

SHEFIT ULTIMATE SPORTS BRA

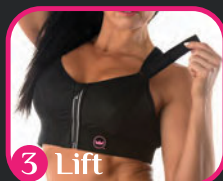
3 Easy Steps for a Perfect Fit



1 Zip



2 Cinch



3 Lift

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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1. Hosiery was a hot category on the show floor. 2. Doing business at the Performance Health booth. 3. Checking out Theraworx product. 4. Inspirational messaging on this magnet by Creative Magnets. 5. At the Handful booth. 6. Zero Runner's home running machine. 7. New styles from Spira.

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...ALL IN ONE PAK



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- Blister Prevention
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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



It had everything from socks and shoes to apparel, packs, electronics and compression gear, and even books. The Running Event's trade show floor was full of awesome new products. As one attendee tweeted when the doors opened - "It's a runner's candy store!" On the floor: 1. Getting traction at the Icebug booth. 2. Farm to Feet socks, made in the USA. 3. Time to kick back with a book. 4. Talking hosiery on the show floor.

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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1



3



2

As always, walking around the trade show floor was a great way to find new products and new companies, as well as catch up with old friends. Seen in Orlando: 1. Less Pain, More Gain with these new Body Glove products at TRE. 2. Networking on the trade show floor. 3. The Joyyoung Knitting Company crew had performance garments and fabrics on display.

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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1



3



2

Because simple conversation isn't the only way to play: brands at TRE showcased some exciting demonstrations that showed off their wares from wicking socks to blinking lights. 1. Discussing business on the show floor. 2. Nobody likes wet feet! 3. There was no shortage of reflective and lighting products on display at TRE. Here, a new product at the GoMotion booth.

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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



More from the show floor: 1. BOCO Gear hats look cool and feature performance fabrics. 2. The Zamst team ready to show off the high-performance technology it has to offer for the elite athlete. 3. Taking a break in front of On's stylish shoe display.

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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1



2



3

Having fun and getting work done: 1. The ElliptiGO Demo area brought to mind the chariot race scene from Ben Hur. 2. Shefit makes high performance sports bras that accommodate women of every size. 3. Anita manufactures high impact sports bra that “know no compromise.”



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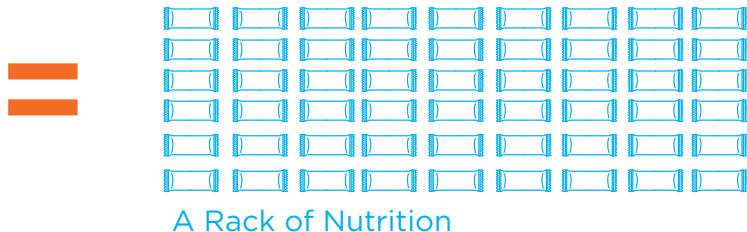
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ROUTE EXPLORATION



TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1



2



3



4

Sometimes you need to kick back and relax. 1. New product from Kahtoola at TRE. 2. Ryka shows off its Re-Zorb tech. 3. Maggie and Dave from Whirlaway in Methuen, MA never have any fun. (Ha!) 4. Hard at work on the show floor.



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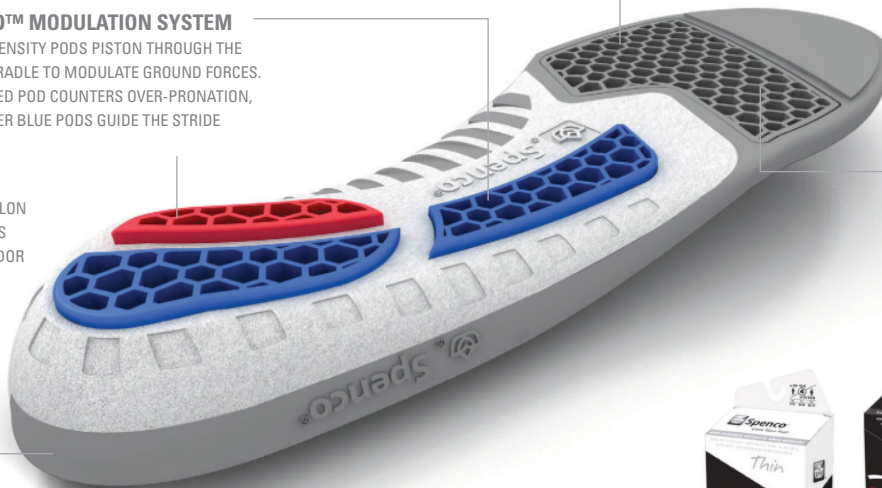
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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1



