

A Magazine by Amer Sports 1.03

NEXT



**Padraig Harrington's
HOME COURSE**

The magazine will be published quarterly in Finnish, English and German. This magazine is mailed to the Group's registered shareholders, customers, present and retired employees and other interest groups.

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DEAR READER,
YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS
THE NEW-LOOK AMER SPORTS MAGAZINE

We want to tell you in a stimulating and understandable way about the interesting world and industry in which Amer Sports operates. The core businesses of Amer Sports are winter sports, racket sports, golf, team sports, sports instruments and fitness equipment. In the pages of our magazine we will get to grips with developments in the

sporting goods industry, in individual sports, and in the equipment and products used in them. There is certainly no shortage of subject matter, because Wilson, Atomic, Suunto and Precor are continuously introducing new game improvement products to make life more enjoyable for active sports participants.

The magazine appears four times a year and we produce it for our stakeholder groups in three different languages: English, German and Finnish.

The name of the magazine is a reflection of its topicality. We examine topical issues and current events, but we also peer into the future to see, for instance, what will be the next new sport to hit the ski slopes or what lies in store for the industry as a whole. We also offer our view on where we are headed by examining different sport-related phenomena. We know our business inside out; our brands are not only specialists but also opinion leaders in their own sports. To ensure that our panorama is not limited solely to the present and future, we will also be looking back at some classic sporting products, events and venues of the past.

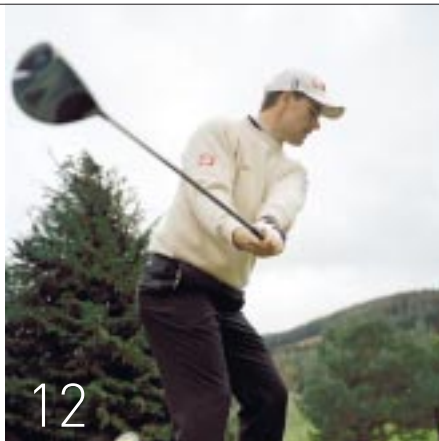
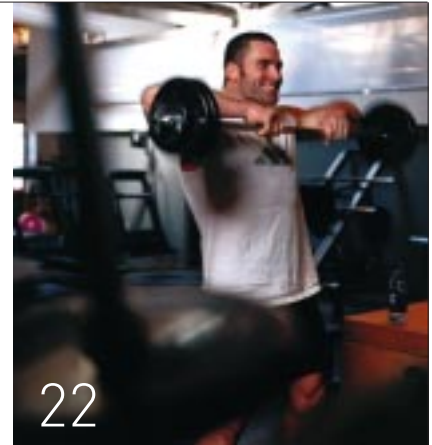
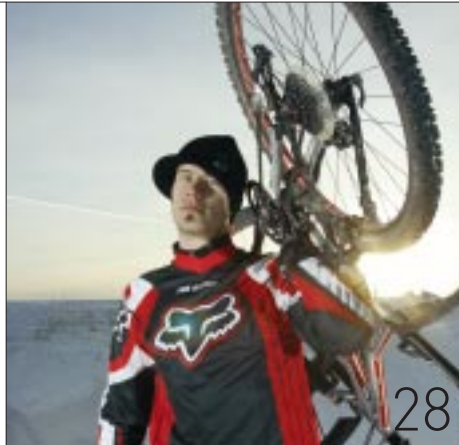
Amer Sports and its brands have a wealth of experience and long traditions in the manufacture of sporting goods. The classic product featured in this issue is the Wilson NFL American football, which has been the official match ball of the US National Football League since 1941. We also interview interesting men and women in the world of sport, including both elite athletes and influential people working in the background.

I hope that you will enjoy reading NEXT and that you will find its content both interesting and informative.

Tea Saari

Editor-in-chief

SPORT IS FUN. I PLAY BETTER GOLF IF A LAUGH AND CHAT IN BETWEEN SHOTS, SAYS PADRAIG HARRINGTON.



NEW IDEAS ARE SPREADING IN FITNESS CLUBS. WE'RE NOT CONCERNED WITH WHAT THE BODY LOOKS LIKE, BUT HOW IT MOVES.

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VELOCITY MATERS — IN EVERYTHING

Wilson's people were the recipients of the prize for the best driver for the second straight year at the PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando. The development work goes on, and the key word is now velocity – both in golf equipment and the company's fast-paced business.

The President of Wilson Sporting Goods Co. and General Manager of the Golf Division, Jim Baugh, returned from Orlando a contented man. Wilson's Deep Red 365 was rated the best driver overall in the independent Rankmark consumer test – this time in both accuracy and distance, last time just in accuracy.

Baugh is satisfied with the sales of the entire Deep Red series. "The competition in golf products continues to be fierce because people are not taking up the game as quickly as new products are being launched. For that reason we are now being more aggressive in the marketplace. Velocity Matters – that goes for our products and our own fast-paced business," says Jim Baugh.

In the new Deep Red II series of drivers the centre of gravity has been lowered and moved 40% further back than in the earlier models. This helps the ball achieve the optimal trajectory.

The new club is available in two models. The Deep Red II Tour has been

designed to give the serious golfer maximum distance and shot-shaping workability. It features a 350 c.c. centre-weighted club head and a Grafalloy Pro

Lite+ graphite shaft. The forgiving Deep Red II Distance provides the high-handicap golfer with the benefits of greater length and accuracy. It features a big 400 c.c. heel-weighted club head with an extra large hitting area. The 18 grams of extra weight positioned low and deep in the heel helps to close the club face at impact, providing more velocity and greater accuracy. The shaft is the .428 tip Grafalloy Pro Lite+ Fat Shaft, which optimises accuracy by limiting club head twist on off-centre hits.

The new series of drivers is complemented by new Deep Red II fairway woods. As with the drivers, the new Deep Red II Fairway Woods have 40% more weight positioned low and deep for maximum distance and forgiveness. The new low profile face promotes a higher launch angle to get the ball up and out more easily. The new fairway woods come in two models: the Deep



Red II Tour for the serious player and the Deep Red II Distance for the high-handicap golfer.

The Tour models come with a standard .350 Grafalloy Pro Lite+ graphite shaft and the Distance models with the .428 Grafalloy Pro Lite+ Fat Shaft. The new fairway woods are available in four lofts: 3, strong, 5 and 7 wood. The flex options are Extra Stiff, Stiff, Regular, Lite and women's models.

The new Deep Red II Tour Irons have been designed with the look, technology and performance features favoured by the serious player. The club head has been designed for traditional solid feel, enhanced workability and consistently accurate shot-making performance.

A special feature of the new irons is the Mass Damping System (MDS). A mixture of light and soft as well as heavy and hard urethane positioned directly behind the hitting area, the MDS insert effectively reduced vibration at impact. The result is unbelievably soft feel. The irons are fitted with True Temper Dynamic Gold shafts and Golf Pride Tour Velvet grips.

