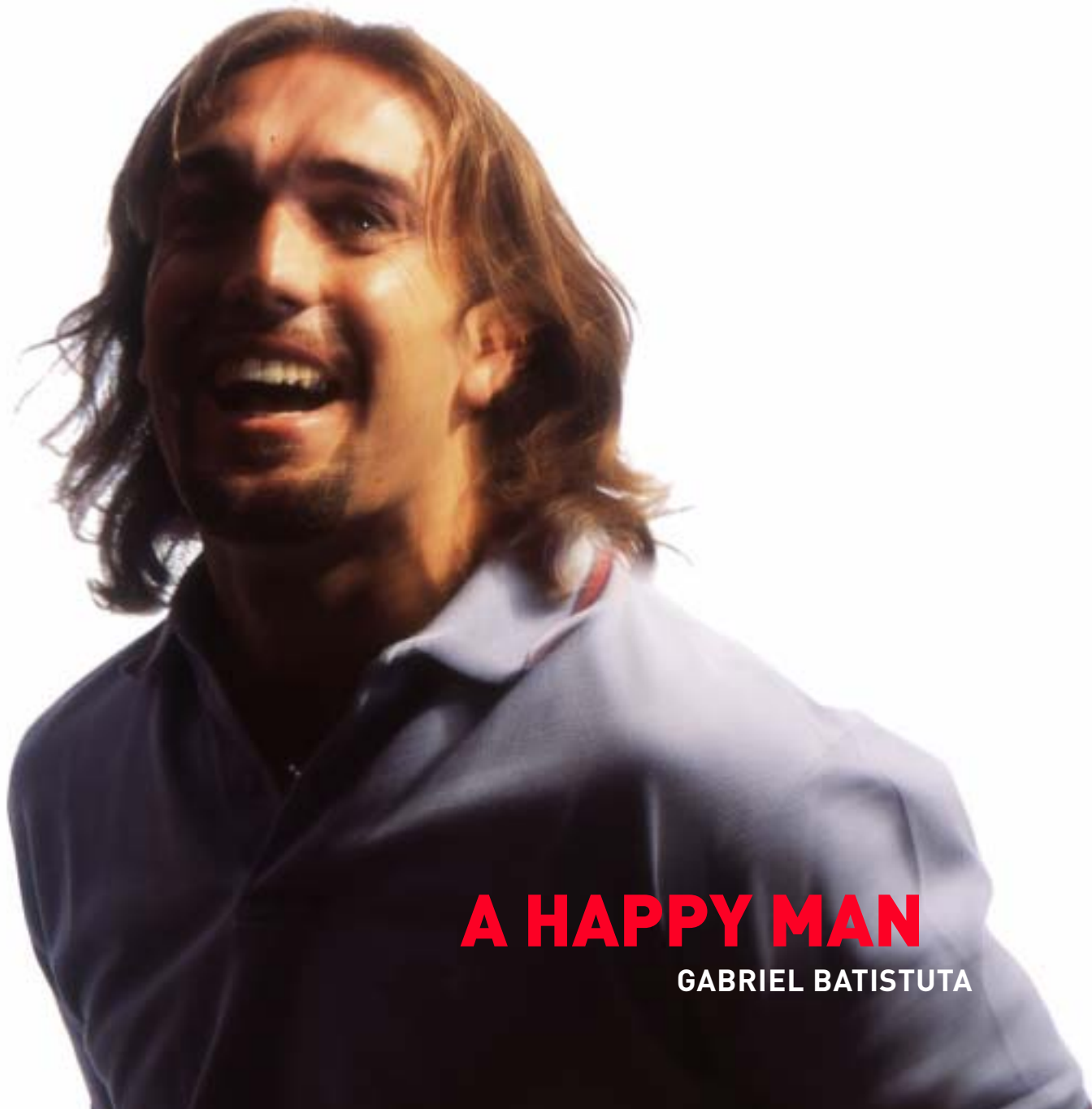


NEXT

A Magazine by Amer Sports 3.03



A HAPPY MAN
GABRIEL BATISTUTA

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Hanna Weseitus

POTENT TEAMWORK

Wilson has now added soccer to its portfolio of team sports as a new focus area. The company has decided to make its initial entry into the sport of soccer by concentrating on the large markets of South America. The legendary striker Gabriel Batistuta has been chosen as Wilson's soccer ambassador and figurehead. To learn more about this charismatic Argentinean and his positive attitude to life, turn to page 12.