2




3



4

Around the corner... even more new gear. 1. Aetrex performance insoles. 2. Catching up on the show floor. 3. Run better with Goodr's running sunglasses. The motto: "We make running sunglasses for people who think running is fun. They're fashionable, affordable, and work to perfection." 4. Silipint holds the patent on silicone drinkware. This customizable product turned a lot of heads at TRE.



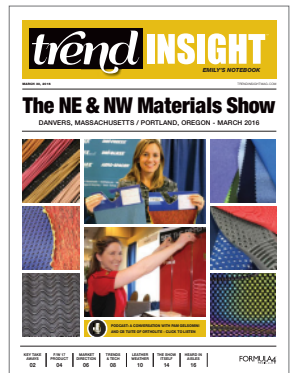
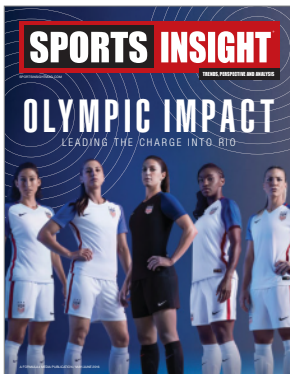
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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



1. Miami-based Zensah showed off its new Featherweight Compression Leg Sleeves at TRE. 2. Chatting in the trade show aisles. 3. SweatyBands makes stylish performance headbands. 4. Rollga foam rollers are ideal for back pain, shin splints, muscle aches and headaches.

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TRE Highlights: Trade Show (continued)



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5

Finding new products is a blast on TRE's show floor. 1. Taste testing with GU. 2. RUN/SUP was founded by runners and stand-up paddlers looking for a way to combine two of the most popular participatory recreational sports in one workout. 3. UFM makes performance underwear for men. 4. DeFeet showed off its wide variety of performance socks.

What happens if.....

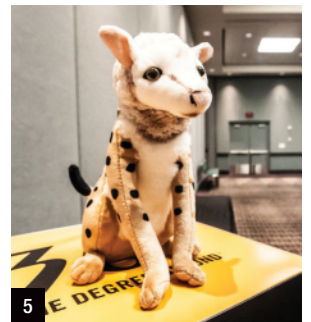
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Electrocuted Participant died after race Race committee member hit a bystander in trying to Property stolen after **Runners collided** Pulled muscle cart-vehicle
move a lock cut on race truck **at a group run** while running **Bit by dog**
tent Runners collided at an event Course support person fell off bike **during a race**
Participant struck by car on race Participant struck in the face course
by feather banner Rental van hit car **Slander charges**
Event spectator collapsed and was airlifted to the hospital
Fell out of truck while dropping Fell, off aid station supplies injured wrist
Wild animal attack on course over participants Phone ruined during rainstorm
Fractured ankle on trail run Race officials damaged city fountain with rental truck
Runner hit during group run Heart attack during group run **Fell on ice, fractured leg** **Tripped -**
in busy intersection after not **Wind blew tent** Participant **fractured / hurt leg**
following traffic signals **into participants** hit their head at an expo vendor's booth





1. Active Tense sportswear features a flexible exoskeleton embedded in each garment. 2. Full speed ahead on the show floor. 3. Talking shop at the Fittletic booth. 4. The Orb Extreme deep tissue massage ball from Pro-Tec. 5. The “mascot” at the 361 Degrees USA booth is unique!

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Ortholite Branches Out

By Bob McGee

The comfort and performance insole maker Ortholite is taking its message and product to all types of footwear, from athletic to casual, dress and work.

“We did this huge research study, interviewing consumers and people in the industry from developers and designers to marketers,” says Pam Gelsomini, president of the Amherst, MA company. “And we discovered Ortholite was not only

considered to be a key element in the first sale of the product, but also in creating that repeat customer.”