Deep Red II

ATOMIC INTRODUCES ELECTRONIC BINDINGS

Atomic presented the world's first microprocessor-controlled ski bindings at the ISPO fair. The Electronic Binding Management system automatically executes a safety check when the skier steps into the bindings.

If the bindings are correctly locked in position, an "OK" message is displayed on an LCD display mounted on the front bindings. If the bindings are not properly locked, for instance because of snow stuck to the ski boot, the LCD displays the message "OPEN". The system also warns of the need for servicing and of incorrect pressure between the front and back bindings. The display can also show how well the tensioning of the bindings is adjusted. The electronics have no effect on the release mechanism; the system

just provides a safety check.

Installed in both the front and back bindings are a number of sensors which send data to a microprocessor in the front bindings of each ski. Data transfer between the front and back bindings is wireless. The power source for the bindings is a battery with a duration of about 80 skiing days. The bindings can be used normally even when the battery is flat.

Atomic recommends that the bindings should be inspected once a year and the batteries changed at the same time. The battery can only be replaced at an authorised ski shop.

The Neox EBM 412 bindings won a European Ski Award at the ISPO fair. In the opinion of the judges the EBM system genuinely improves the safety of

alpine skiing. A significant percentage of skiing injuries are caused by the safety factors that EBM addresses. The new bindings will initially be sold on a limited scale in Austria, Switzerland and Germany. In addition to the bindings, the package always includes Atomic's R11 skis. The total package price is EUR 999.



EBM Binders

BETA IS EVEN BETTER

Atomic's R&D team has succeeded in improving on the Beta structure of the company's alpine skis. The models for next season will include Beta Puls – the latest development of Atomic's Beta technology.

Strips made of titanium or a special composite plastic on the surface of Beta Puls skis ensure that the forces acting

on the edge of the ski are distributed more evenly over its entire length. The new structure also gives superior edge grip and a better combination of torsional stability and flexibility.

The Beta Puls structure is used in Atomic's R and C series skis. The R series skis are designed mainly for off-piste freeride, and the C series for carving and piste skiing.



Beta Puls

GOODIES GALORE



WILSON T8344 INDOOR GAME SHOE New design, durable outsole and flexible DST midsole.

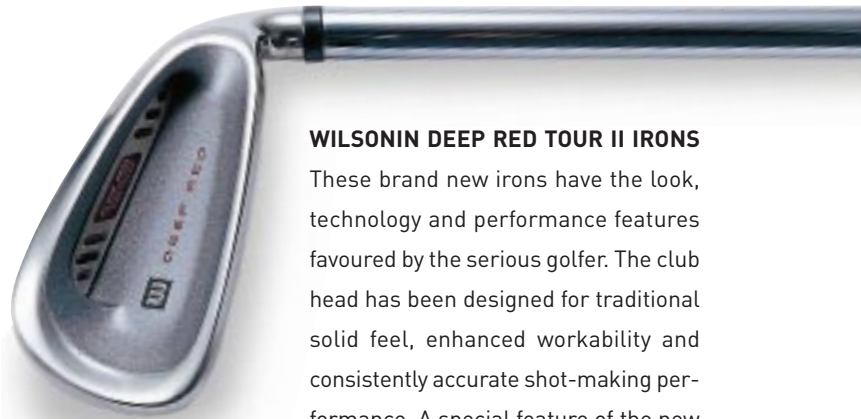
SUUNTO D3 Designed especially for free diving without SCUBA equipment.

D3 tracks dive time accurately to the second and can be programmed to give audible warnings of elapsed dive time.





SUUNTO OBSERVER A wristop computer for rugged outdoor use. Altimeter, barometer, digital compass and chronometer all contained in a stainless steel or titanium body.



WILSONIN DEEP RED TOUR II IRONS

These brand new irons have the look, technology and performance features favoured by the serious golfer. The club head has been designed for traditional solid feel, enhanced workability and consistently accurate shot-making performance. A special feature of the new irons is the Mass Damping System (MDS). A mixture of light and soft as well as heavy and hard urethane positioned directly behind the hitting area, the MDS insert effectively reduces vibration at impact.



WILSON JACK This new ball from Wilson has a more youthful image than any other ball before. It looks good and flies long. Wilson Jacks are sold in a new kind of 4-ball ball pack.

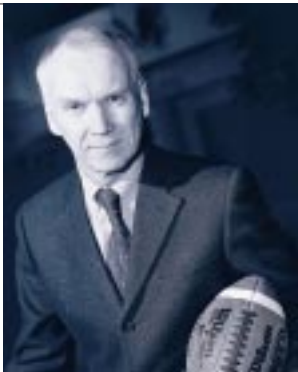


ATOMIC SX:9 Designed primarily for Ski Cross but also for Freeride. Featuring the Aerospeed top sheet and titanium Beta profile, they carve but are also responsive, giving fast acceleration out of turns and jumps.

RECORD-BREAKING RESULT

Amer Group's result last year was an all-time record. Operating profit exceeded EUR 100 million for the first time. The target set for net sales growth was not achieved.

Pekka Paalanne



Amer posted its best-ever result in 2002. Operating profit was EUR 103 million. Net sales remained flat at the previous year's level. On the other hand, comparable net sales in local currencies did rise by four per cent. For instance, the net sales of the Team Sports Division in US dollars grew by

six per cent, but that actually translated into a slight decline on the consolidated income statement. The difference is due to changes in the euro/dollar exchange rate. Exchange rate movements actually reduced net sales by about EUR 38 million.

"In view of the fact that we did not achieve our growth targets, the result was very good indeed. We are certainly one of the best companies in the sports equipment industry in terms of profitability. Amer's broad portfolio of sports brings balance to our business, and that was evident again last year," says Senior Vice President & CFO **Pekka Paalanne**.

Pekka Paalanne says that the growth target shortfall was due to both the general economic situation and factors affecting individual sports. For instance, poor snow conditions in the early part of the season meant that Atomic did not receive the re-orders it anticipated for the fourth quarter.

Precor Inc., the U.S. sports equipment manufacturer acquired by Amer at the end of October, contributed EUR 39.5 million to the Group's net sales in November and December. Precor's share of the operating profit after the amortisation of goodwill was EUR 5.1 million. The Group's operating profit for

2001 included a gain of USD 8 million following the settlement of certain patent infringement lawsuits in the United States. Precor's acquisition price was USD 166 million. The deal reduced Amer's equity ratio, but it is still a very respectable 45.6 per cent.

The balance sheet and cash flow were both strong. Amer's net sales and operating profit are expected to grow this year, even though uncertainty is likely to prevail on the global sports equipment market. New products will be launched in all of the Group's business areas.

Further efficiency gains

Internal efficiency has been continuously improved by developing logistics amongst other measures. Europe's newest logistics centre was opened in Überherrn, Germany. Suunto's products were the first to be delivered from Überherrn, and in the spring all racquet sport stocks will be moved there from an outside logistics company in Rotterdam. In the United States the central warehousing facility in Nashville was enlarged, thereby enabling the closure of two other warehouses. Has all the "fat" now been trimmed? "We can certainly make further improvements in capital utilisation in all of our business areas. We will also be trying to dispose of the parent company's unnecessary real estate assets, but we are no longer very far away from our target," says Pekka Paalanne.