We wanted to take a look at a traditional American sport, American football, from a European perspective. American football is played with real passion on the old continent, for instance in the NFL's sister league, NFL Europe (page 6).

We also offer an glimpse into Team Wilson and its work behind the scenes at the Wimbledon Championships. We first referred to Team Wilson in our magazine as a working name for the organisation which ensures that players' equipment is in good shape for Grand Slam tennis tournaments (page 24). Now the Team Wilson concept has been enlarged to encompass not only Wilson's own organisation but also the players and their coaches. One day or event provides only part of the whole picture; Team Wilson operates all year round.

The themes covered in our magazine prompt one to consider the importance of teams. When tasks are tackled together, consideration must always be given to other team members. This is important in all walks of life, not just in sports and recreational pursuits. Teamwork at its best produces synergy: the team as a whole is more than the sum of its individual members. Teamwork gives rise to ideas, feedback and interaction, not to mention strength and commitment. The best teams are built around strong individuals who play well together as a single potent unit.

Tea Saari

Editor-in-chief



"SOCCER IS HARD WORK, BUT VERY ENJOYABLE TOO," SAYS GABRIEL BATISTUTA, WHO CONFESSES TO BEING A HAPPY MAN.



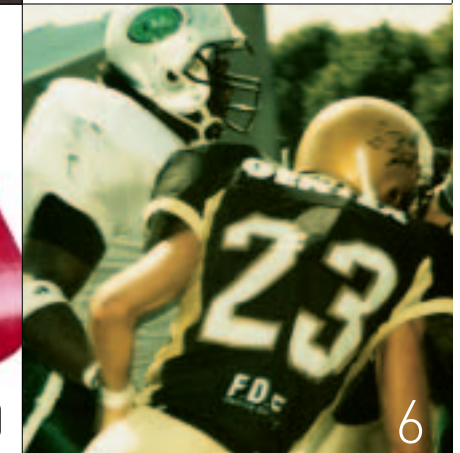
12



30



20



6

THE MAIN TREND IN PHYSICAL TRAINING IS NOW FULL-BODY EXERCISE. COMPETENT PERSONAL TRAINERS SERVE THEIR CLIENTS BY PREPARING INVENTIVE PROGRAMMES THAT TAKE ACCOUNT OF ALL AREAS OF THEIR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING.

Next 3.03: Contents

- 4** **HOT NEW PRODUCTS** Wilson's Legacy range of tennis shoes, Suunto X3HR heart rate monitor, Wilson Triad 3 tennis racquet etc.
- 6** **AMERICAN FOOTBALL** An icon of American culture is now establishing itself in Europe too.
- 11** **NEW GENERATION OF TENNIS RACQUETS** Wilson's new racquets on show.
- 12** **GABRIEL BATISTUTA** Batistuta made it all the way to the top, event though he didn't start playing soccer until he was 18 years old.
- 19** **NEWS** Amer Sports moves to Neuried, Amer Sports Switzerland's new address and appointments.
- 20** **RENTAL SKI BUSINESS** More and more new skis find their way into rental rather than retail stores.
- 24** **TEAM WILSON** Tennis stars rely on a dedicated team of professionals working in the background.
- 28** **RESULTS** Amer Group's second quarter.
- 30** **PERSONAL TRAINERS** Fitness enthusiasts are increasingly turning to personal trainers for help and guidance.
- 35** **NEWS** Wal-Mart chooses Wilson, Scuba skiers, Wilson reorganised and Wilson No. 1 at Wimbledon.

NEW FROM SUUNTO

Suunto X3HR is not only a heart rate monitor but also a versatile wristop computer for outdoor enthusiasts. X3HR measures temperature, barometric pressure and height above sea level. The measurement data can be read during performance and analysed later too. X3HR records, for instance, the duration of exercise and the average heart rate.