To that end, Ortholite has hired three footwear industry veterans for its sales and marketing team and re-aligned its staff to focus on specific sales channels—performance, premium and specialty—to encompass not only athletic footwear but also casual and dress shoes.

Dan Legor, who has more than 20 years of experience that includes stints as head of U.S.



Matt Hennessy, Ortholite

marketing for ECCO Shoes and senior marketing manager for Timberland, has joined Ortholite as director of market-

ing. Separately, Andy Downes, a former 13-year Nike executive who most recently was a key account sales manager for Inov-8 footwear, joins as sales manager for key accounts, and Matt Hennessy, a former product development manager for Sperry and senior development manager for Under Armour, has been hired as sales manager for Performance East.

“Our goal with all of this—bringing new people, rebranding and a new ad campaign—is all about supporting our brand partners,” says Gelsomini. ■

3D Runner from Adidas Launches to Consumers

ADIDAS LAUNCHED ITS FIRST SHOES MADE WITH 3D TECH to consumers in mid-December via a limited edition release. The 3D Runner was made available for \$333 via the “Adidas Confirmed” sneaker reservation app. Sales to consumers were made available via advance sign ups and reservations. Pairs were then made available for pick-up on Dec. 15 at Adidas NYC, the brand’s new flagship store on Manhattan’s Fifth Ave.

The shoe features an engineered 3D web structure with what the brand describes as “dense zones in high force areas and less dense zones in the low force areas, allowing for the optimum level of performance.” The 3D Runner also features a 3D printed heel counter, which is integrated into the midsole and avoids the typical process of gluing or stitching. A black Prime-

Knit upper makes it on-trend for sneaker mavens.

“This is just the beginning,” says Mikal Peveto, senior director of Adidas’ Future team. “Creating customized shoes based on an individual’s footprint – including their running style, foot shape, performance needs and personal preferences – is a north star for the industry and Adidas is leading with cutting edge innovations.”

Adidas originally unveiled the 3D Runner in August when a select number of its top athletes – including Team GB heptathlete Jessica Ennis-Hill, USA swimmer Allison Schmitt and Colombian BMX cyclist Mariana Pajon – were gifted pairs.

In addition to the NYC drop, a limited number of the shoes were made available in London and Tokyo. ■

\$333 limited edition 3D Runner from Adidas.



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sportstyle[®]

the show



Images courtesy of: Marika, Lole

A Trade Show, Business Conference + Consumer Expo

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Contact Jeff Nott: jnott@formula4media.com or Troy Leonard: tleonard@formula4media.com

Fort Lauderdale Convention Center, Florida / sportstyleshow.com

Bucking the Trend

As race participation numbers fall, Chicago based RAM Racing is on the ascent

By Daniel P. Smith

Back in 2001, RAM Racing CEO Steve Ginsburg never imagined this. He held no grand visions and clutched no forward-looking strategic plan.

When Ginsburg and a high school pal launched Running Away Multisport (RAM) in Chicago's Bucktown neighborhood, retail was the sole play. Almost immediately, though, the RAM team fell into event production when the director of the Bucktown 5k looked to cede control of the fledgling race.

"We knew very little about how to put on a race, so it was about as grassroots as it could get back then," Ginsburg says.

More than 15 years later, Chicago-based RAM Racing is among the nation's premier race event enterprises – overseeing the 15-city Hot Chocolate series and a stable of 16 other top Chicago area races – and a still-swelling enterprise with its hands in race management, operations, timing and race technology.



And RAM Racing is proving its mettle by bucking the industry's falling participation trends.

More than 219,000 runners took part in last season's Hot Chocolate 15k/5k series, an 8 percent jump from the previous year. In the current edition of the series, which began with an Oct. 2 event in Denver and culminates on April 5 in Minneapolis, series-wide registration was showing a more than 20 percent increase as of early December. Those numbers represent a stark contrast to national figures from the likes of Running USA, which reported a 9 percent drop in participation in 2015.

But it's not just RAM's marquee Hot Chocolate series on the rise.

In September, RAM's Bucktown 5k, the race that started it all, sold out its 6,000 spots, an all-time high for the community race and a 20 percent increase over the previous year. On Thanksgiving, RAM recorded a 9 percent jump in registration for its 6,000-runner North Shore Turkey Trot in suburban Chicago.