Golf returns to profitability

Wilson Golf was a bright spot of the last financial year. The main factors behind the Division's return to profitability were the success of Deep Red clubs, rigorous cost control and improved operating efficiency. The operating loss of the previous

year was transformed into a profit in 2002, an improvement of EUR 10.4 million. The Deep Red drivers were particularly successful. Sales of golf clubs grew by four per cent overall and by 20 per cent in the higher price point category.

The situation on the golf ball market continues to be difficult, and Wilson's market share was slightly reduced. In these adverse market conditions Wilson will stick to its strategy of continuously launching new products, but will not attempt to force up its market share at the expense of profitability. According to President & CEO **Roger Talermo**, the time for growth will not come until the market has recovered.

Badminton has growth potential

The net sales and operating profit of Wilson Racquet Sports declined by eight per cent and two per cent, respectively. The situation in tennis was weaker than expected in all key markets, but Wilson still retained its position as the market leader. Tennis racquet sales fell by eight per cent and ball sales by four per cent. "Given the market conditions, holding on to market shares and almost matching the previous year's operating profit was quite a good performance," says Pekka Paalanne.

Wilson is looking for growth not only from tennis but also from badminton and other minor racquet sports. The sport has its largest following in Asia. In Europe it is most popular in Denmark and Great Britain. On the other hand, the sport is hardly played at all in the United States. "We have a good distribution network, technologies and products. We must seek growth also from racquet sports markets of lower volume," says Pekka Paalanne. Sales of Wilson footwear rose by eleven per cent.

Primus inter pares

Wilson Team Sports was one of Amer's star performers last year. The Division's result has been at a good level for years. Team Sports is the sector's primus inter pares, first among equals. "The Team Sports Division's net sales growth and excellent result was a really fine performance because the mar-

Group Results, € mill.

	2002	2001	CHANGE, %
NET SALES	1101.9	1099.8	
OPERATING PROFIT	103.0	98.6	4
NET FINANCING ITEMS	-7.4	-9.3	
PROFIT BEFORE TAXES	95.6	89.3	7
TAXES	-26.5	-20.5	
MINORITY INTEREST	-0.6	-0.3	
NET PROFIT	68.5	68.5	
EARNINGS PER SHARE, EUR	2.95	2.90	
ADJUSTED AVERAGE NUMBER			
OF SHARES IN ISSUE, MILLION	23.2	23.6	
EQUITY PER SHARE, EUR	19.17	18.71	
ROCE, % *)	18.3	17.0	
ROE, %	15.5	15.6	
AVERAGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	3,827	4,015	

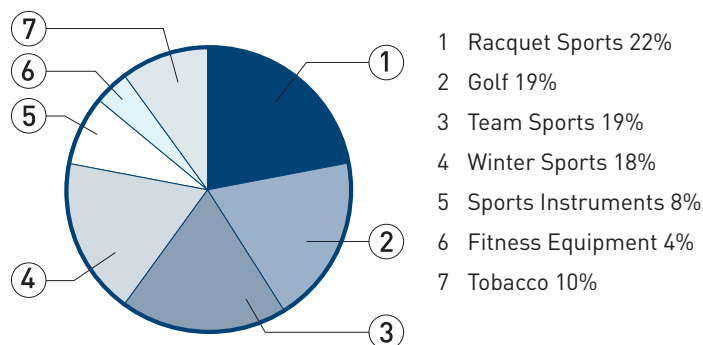
*) 12-MONTH AVERAGE

WHEN CALCULATING THE FINANCIAL INDICATORS HOLDINGS OF OWN SHARES HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED FROM SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY AND THE NUMBER OF SHARES IN ISSUE.

Operating Profit by Business Area

	2002	2001	CHANGE, %
RACQUET SPORTS	25.6	26.1	-2
GOLF	7.1	-3.3	
TEAM SPORTS	24.0	24.2	-1
WINTER SPORTS	39.6	40.2	-1
SPORTS INSTRUMENTS	10.5	10.1	4
FITNESS EQUIPMENT	6.3		
TOBACCO	9.2	9.6	-4
HEADQUARTERS	-9.2	0.3	
GROUP GOODWILL	-10.1	-9.3	
	103.0	97.9	5
SOLD OPERATIONS	-	0.7	
TOTAL	103.0	98.6	4

Net Sales by Business Area



ket was very flat. Team Sports have done a lot of hard work and it has borne fruit: operating profit was twelve per cent of net sales, the best ratio in the whole sector," praises Pekka Paalanne. The Team Sports Division is seeking more growth outside the United States.

Global leader in profitability

According to Amer's President & CEO Roger Talermo, Atomic is the most profitable company operating in the global winter sports market. Atomic preserved its excellent profitability last year, although the company did fall short of its growth targets owing to the dearth of re-orders in the fourth quarter. Sales of alpine skis and bindings rose by six per cent. Atomic further boosted its share of the alpine ski market. In the United States Atomic has quickly risen to become one of the No. 1 ski brands. Sales rose by nine per cent last year. Roger Talermo thinks that the high growth figures of recent years will be difficult to achieve in the future because the company already has a large slice of the market.

On the minus side, sales of Atomic ski boots declined by 22 per cent. The company is expecting a great deal from its new range of ski boot models. Atomic is seeking growth from all of its business areas. Amer Sports is setting up a sales company in Switzerland, and this will also help to boost the efficiency of Atomic's business.

Precor in line with expectations

There have been no unexpected surprises from Precor. "The acquisition itself went very smoothly. The company's business has been developing as expected and we are very satisfied," says Pekka Paalanne. Precor's integration into the Group is now underway and when that task has been completed the business development phase will begin. Last year Precor's pro forma net sales grew by 14 per cent to EUR 202.4 million. Operating profit was EUR 23.4 million.

Modest improvement for Suunto

The Sports Instruments Division's net sales rose by two per cent and its operating profit by four per cent. "The result was quite good considering the modest top-line growth," says Pekka Paalanne. He goes on to explain that net sales growth was below expectation due to delays in new product launches. Sales of wristop computers grew by 20 per cent, but expectations were even higher than that. "The growth potential was pushed over to this year," states Paalanne.

Sales of diving instruments rose by seven per cent. As the market as a whole was flat last year, Suunto further increased its market share. The modest growth achieved by the Division as a whole was partly due to the fact that Suunto dropped some of the products for which it acts as an intermediary. Suunto's own products, i.e. sports instruments, accounted for about 60 per cent of the company's net sales. R&D investments were again up last year.