BATISTUTA SIGNATURE FOOTBALL

Featuring unique underglass pattern (PVC). 32 panels, hand sewn for a perfect shape. Water resistant polyester stitching provides durable seams in wet conditions. Dynamically balanced butyl bladder provides outstanding shape retention, control and air retention. Multi-ply polyester and cotton lining ensures superior strength and shape retention.



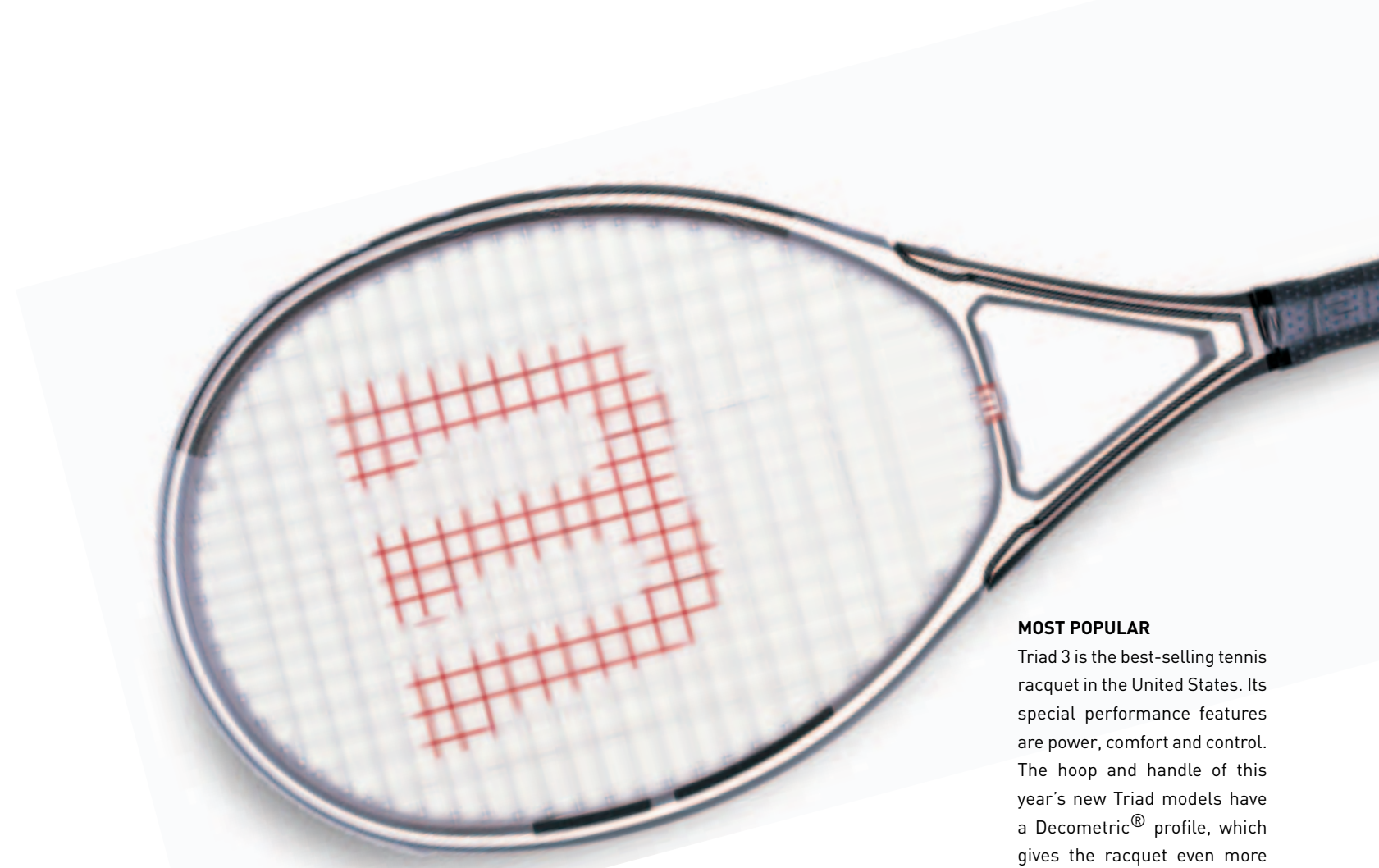
BETA IS BETTER

Atomic's alpine ski models for next season will feature Beta Puls – the latest development of Atomic's Beta technology. Two strips made of titanium or a special composite plastic embedded in the new Beta Puls skis ensure that the forces acting on the edge of the ski are distributed more evenly over its entire length. The new construction 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.



goodies galore

Photos by Marja Helander



MOST POPULAR

Triad 3 is the best-selling tennis racquet in the United States. Its special performance features are power, comfort and control. The hoop and handle of this year's new Triad models have a Decometric® profile, which gives the racquet even more torsional stability.