Where many are struggling, RAM is finding success – and plenty of it.

Listen to the runner

If there's a secret sauce to RAM's triumphs, Ginsburg says it's an unrelenting focus on one simple axiom: "It's all about the runner." From the registration process and packet pickup to an abundance of portable toilets, the

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Bucking the Trend (continued)

course and post-race food, everything has to benefit the runners.

“We work really hard at listening to runners and making their weekend as safe and enjoyable as possible,” Ginsburg says.

To wit: At RAM’s first Bucktown 5K back in 2002, Ginsburg and his crew explored ways to improve the participant experience and landed on the idea of replacing the event’s traditional white cotton tee with a long-sleeve tech tee.

Though a rather commonplace race offering today, the tech tee idea represented a novel approach for any race back then, but particularly so for a community 5k.

“It started with three of us in the back of our store. Now, we have a 72,000-square foot warehouse, more than 100 employees and satellite offices in four states.”

Runners gravitated to the improved goody bag and heightened swag remains a core piece of RAM’s philosophy. Both Competitor and Women’s Running have honored the Hot Chocolate series’ high-end, zip-up hoodie, for example, as one of the nation’s best race premiums. For this current Hot Chocolate season, RAM even involved its runners, asking fans on social media to weigh in on their favorite design for the hooded jacket. More than 85,000 cast votes.

“That kind of engagement from our runners shows how important it is to listen to what our participants want,” Ginsburg says.

Alongside the swag, RAM provides every Hot Chocolate registrant complimentary training programs crafted by noted running coach Greg McMillan, free finish line photos and a proprietary

hot chocolate blend concocted with high-grade cocoa from Chicago’s famed Blommer Chocolate Company.

RAM also devotes tenacious attention to operations and, in Ginsburg’s words, “not repeating mistakes” that will hamper the runner experience.

In RAM’s first Hot Chocolate event outside of Chicago in December 2011, a 90-minute delay plagued the start of the Washington, D.C. race. Later, runners were detoured the wrong way on the course. Though more than 17,000 runners finished safely, always Gins-



burg’s foremost aim, the RAM crew encountered vocal dissatisfaction from participants.

“There was inexperience on everyone’s part, but you either fold from these things or learn and grow,” Ginsburg says. “Today, we go into every city with eyes wide open.”

RAM also enters every city with the same crew – “a traveling circus,” Ginsburg calls them. The experienced and collaborative team helps ensure every event delivers on participants’ expectations.

Over the years, Ginsburg adds, RAM has continued to develop economies of scale and refine its practices, from an automated packet pickup system that processes runners in as little as 7 seconds to

sophisticated marketing that allows it to pinpoint runners’ top desires.

“Listening to the runner will always be central to anything we do,” Ginsburg says.

Building for the future

With surging participation numbers at its races and ever-strengthening operations, RAM is adding both assets and capacity to propel its future.

In early 2016, RAM swapped its Running Away Multisport retail store in suburban Chicago for ownership of Fleet Feet Sports Chicago’s racing division and its signature events, including the 12,500-runner Soldier Field 10 Mile and the 15,000-runner Big Ten 10K.

“As we grew the race business, retail just didn’t receive the attention it deserved, so that was a win-win deal for both of us,” Ginsburg says.

Then, last May, RAM acquired Michigan-based Gault Race Management, a move that immediately tripled the capacity of RAM’s timing services business from 250,000 runners to 750,000. The move also made RAM the nation’s largest provider of endurance timing services.

In addition to the races it owns and operates, the RAM enterprise includes RAM Production, which offers operations, management, equipment and other services to race owners and directors, as well as EnMotive, a one-stop technology solution that offers fully customizable registration, timing and photography capabilities to races.

“It started with three of us in the back of our store,” Ginsburg says. “Now, we have a 72,000-square foot warehouse, more than 100 employees and satellite offices in four states.”

It’s not something Ginsburg could have dreamed up 15 years ago, but it’s a reality he’s proud to live today.

“When you make your runners the top priority, everything else falls in line,” he says. ■



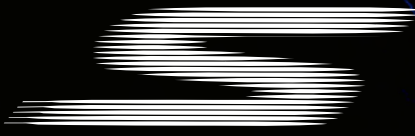
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