Net sales growth for Amer Tobacco

Amer Tobacco's net sales grew by ten per cent, but operating profit declined by four per cent. At the beginning of the year the strong dollar weakened profitability. At the beginning of last year the company began tax-free shipments of Marlboro cigarettes to the Baltic Rim region. ■

Text by Markku Rimpiläinen ■ Photo by John Mabanglo



Super Bowl and Wilson

Ada, Ohio certainly isn't the one of the best-known towns in the United States. For the genuine aficionado of American football, however, the small town of 5,400 inhabitants has a special significance: it is where Wilson manufactures the official match balls used in the NFL and the Super Bowl. Wilson supplies 36 match balls for each NFL game and almost a hundred balls are made for the Super Bowl. In addition, the same number of balls are delivered to a secret address close by each match venue. These reserve balls have never once been needed.

Since 1941

The partnership between Wilson and NFL began long before the Super Bowl era in 1941, when the Duke ball was selected at the NFL's official match ball. The NFL balls have been manufactured at Ada since 1954. Today the factory manufactures annually over 1,000,000 footballs, of which 100,000 are NFL match balls.

The outer cover of the NFL ball is still made from very carefully selected leather. The hides are delivered to Wilson's Ohio factory by Horween Leather Co., just as they always have since 1941. The hides are first cut up into four strips, which are precisely weighed and stabilised. The thick strips are then marked with either the NFL or Super Bowl logo and stitched together inside out. Once stitched, the ball is turned the right way round – this is the most labour-intensive stage of the manual process and there are 21 men at the factory who perform the difficult task of turning the footballs right side out.

In the next stage of the process a polyurethane bladder is put inside the ball. The three-ply lining of the bladder gives the ball durability and resilience. The structure of the bladder and lining is one of Wilson's most closely guarded secrets.

The construction and visual appearance of the ball is finished off with the addition of its lacing, which requires a high degree of professional skill. The lacing is very important because it enables the quarterback's throwing hand to grip and impart spin to the ball.



Today's balls look almost the same as those made decades ago. In actual fact the balls have changed so much over the years that they have even changed the game itself.

Ball changed the game

At the beginning of the last century the balls could hardly be thrown at all. The heroes of the game were powerful runners like **Jim Thorpe** and **Red Grange**. They battered their way to the opposing team's end zone assisted by their team mates in the flying wedge formation.

The nature of the game changed radically when in 1924 Wilson introduced a new type of double-lined KR ball that possessed much better throwing properties than other balls of that era. Long up-field passes became commonplace and the modern passing game was born.

In 1941 Wilson became the supplier of the NFL's official match ball. The next major ball innovation occurred in 1954, when Wilson introduced its revolutionary TD range. The outer cover was made of Grip-Tite leather, which guaranteed a firm grip on the ball. The Ultra Pebble treatment introduced in 1981 further improved the leather. ■



Mr. Analysis

Tireless in his devotion to practice and improvement of his already formidable golfing skills, Padraig Harrington is nonetheless surprised by his own success. His first victory on tour actually came unexpectedly. Harrington is seldom too

disappointed about coming second, because then the thoughtful Irishman can always contemplate on what he could have done better.

Text by Arja Vartia ■ Photos by Tero Puha



KARTEL

Fresh Life



On a chilly afternoon in early February a solitary Mercedes XL500 stands in the car park of Stackstown Golf Club and behind a spruce hedge on the practice ground stands an equality solitary figure, who turns out to be Pdraig Harrington enjoying his eight-week winter break. Even when there are no tour events to prepare for, Harrington can be found every day on the practice ground honing his game and testing his new equipment.

“Testing is important when selecting equipment. Generally speaking, top golfers spend far too little time testing their clubs and equipment,” he begins. Harrington tests every aspect of his equipment. “The most important thing with all golf equipment is how far the ball goes. If you start using new clubs, they should give more distance than your old ones. That’s a basic requirement.”

His club testing programme involves hitting many balls in different wind conditions: headwind, tailwind and side wind, and off different surfaces: bare lies, fluffy lies, off the tee, in the semi-rough, and so on. The same distance requirement applies to the ball as well. Of almost equal importance is how the ball behaves and how straight it flies in the wind. In this respect Wilson get very high marks. “Wilson’s new True balls fly very straight even in strong winds,” he comments.

Even though Harrington is a very good wind player, he still prefers to play in hot weather when the effect of the wind is less pronounced. The feel of the ball is also important: how does it feel when hit from different lies, and how does it rolls on the fairway and green? These are things the golfer needs to know.

Enthusiastic about new irons

How well high and low shots can be hit with irons is a crucial factor. Good feel is essential. Last year Harrington played with RM Signature irons and the Deep Red 365 driver. This year the Irishman has Wilson’s new Deep Red Tour II irons in his bag and he is very enthusiastic about them. “The feel of these new irons is even better than the old ones. They are easier to hit and the ball flies a lot higher. I can trust them and that is very important.” On top of everything else the new clubs look good too.

Harrington is particularly appreciative of the short irons, on which he is something of an expert. The short game is Harrington’s greatest strength and he has even developed his own 56-degree wedge. In honour of its designer, the initials PH are stamped on the bottom of the club.

“The club incorporates the three characteristics of a good short iron: it is good out of sand, from the fairway and just off the putting surface.” Harrington has assisted Wilson in its product development work by describing and commenting on his own experience of testing new items of golf equipment. However, he doesn’t claim any personal credit for the product development work itself. “I just check that they’re heading in the right direction,” he says modestly.

In everything he does, Harrington displays the same kind of optimism as in the wedge development work. On his wrist he wears a Suunto X6HR wristop computer, which not only shows the time but also his heart rate and a wealth of environmental information. There will be no need to pack an alarm clock when he returns to the tour.

Important team

Pdraig Harrington practices on the undulating and windswept Stackstown golf course in Dublin. It is literally his home course. His father first took him there as a four-year-old, and he played there from that day until he turned professional at the age of twenty-four.

Harrington’s father, **Paddy**, together with his colleagues from the Garda, established the course and the club back in the 1970s. Now the membership includes people other than policemen,

and the atmosphere in the clubhouse is very homely. One of the four Harrington brothers is still involved in running the club. Paddy Harrington still follows his son’s practice session during his breaks from the tour, although he only goes to watch his son play at tournaments a few times a year.

“I have a support team of 5–6 people. I work with them as a team and they help me to improve my game.” The team has remained almost the same for over ten years. Harrington is unrelenting in his pursuit of improvement, and he is seldom disappointed to come second. “At least, then, I can always ponder over what I could have done better.”

One of the most important team members is psychologist **Bob Rotella**. In fact, Harrington only meets him 3–4 times a year, but Rotella’s books are never far from hand. By consult-

I have a support team of 5–6 people. I work with them as a team and they help me to improve my game. The team has remained almost the same for over ten years.