LEGACY

Wilson's Legacy footwear range draws inspiration from the era when Jack Kramer dominated the world of lawn tennis. Three of the four Legacy tennis shoes are named after Kramer, and the fourth after Wilson founder, Thomas E. Wilson. The uppers of the shoes are made from genuine leather or strong cotton canvas.

FIRST STEPS

Tennis ball and baby-sized tennis shoes in the same package.





Italy's Lions do battle with Frogs & K in Bolzano. The Lions are Italy's best and also only fully professional team.



One of the icons of American culture is now establishing itself in Europe too.

Text by Sami Turunen ■ Photos by Emmanuel Mathez



Heavily padded men who make ice hockey players look like beanstalks limber up on the artificial turf surface. There's a crowd of a few hundred people, and a gaggle of good-looking cheerleaders are busy building a pyramid on the side line. Rock music blares from the loudspeakers and a commentator bellows out the team lists. Someone in the crowd tosses a Stetson up in the air. The atmosphere couldn't be more American, and with good reason: this is a game of American football. The scene could be from almost anywhere in the United States, but actually it's all happening in Europe.

Touchdown

on the old continent

A SIMPLE GAME AT ITS SIMPLEST

A game of American football is played by two teams with eleven players from each team on the field at any given time. The field is 100 yards (91 metres) long and 53 yards wide.

The team with possession of the ball attacks and the other team defends. The purpose of the attacking team is to get the football into the end zone (the area of play behind the goal line) of the defending team. This is called a touchdown and earns the attacking team six points. The attackers do not have to achieve this on the first attempt: in fact, they are allowed four attempts to make just 10 yards of progress towards the defender's goal line. If the attacking team achieves this gain of ten yards, it is given another four attempts or downs to gain a further ten yards, and so on. When the attacking team fails to make ten yards of progress, possession of the football passes to the other team and the roles of attacker/defender are reversed.

Each attack can be made by throwing or carrying the football forward. These two methods of attack are referred to as the passing game and the running game. In the running game the ball is handed off to a running back who tries to make ground while his team mates protect him from possible tacklers. In the passing game the quarter back throws the ball forwards, aiming at one of the receivers who sprint forward and then try to catch any pass thrown at them.

The task of the defence is primarily to stop the attacking team from scoring any points. It achieves this by preventing the attackers making the ten yards necessary to gain four more downs. The job of the defenders is thus to tackle the ball-carrier at the earliest possible opportunity. The defence also tries to end the attacker's possession of the football by intercepting passes and grabbing hold of it when fumbled by an attacker.

In addition to a touchdown, points can be stored by kicking a field goal (3 points). The defending team can also score a safety (2 points) by forcing the attacking team's ball-carrier back into his own end zone and then tackling him.

At first glance American football appears to be a pointless brawl in which full-grown men run into each other and then wrestle furiously for a few intense moments. Suddenly, the action stops. The players resume their starting positions, and then do much the same thing again. Amidst all this chaos there is an elliptical ball, but its actual role in the game is hard to discern for the uninitiated spectator.

But the game is more than just an organised fight between teams of big men. "The sport is suitable for players of all sizes and builds. Different positions require different characteristics and abilities. Smaller and more agile players are needed just as much as big, strong men. In many other sports the players are pressed from more or less the same mould," says Roope Noronen.

Noronen knows what he is talking about. President of the American Football Association of Finland, Vice-president of the European Federation of American Football, and manager of Finland's national Maple League, Noronen has been a fol-

lower, player and coach of American football for the past twenty years.