Padraig Harrington

Born: Dublin 31.8.1971

Height: 185 cm

Wife: Caroline

Interests: tennis, cinema, sports in general, working out in the gym

- started playing golf as a four-year-old at Stackstown Golf Club
- was a promising footballer until at the age of 15 he decided to concentrate on golf
- a qualified accountant, he opted for a career in golf and turned pro in 1995
- won the Spanish Open in 1996, his first full year as a touring professional
- has represented both Ireland and Europe in a number of different competitions
- best round: 62 strokes, (10 under par)
- 2 hole-in-ones in competition play
- worst score on a single hole (par 5) in competition: 13 strokes, with four balls finding the water
- at the beginning of February 2003 he was ninth in the world rankings and second in the European rankings

this respect the caddie plays an important role. "My caddie, **Dave McNeilly**, tells me jokes and stories in between shots. These keep me in a good mood and put the golf out of my mind. I play better golf if I laugh and chat in between shots."

Harrington says that the caddie's role is a very important one. The relationship between the player and his caddie is in many ways unique. "Your caddie knows a lot of things about you that no-one knows. Many players spend more time with their caddies than they do with their wives. The player and the caddie must get along, but they cannot be friends. Many caddies have had to quit because the relationship has become too close. You have to remember that it's an employer-employee relationship. You wouldn't tell a friend to wash your clubs or carry your bag."

One important member of the team is Harrington's wife **Caroline**. They have been inseparable since the age of sixteen. Caroline watched Padraig play in a club competition, and when the shy junior later plucked up enough courage to say 'hello' in the clubhouse, it marked the beginning of a long and happy partnership.

Surprise win

Harrington is resolutely supported by all the members of his team, but when he is out on the course during a tournament he plays his own game and isn't interested in the scores of other players. Sometimes, of course, there's no way to avoid seeing the leader board, and when that happens it's good if Harrington is in the hunt.

One leadership tussle stands out above all others in his memory. Harrington held a one-stroke lead over **Tiger Woods** with three holes to play, and everyone expected him to buckle under the pressure of another Tiger charge. Harrington himself had other ideas and, to the surprise of everyone, maintained his lead over Woods to win the tournament.

He remembers his first tour win as one of his best because it came so early and unexpectedly in his career. It was only his tenth event as a touring professional, and at that time he didn't think that he was ready to win. "It was a shock!" In fact, Harrington's decision to become a professional golfer was something of an afterthought.

After finishing high school he studied accountancy, and when he graduated he thought about a career in the golf business, but not as a professional player. When rival amateurs whom Padraig had beaten turned professional and did quite

Harrington believes that 90 per cent of the game is played between the ears.

ing the books and thinking things over, Harrington can usually get the mental aspect of his game in good shape. Harrington recommends others to pay more attention to mental preparation: "Every golfer should read Rotella's first book 'Golf is not a game of perfect'."

How does a tour professional maintain concentration over four rounds of tournament golf, each lasting four and half hours? "There's actually no need to concentrate for so long. It's enough if you concentrate for one minute before each shot. It's important to be relaxed and cheerful between shots."

"If you see me staring at my bootstraps with my hands on my hips, then you'll know I'm not playing well. At such times your mind is filled with thoughts like why me, why does that always happen to me? No good ever comes of such thinking." In

well, he decided that he would try to make the grade as well. And he found to his surprise that he still had the beating of them. In February he was in eighth place on the world rankings and the second best player in Europe.

Harrington certainly isn't easy on himself. He is said to practice harder than any other tour pro. How does he keep it up? "I've always been keen to improve my game. I continuously analyse what I need to improve and how I can achieve it. The challenge fascinates me. I also like to do things my own way, especially if it goes against the grain of conventional wisdom. I get a lot of

satisfaction from that. The strength of my approach to the game is that I plan what I'm going to do and I know what I'm trying to achieve. I hate mistakes. I want to improve all the time – to take my game to the next level. My father often says that I'm trying to attain perfection. Rotella's book talks about that, too."

The fact that Harrington does not want to know what is written about him is something of an idiosyncrasy.

"I never read anything that is written about me. If I were to be criticised, I might get depressed, if I were to be praised, I might get carried away. It's a lose-lose situation." ■

Golfer's paradise

The Irish call their country the Mecca of the golfing world – and for good reason. With a population of just five million people, the island has no fewer than 350 golf courses. And that's plenty to pick and choose from.

Ireland offers many different kinds of courses from old and traditional to new and modern. The varied terrain of the

country also adds to the choice. There are plenty of links and flat parkland courses, but there's no shortage of courses built in hilly terrain either – Stackstown being one of them. Golfers can play in Ireland all year round, but there can be cold spells and even snow in December and January. The best of the season is from April to October.

The Irish estimate that there are roughly half a million golfers in the country. However, there are so many courses that pre-booking is only necessary at peak times. ■



Gettyimages

Does the trade know how to sell

everyone?

The biggest players of the German sporting goods trade, Intersport and Sport 2000, believe strongly in the present and future competitiveness of entrepreneur-driven stores. Still, there is no doubt that challenges do lie ahead. Sports stores are getting bigger and specialising, but how well do they serve difference customer groups?

Text by Markku Rimpilinen ■ Photos by Okko Oinonen

They have time for recreation, they have money in their pockets and they know what they want, but they may shy away from the trendy background music and youth-oriented image of today's sports shops. Whoever they are, these people are a growing consumer group that the trade cannot afford to overlook. So who are these valuable customers? They are today's fit and sports-minded seniors, age group 55+, who are making their presence felt in the sporting goods trade on both sides of the Atlantic.

"The age pyramid is changing. People are living longer and they want to stay in shape for the duration," says the President of Intersport, **Klaus Jost**.

Even though seniors will be buying a lot of sporting goods in the future, Jost does not think they will want their own senior products. "Products that are suitable for the 25–40 year age group are certainly appropriate for older people too. Seniors don't want to be 15 again, but they don't want to be very old either," says Jost. Besides the products that a shop sells, its atmosphere and service are of great importance. "It is important that we provide a somewhat



Middle-aged and even older people will account for an increasingly large share of the trade's future net sales.



more tranquil atmosphere. No light effects; no loud music. On the other hand, we speak to our customers directly through the products.”

Bigger stores

In the case of sports with a very strong youth following, specialised stores catering especially to young people are already

commonplace. Slightly older people would not willingly or comfortably set foot in such places. Seniors and middle-aged customers are accustomed to shopping in general sports stores. In the future these general stores will have to be able to serve a wide range of customers from young snowboarders to elderly gentlemen looking for fishing tackle.

Partly for this reason, general sports stores have grown in



Not all newcomers to the world of snowboarding are under 20 years of age.

size over the years. "You can't present the whole world of sport on 250 square metres of shop floor," says the President of Sport 2000, **Wolfgang Schnellbügel**.

In recent years Sport 2000 has developed its own concept for large sports stores. Sport 2000 already has 11 Big Point stores in Germany. Each of these has a floor area of over 1,000 square metres, and the biggest is almost 3,000 square metres.

"All of the entrepreneurs who have joined us in this model have been satisfied," says Wolfgang Schnellbügel.

It seems unlikely that the size of Germany's biggest Intersport sport, i.e. about 3,000 square metres, will be exceeded in the near future. "Stores of 600–1,200 square metres are the optimal size for us, and they also serve the market well. There are stores with floor areas as large as 5,000 square metres, but the customer does not know to operate in such a large space. Size alone is not the decisive competitive factor," says Jost. Specialisation is the best option for the small store. The supply chains also support specialisation. "There are already many golf pro-shops among Sport 2000's stores. In 2002 we set up a new company to serve outdoor specialists," says Schnellbügel.