USA in a class of its own

On the field, the helmeted heads and heavily padded shoulders crash together in tackles. There are injuries, of course, but the timely application of ice-packs speeds recovery: a player who just limped from the field sprints back on as if nothing had happened. A commentary on events taking place on the field of play undoubtedly helps first-time spectators to understand what is going on.

Noronen says that a basic understanding of the sport comes after watching two or three games. The tactical subtleties of the sport then start to become more apparent. "American football is a great spectator sport because you never stop learning new things about the game. During each break in the action the players of each team form a huddle to receive instructions on the next play. The wide variety of possible plays greatly adds to the game's tactical diversity."

American football is one of the big four sports in the United States, the others being baseball, basketball and ice hockey. They continuously attract tens of thousands of spectators into sporting arena around the country. People come to these enormous stadia not only to watch the game but also to spend time and have a meal with friends and family. The biggest American football game of the year, the Superbowl, brings the whole country to a virtual standstill as tens of millions of people follow the action on TV.

In Europe and Finland we are still a long way away from this kind of hype, but

Some 20,000 spectators on average attend NFL Europe's league games. As many as 40,000-50,000 watch the league matches played between German teams. This year's league final, the World Bowl, was won by Frankfurt Galaxy in front of 30,000 fans.

► continues



Barbari Roma play in an all-black strip.



the sport is enjoying vigorous growth on this side of the Atlantic. Equipment sales are also growing strongly and Wilson is focusing on American football as its No. 1 team sport. The standard of league games played in Europe is also quite high, at both the national and continental level.

Two leagues in Europe

Eurobowl is a club tournament organised by the European Federation of American Football (EFAF). The two top teams of each national league qualify for the competition. The Eurobowl has been played since 1986, when Finland's Taft took the honours. In 2000-2002 the Eurobowl championships was won by Italy's Bergamo Lions.

The continent's other competition is the NFL Europe League, which is organised by its North American sister league, the NFL. The league has been in existence for 11 years. Six teams play in the league: three

from Germany and one from the Netherlands, Scotland and Spain. The teams are made up of American, European, Japanese and Mexican players, and many of these young men have run, thrown and tackled their way into the USA's league.

According to NFL Europe's spokesman Neil Reynolds, some 20,000 spectators on average attend NFL Europe's league games. As many as 40,000-50,000 watch the league matches played between German teams. This year's league final, the World Bowl, was won by Frankfurt Galaxy in front of 30,000 fans. European attendance figures are, how-



ever, modest compared with those in the sport's American homeland. In several European cities the staging of league games is more a labour of love than a business.

Germany dominant in Europe

American football has been played seriously in Europe since 1980. There are national leagues in almost every European country, and Germany is the European Champion and the Junior European Championship silver medallist. "The popularity of the game in Germany is unsurpassed anywhere else in



The game ends in victory for the Lions. They also reached this year's Eurobowl semifinals.

Europe: there are 250 clubs and 25,000 licensed players in the country," says Noronen. In Europe as a whole there are just under 100,000 registered players.

Britain, Finland, Sweden, France, Austria and Italy contend fiercely for second place in the pecking order after Germany.

The sport is growing fastest in the ranks of junior players especially. The NFL leagues on both sides of the Atlantic invest in youth and children's activities as well as collaboration with schools. American football's non-contact sister sport, flag football, has helped in this work. Flag football can be played by boys and girls on the same field and, according to Neil Reynolds, the sport has reached as many as a million children in Europe. ■



Wilson tennis racquets are divided into three product families to fit various types of players: TRIAD technology delivers comfort, power and control without compromising one for the other. Hammer technology delivers a higher and larger sweet spot and Pro Staff has always been a favourite on the Tour.

NEW GENERATION OF TENNIS RACQUETS

In 2003, Decometric geometry was introduced to the Triad line. The new Decometric 10-sided frame design allows the racket to have more stiffness, stability and power with less material, so the rackets have a lighter pick-up feel. As the name suggests, Triad racquets are assembled from three separate components: the handle, the hoop and between them a shock-absorbing polymer called Iso-Zorb. Slightly less Iso-Zorb is used in the latest Triad models, giving the racquets improved feel.

There are four models in the Triad range, Triad 3 being the stiffest and Triad 6 the most flexible. Triad 3 is the most popular tennis racquet in the United States. Stiff racquets are favoured by players who have a short, compact stroke. Powerful hitters with long, loopy swings get better results with more flexible racquets. The stiffness of a racquet is described by its swing index: the lower the swing index, the stiffer the racquet.

A new structural feature of the light and head-weighted Hammer racquets is called IsoGrid - a grid of Hyper-Carbon and kevlar built into the racquet frame. IsoGrid

stiffens the frame, giving shots more power and greater accuracy.

The lightest model in the Hammer range is the H2. The H4 model is used by Venus Williams. The H Tour is favoured by professional players, including top names like Justin Henin-Hardenne and Todd Martin. The Tour model replaces the popular Hammer 5.2 racquet.

The Hammer 6 or Hammer 7 is an ideal choice for players looking for a racquet even more flexible than the Tour. The Pro Staff range favoured by professionals and serious amateurs has been comprehensively renewed. Only the 6.1 model remains unchanged.

The replacement for the 5.1 model is called the Pro Staff Surge 5.1. The racquet is also available in a slightly heavier Surge X version. The completely new Pro Staff models are the Pro Staff ROK and Pro Staff 7 Torch. The unofficial flagship of the range is the Pro Staff Tour - the time-honoured tool of the professional player.

Wilson's new range of tennis racquets will be available in stores in autumn 2003.



Fishing for freedom

"Only hard work brings results," says Gabriel Batistuta, a man acknowledged as one of the greatest goal-scorers of recent years. The fact that Batistuta didn't start playing the game until he was 18 years old suggests that great talent was also an important factor in his success.

Text by Pertti Lepistö ■ Photos by Claudio Gaiaschi

The crystal-clear waters around the Maldives in the Indian Ocean set the scene for a chance meeting of two silent predators. The pair exchanged glances and somehow made a connection. Scuba divers encounter large sea creatures all the time, but this was the first time that Gabriela Batistuta had bumped into a bigger shark than himself.

"The emotional charge was tremendous, although it all felt somehow natural. The feeling of respect tinged with fear didn't come until after the dive was over. My legs were a little shaky, I must admit," recalls Batistuta two years later in Milan. Batistuta was having a well-earned holiday in the Maldives as a justifiably satisfied player of AS Roma, the Eternal City team which had just won the Italian league championship. It had indeed been an eternity, no less than 18 years, since AS Roma last won the championship.

The part played by Batistuta in the team's triumph was indisputable. The predatory instincts of the shark-like Argentinean striker had brought 20 goals in 28 matches. That championship was Batistuta's first and last in Italy. It is perhaps too few for a player who will be remembered in soccer's history books as one of the most dangerous strikers of the 1990s and early 2000s. Batistuta will play the next two seasons in Qatar, but after that he would like to play again for an Italian club.

"I'm satisfied that the championship came at last. I should certainly have won more. It would have been reasonable. I scored a lot of goals in the other years, but they didn't bring any rewards – just statistics," smiles Batistuta.

For example, in the 1994–95 season Batistuta was the top goal-scorer in the Italian Serie A, a league renowned for its low-scoring games and tight defences. Twenty-six goals in thirty-six matches was not enough, and Fiorentina finished the season in third place.

The league title was also close in the 1998–99 season, when Fiorentina were the front-runners for more than half the season. But Batistuta was injured and the month-long recovery period that followed disheartened the Firenze team and they finished the season in third place again. Despite his injury and lay-off, Batistuta's tally for the season was nineteen goals.

Three years earlier Fiorentina won the Italian Cup and the Italian Supercup. In the Supercup final, two Batistuta goals were enough to sink AC Milan, which had won the championship in May.

Batistuta's worldwide reputation grew and reached its peak in the years 1991–2000 during his time with Fiorentina. In Firenze Batistuta is still today more than just a soccer player. In 1996 Fiorentina's supporters erected a life-sized bronze statue of the star striker. Such an expression of esteem and affection is very rare in the world of sport, and it moved both the player and the whole of Firenze. The bonds between Batistuta and Firenze are strong in both directions: Fiorentina discovered Batistuta in Buenos Aires and Batistuta became a mega-star at Fiorentina.