Purchasing power and support for the store owner

Both Sport 2000 and Intersport are typical representatives of the traditional distribution channel. Individual stores are entrepreneur-driven and often family-owned specialist businesses operating under the chain's brand name.

The supply chain operating in the background negotiates favourable supply contracts with manufacturers. The chain assists in training and marketing as well. Sport 2000 also has a standardised billing system that is handled with DZB Bank. Stores belonging to the Intersport and Sport 2000 chains still account for over 50 per cent of the German market.

Both Jost and Schnellbügel have great faith in the combination of the supplier chain and entrepreneurial drive. "The chain acts as a counterbalance to the competitive challenges faced by individual stores. We represent also 1,200 stores. No other single chain comes anywhere near this number," stresses Schnellbügel. He believes that staff expertise is still a cornerstone of competitiveness. A large proportion of sporting goods are very technical. Time and a lot of expertise are need-

ed to sell these products, and that is what we can offer. You won't find sales personnel in a large discount store – there the product has to sell itself."

Schnellbügel points out that the expertise of the trade is also an advantage for manufacturers. "Sporting goods manufacturers are dependent on the trade's ability to sell new products."

When the market won't grow

The German sporting goods trade has gone through a period of unprecedented market contraction in recent years. In 2001 the trade's volume fell for the first time in living memory. And the outlook for 2003 is none too rosy either.

"This year will not see any great growth in Germany. On the contrary, uncertainty about the future means that people will not spend as much as before on consumption. This is already becoming more or less a worldwide trend," says Jost.

Difficulties stemming from the state of the economy and intensified competition will affect large and small companies alike. "It is now a question of how the market will be divided up rather than how much it will grow." And there are plenty of actors who want a piece of the action. Department stores and large supermarkets are now taking much more interest in the sporting goods market. "Discount stores have noted that they can make good money by selling sporting goods very cheaply for a limited period of time," says Schnellbügel.

So what is the response to competition from discount stores? "We do not intend to compete with discount stores on price, but we will have to be more aggressive in our advertising. We intend to select certain products from our range, mark down their prices and advertise them aggressively. In this way we will get more customers into our stores than before. If we succeed in this, we can also offer products that are even better suited to the customer's needs than the products on special offer."

But there are also other ways to approach the challenge of competitiveness. "Expertise, service, maintenance, breadth of product range, and good availability," lists Schnellbügel.

He likes to plan campaigns in collaboration with manufacturers. "We can agree with a manufacturer that we will sell ten balls cheaply and give one away free. Then we put an advertisement in the paper." ■

People are living longer and they want to stay in shape for the duration.



New trends in

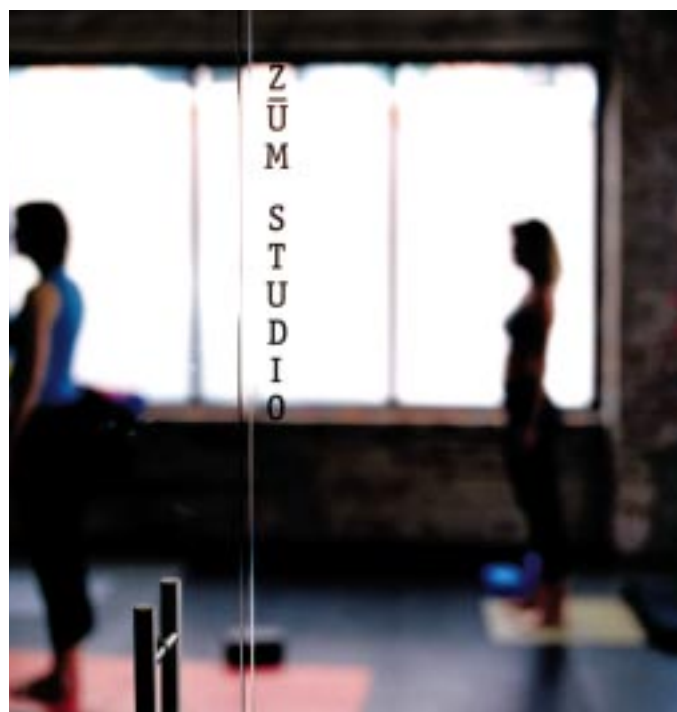
fitness

The baby boomers have taken to America's gyms on mass. Body-building basement gyms are a thing of the past; today people want to enjoy their workout on low-impact fitness equipment in a relaxed and peaceful environment.

Text by Marita Seulamo ■ Photos by Jason Koski

Timothy Schliebe is an intense guy – energetic, straightforward and extremely focused. The same traits are discernible in the gym that he manages, The Training Club. “My clients want me to help them get into the best shape that they can possibly achieve,” says Schliebe, who is also a personal trainer and leads the merciless spinning classes.

The Training Club is located in San Diego, Southern California. With a floor area of just 10,400 square feet, the club's premises are fairly small. Club membership is limited to 600. A large percentage of the members are business men and women – most busy and many very successful. Schliebe has thirty years of experience behind him in the fitness club business. Over the years that wealth of experience has crystallised into a clear and complete philosophy. “You won't see any bodybuilders here,” says Schliebe. “It's not about losing weight or building muscle. It is all about being healthy and feeling good. The body and the mind are linked. Getting into shape and staying that way demands hard work. We want to motivate our clients. We want to be everything that large institutions are not: small, intimate and focused on every person as an individual.” ▶



ClubZum offers a special mix of oriental harmony, vigorous training and the joy of exercise.



The East and West Coasts of the USA are showing the way. The latest trends: social megaclubs and holistic miniclubs.

Low-impact exercise for healthy joints

Don Cooper, 51, does body stretches in the subdued atmosphere of the yoga room. He says that he works out primarily for health reasons but also for the sake of his looks. Cooper says that he really appreciates the fact that The Training Club is not crowded “Most

places are chock-a-block with people at this time of the day.”

Cooper represents the age group whose membership of gyms is growing the fastest in the United States. Gyms are renewing their equipment and programmes to meet the needs of older people. This is apparent from the popularity of exercise equipment that has a low impact on the body’s joints.

“Whatever the muscle may be, we can get you into shape,” Schliebe promises. The secret lies in equipment that limits movements to just one or two muscles. “One of my clients started working out at 65 years of age. He had been diagnosed with cancer. Now, five years later, he still trains with me three times a week,” says Schliebe. “It’s never too late to start.”

Because of middle-aged people’s new enthusiasm for physical exercise, the longest queues in gyms are for elliptical equipment. These simulate the natural movements of the body

and reduce impact on the body’s joints. The Precor EFX is Schliebe’s favourite.

“It is the best and most efficient piece of endurance training equipment that I know. It doesn’t impact on the joints and it doesn’t aggravate knee pains. It’s unbelievable. On the Precor EFX my members can train hard without hurting themselves at all.”

Family holiday oasis

“We are like a hotel without guest rooms, like a vacation resort in your own home town,” says **Lisa Blocher**, fitness director of the brand new Pacific Athletic Club, PAC, in San Diego.

Anyone who enjoys exercising and relaxing with the whole family could certainly take a vacation in a place like PAC. It took a full hour for Lisa Blocher to show us around the club’s magnificent facilities. The building has a floor area of 87,000 square feet and sits in ten acres of its own grounds.

PAC responds to the needs of families in particular. It represents the other main trend in the US fitness club business, the social megaclub. The list of fitness activities offered by PAC is impressive: basketball, volleyball, squash, different schools of yoga, various aerobics classes, kick-boxing, spinning, etc.



mand for this service since the children's area is already being extended. PAC has also responded to the needs of its members by starting up supervised gym training for 11–14 year-olds.

"People asked what could be done for their teenage children who they didn't want to leave at home alone," explains Blocher.

The club has been designed in such a way that it encourages social interaction among the members. Members gathered around the family pool quickly get to know each other. Adjoining the coffee shop is a television room, which Blocher says is packed with sports fans on game nights.

The fact that PAC offers its members much more to do than just keeping fit exemplifies its role as a social centre. The range of events organised by PAC covers the whole spectrum from hair-dressing trends to charity galas. "The most popular of all our courses is ballroom dancing," reveals Blocher. ▶

Club life in San Diego. The Training Club (photos on page 24 and below) is very much oriented towards the individual. The Pacific Athletic Club (left) offers something for the whole family.

And from the balcony one can see the outdoor facilities: a swimming pool and jacuzzi for adults, eight tennis courts, and for families another swimming pool with children's changing rooms and a separate children's paddling pool.

PAC serves the whole family on many fronts in the same way as the YMCA has done for decades. The only difference is in the standard of the facilities. From the dazzling entrance hall onwards, the building is filled with open spaces of great beauty. Even the shower rooms are finished in marble. From the back door of the changing rooms there is a staircase leading up to the "Temple", a full-service beauty salon.

Personal lockers, each with its own name plate, can be rented for sixty dollars a month. "The lockers were all taken even before PAC opened its doors," mentions Lisa Blocher.

PAC definitely caters to the needs of families. Few fitness clubs try to offer something for all age groups. Members arriving with small children have their own parking places, which offer direct access to the child care rooms. Eight cots are ready and waiting in the infants' room. Older children have their own areas. Theme days are marked on the calendar every week.

A television room, ball game area and play room serve as a place to park 6–12 year-olds. There is obviously plenty of de-



San Diego's PAC is part of the Western Athletic Club chain, which is made up of eleven fitness clubs in total. The oldest is the Bay Club in San Francisco. Allowing the members of sister clubs to make use of the chain's facilities throughout the state is expected to become a future trend.



Vigorous exercise in a tranquil sanctuary

The Training Club's range of group classes is very narrow: yoga, spinning and BOSU, which strengthens the abdominal muscles. This simplicity is attractive to the growing number of Americans who are weary of the plethora of alternative goods and services.

Some of the middle-aged people now visiting gyms are doing so for the first time in their lives. Some may have exercised regularly in their youth, but because of the hectic pace of modern life had stopped taking care of themselves properly. Some don't step onto a treadmill or an elliptical fitness device until their health fails or obesity becomes a real problem. The one

thing that is common to all these people is that they are easily confused in the jungle of unfamiliar equipment and dozens of different group classes.

The atmosphere in the Training Club in the early afternoon is relaxed and peaceful, which is surprising for a gym. The search for tranquillity may be a growing trend. At present the fitness club that has gone perhaps further than any other along this new road is to be found in downtown Seattle at ClubZum, the pet project of double Olympic medallist **Peter Shmock**.

"We're like a retreat," says Shmock, for whom ClubZum is a milestone on a very long road. "I had come to the conclusion that the fitness business wasn't giving people a good service. It wasn't about health at all, just looks and money."


Shmock's philosophy is based on his own experiences as an elite athlete and, following his retirement from competition, as a coach. He is grateful to his own mentors, from whom he learnt that exercise should be fun and that there is a balance between training and rest.

ClubZum is a special mix of oriental harmony, vigorous training and the joy of exercise. "All of our classes have something new about them. Our aerobics classes are taught by a former ballet dancer. We teach people about their bodies and how to exercise functionally. We're not concerned with what the body looks like, but how it moves."

ClubZum offers meditation classes and posture exercises. Besides conventional spinning and yoga, the programme of classes also includes a survivor class. The winner gets "a bottle of water, momentary fame and bragging rights for a week." The club's fitness equipment room is flooded with natural sunlight. Other facilities include a room for meditation and stretching and a lobby equipped with a computer for use by the members.

"We wanted to create a homely space in which people would feel welcome," explains Shmock. ■

Having a personal trainer is a must for today's fitness club members.



ClubZum teaches people about their bodies and how to exercise functionally.

We're not concerned with what the body looks like, but how it moves, says Peter Shmock.



Mega wristops

Suunto's new-generation wristop computers support the sporting activities of their users on three different level. Besides providing immediate feedback on performance, Suunto wristop computers record data for subsequent analysis on a PC and for sharing with other active sports participants on the Internet.

Text by Jussi-Pekka Aukia ■ Photos by Rami Lappalainen

In action the wristop computer benefits its user directly by displaying information on performance and the environment: divers see the depth and remaining air time, cross sports enthusiasts the compass bearing, barometric pressure and height above sea level, cruising and racing sailors the speed, position and route of the boat, and golfers, for instance, the distance hit on the last shot.

The wristop computer is also able to store values measured during performance into its log files, which can later be transferred via an interface cable to dedicated software such as Suunto Activity Manager running on a PC. The user can then record, analyse and prepare statistics on his or her performance data after the event. ▶



Experience is a good teacher

The second functional dimension of the wristop computer gives the sports participant an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of his/her performance and to track the development of his/her physical condition and training knowledge. For example, the altitude and heart rate profiles recorded by the Suunto X6HR (cross sports) can be plotted against time on an easy-to-read graph. The Suunto G9 (golf) and Suunto M9 (sailing) models contain GPS receivers that record the route sailed and distances hit during a round of golf.

Suunto wristop owners can also share their analysed performance data with others on the www.suuntosports.com website. This is the third functional dimension of the wristop computer. The data does not have to be manually input again because Suunto Activity Manager transfers the logs directly from the wristop to the website.

The social dimension created by the Suuntosport.com server provides almost limitless opportunities for deepening the user's understanding of his/her sport. Everyone belonging to a Suuntosports.com community can benefit from the ex-

periences and knowledge of its other members. The factor linking all the users is accurate and commensurable wristop data, which can be easily handled thanks to the server's excellent tools.