"I have never used soccer as a vehicle for seeking fame. Deep down, I don't believe that I have changed as a person at all. Perhaps people have other ideas."



Batistuta's expression of love for his own wife, Irina, at the 1996 Supercup final was also unforgettable: after scoring a goal he ran towards the TV camera and cried, "Irina te amo!"

Fifteen years at the top

Batistuta's career as a top-flight professional soccer player has been amazingly long: 15 years. He has played 400 matches in the Italian and Argentinean leagues and scored no fewer than 221 goals. In World Cup matches Batistuta notched up 10 goals.

Gabriel Batistuta has been fortunate in so far as he has not suffered any serious injuries. The fact that Batistuta did not start systematic soccer training until later than his peers is another important factor behind his professional longevity. Having played on the volleyball and basketball teams at school, Batistuta did not choose soccer until he was already 18 years old.

"I should have become something else than a soccer player. I actually intended to study medicine after graduating from high school. At that time it seemed to me to be a sensible choice. If soc-

cer hadn't come along, I might be a doctor now. I had to raise money for my schooling, which is why I decided to seek a contract with a soccer club."

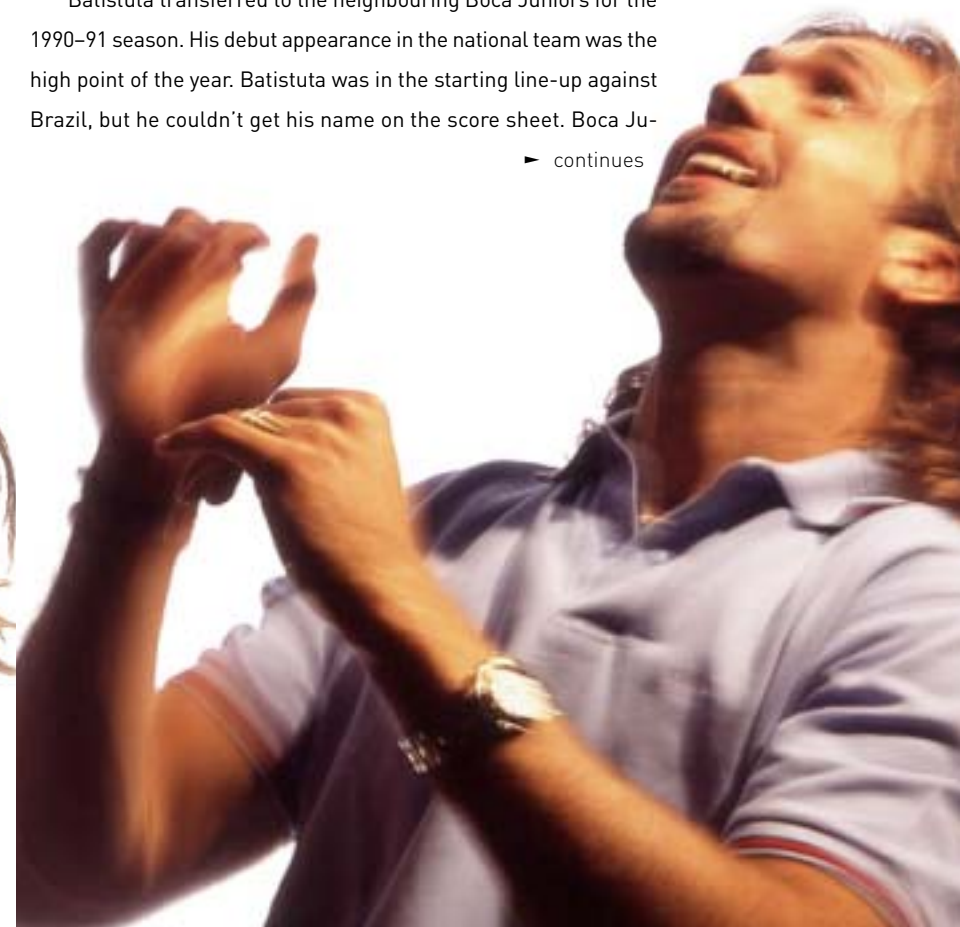
Newell's Old Boys offered the 19-year-old Batistuta a contract. Then he was loaned to the Buenos Aires team Deportivo Italiana, with whom Batistuta travelled abroad to play for the first time. The team's destination was Italy and Toscana – a portent of things to come. An international tournament in the carnival city of Viareggio gave Batistuta his first taste of Europe.