Three access levels

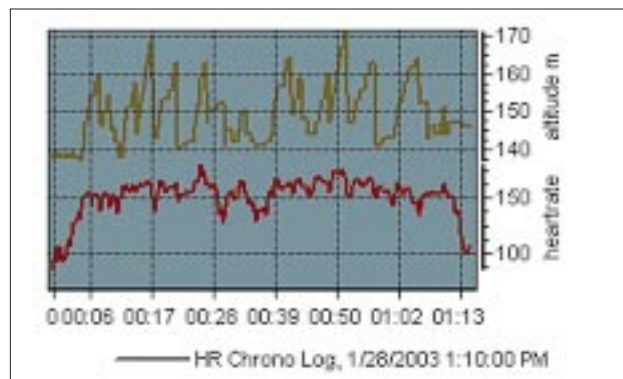
Performance data recorded by a wristop and processed by Suunto Activity Manager can be stored on the Suuntosports.com server either in MySuunto personal folder, or as a report accessible by a particular community of registered users, or as an activity report open to all. The latter can also be browsed by unregistered visitors who do not themselves own a Suunto sports instrument. Photographs and comments can be added to all the different kinds of activity reports. A photo taken, for instance, during a hike in the mountains or a sailing trip can often be the best way to relate an experience.

With the year-long pilot phase now completed, the website has almost 11,000 registered users, who have already transferred thousands of logs to the different access levels. Readers of Skiing Magazine and depth divers are among the most active user groups.

Sharing information and experiences on the Internet adds a social dimension to the wristop computer.



Marja Helander



Data stored in the wristop can be easily transferred to a laptop computer for further analysis (top). Altitude and heart rate profiles for a training run (bottom).

Why share?

Storing one's own performance history in the MySuunto folder is the basic level, on top of which it is easy to build virtual communities such as golfing and skiing societies. Exchanging information on performances is beneficial to both professional athletes and recreational sports participants.

For example, the members of a newly-formed fitness club at some workplace could encourage one another by publishing information of personal development from the couch potato stage towards decent levels of fitness. In just the same way a professional coach could track the progress of his athletes' training even when he cannot be present. There are many reasons why users would want to publish their activity reports openly in a sport-specific forum. For some, sharing is a worthwhile pursuit in its own right; others simply want to spread the word about the sport that they love. Publishing reports can al-



so benefit professional athletes in their public relations, because the rank-and-file sports enthusiast is certainly interested in comparing his/her own performance with that of a top athlete in the same arena.

Suunto does not create content for the Suuntosports.com website – the users do that themselves. Suunto merely maintains the server and supervises its use, for instance, in connection with advertising.

General-purpose instrument

Suunto X6HR is an indispensable tool for anyone interested in outdoor and endurance sports. It includes a compass, chronometer, heart rate monitor, barometer and altimeter all in one package. The instrument can also tell its user the air temperature and the degree of slope.

The instrument measures – and if necessary also records – altitude and heart rate profiles at 2, 10, or 60-second intervals. It also stores in its memory the barometric pressure and temperature over the last 12 hours. It calculates a wide range of values from the recorded data: examples include the highest and lowest points of the route, different kinds of averages, ascent and descent rates and the accumulated ascent value.

One shouldn't be daunted by the versatility of the Suunto X6HR. It pays to start by learning the simple functions first and then gradually to get used to the more advanced features one at a time. Actually, learning to get the most out of the physiological, meteorological and topographical data that the Suunto X6HR measures is perhaps the steepest part of the learning curve. Once the basics have been mastered, however, this knowledge can be deepened almost limitlessly by reading the literature and

examining the logs on a PC. Sharing the measurement data and comparing experiences with other members of a Suuntosport.com community greatly increases the value of the performance data.

User-friendly software

Suunto Activity Manager (SAM) is simply and automatically installed on any PC running a modern Windows operating system. It can also be run in the Mac environment with Virtual PC software. The ability to view the altitude and heart rate profiles of a route in graphical form is particularly useful.

It is easy to browse, compare, edit and print out logs and reports from MySuunto personal folder. A registered user can examine his personal logs from any PC anywhere in the world using a standard web browser. For many people this may be an important reason for storing their personal logs on the Suuntosports.com server.

Joining a community is the next step once the basic routines have been learnt. If a new user is not joining an already familiar group of people, he/she would be well advised to spend a little while on the sidelines observing how active community members operate and what kind of etiquette they follow. Once the rules are understood, the new user can confidently join in the discussion and interaction. ■



The wristop computer provides the outdoor enthusiasts with accurate physiological, meteorological and topographical information.

WILSON RETURNS TO THE PGA TOUR

Wilson has returned to golf's US PGA Tour after an absence of two years. Jesper Parnevik was the first player to sign up with Wilson, and not far behind him as new members of the Wilson Advisory Staff came Grant Waite and Michael Clark II. Waite is a 38-year-old veteran who is now starting his thirteenth year on the Tour. This season Waite will use the Wilson Staff True Elite ball, the new Deep Red II Tour Irons, the Wilson Pro Fit glove and the Wilson Staff Tour bag. The other new member of the Wilson Advisory Staff, Michael Clark II, will use the Wilson Staff True Elite ball and the Wilson Pro Fit glove.

FIVE MEDALS AT ST MORITZ

Atomic Racing Team added another five medals to their season's tally at the Alpine Skiing World Championships in St Moritz. Gold medals were won by Michael Walchhofer in the Men's Downhill and Stephan Eberharter in the Men's Super-G. Silvers went to Hans Knauss in the Men's Giant Slalom, Hermann Maier in the Super-G, and Marlies Schild in the Women's Slalom. Atomic had a very successful time in the men's events. The gold and silver medals in the Super-G were icing on the cake for Atomic, who had four skiers in the top six in the Downhill.



Lehtikuva

▲ Stephan Eberharter



WRISTOP INTERNET

Suunto has started R&D co-operation with Microsoft Corporation. Microsoft technology will be used in Suunto's wristop computers. As a result of the co-operation Suunto will launch a new Suunto n series of wristop computers that use wireless technology to receive short messages and user-specific information from the Internet. Radio frequencies are used in the data transmission. The Suunto n series will be offered in the North American markets. The radio receiver solution developed by Microsoft is available in the 100 biggest cities in the USA and Canada. Suunto aims to have the first n series wristops, i.e. the n3 and n6, on sale in North America in December.

Additional information: suunto.nitrofx.com/n6

APPOINTMENTS

Petteri Koskimäki, Global Business Analyst, Amer Group
Vrana Pitois, Trade Marketing Manager, Suunto Europe
Bruno Rindli, President, Amer Sports Switzerland, from 1 April
Scott White, Business Director for Golf Balls, Wilson Golf

ANDERS BOESEN JOINS WILSON



The sixth best player on the world rankings of men's badminton, Anders Boesen of Denmark, has signed a three-year deal with Wilson. Boesen will use Wilson's new Vision series V2 racquet, Wilson Sensation Braid strings and Wilson footwear and apparel. Last year 26-year-old Boesen reached the finals of Danish and German open championships.

Boesen is ranked as the No. 1 player in his Danish homeland.



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