The beginning in Europe was not a particularly successful one: Juventus's less famous neighbour, Torino, ended Deportivo's involvement in the tournament on the same day that Batistuta celebrated his twentieth birthday.

Young Batistuta's skills had not gone unnoticed by Argentina's top clubs, and he began the 1989-90 season with the illustrious River Plate club. However, the small-town boy did not enjoy life in the big city at first, and his situation only got worse when the former star player Daniel Passarella became River Plate's coach. It was inevitable that such strong personalities would collide. The clash reoccurred ten years later on the eve of the World Cup tournament in France, when Passarella took over responsibility for Argentina's national team. Batistuta found himself out of the team for almost a year.

Batistuta transferred to the neighbouring Boca Juniors for the 1990–91 season. His debut appearance in the national team was the high point of the year. Batistuta was in the starting line-up against Brazil, but he couldn't get his name on the score sheet. Boca Ju-

► continues



niors became a winning team when **Oscar Washington Tabarez** took over as club coach in mid-season. Tabarez gave Batistuta the responsibility and confidence that he needed, and the team succeeded in reaching the final of South America's Copa Libertadores club tournament.

Top European clubs Fiorentina, Juventus and Real Madrid began to vie for the services of Batistuta, a striker who was still known in Argentina by his nickname "The Truck". Batistuta earned this epithet in the early days of his career because the youngster was strong enough to accelerate towards the goal even with defenders

"I don't have the same deceptive skills as Ronaldo, Luis Figo or Zinedine Zidane, but then I don't think that they have as hard a shot as me."

hanging all over him. The South American championship tournament Copa America was Batistuta's final breakthrough. Argentina won the championship and Batistuta was the tournament's top goal-scorer with six goals in six matches.

"Actually, everything happened quite quickly. I had a club trial as a 18-year-old, played in the Argentinean premiere league as a 19-year-old, and found myself playing in Europe as a 21-year-old."

"I certainly can't complain about the way things turned out. Soccer gave me an opportunity to embark on a great adventure, which still continues to this day. I got the opportunity to see the world, which I could only have dreamed of doing earlier. I didn't hesitate for a moment when I had the chance to come to Europe, even though it meant a painful separation from my family, my parents and my sisters."

Three World Cup tournaments

Batistuta's goal-scoring for the Argentinean national team was a source of great joy for his countrymen. 'Was', because Batistuta said farewell to international soccer after the last World Cup tournament in Korea/Japan. "I wouldn't have had any chance of lasting through to the next World Cup in 2006."

Batistuta represented his country on 76 occasions and scored 56 goals in his international career. Fate nonetheless dictated that Batistuta should not find success in the three World Cup tournaments in which he spearheaded Argentina's attack.

"My decision to retire from international soccer was easy but at the same time difficult. Difficult because nobody wants to leave their national team, but I made my decision calmly and after giving it a great deal of thought. And this decision is final. It was easy in the sense that I played in the Argentinean shirt for many years and I succeeded in fulfilling the role assigned to me – which was to score goals. I played in the World Cup, which is an unforgettable experience for any soccer player," says Batistuta, who is unable to hide his sadness and disappointment about the national team's performance in recent World Cup tournaments. "We could have



won the 1994 World Cup in the United States. We had a good team and I was in top form. I scored a hat-trick against Greece. Then **Diego Maradona's** doping problem messed up all of our plans. In 1998 the team was quite good, but it lacked something. We went to the World Cup in Japan/Korea as favourites, but the tournament went badly for us from the very first game."

"What has happened in the past no longer has any effect on me. If things went well, then OK; but no matter how much I dwell on past failures, it won't change anything," reflects Batistuta. "However, I must admit that eliminations from World Cup tournaments are the most unpleasant memories of my career. I expected, hoped for and believed in victory. The World Cup is a unique event. The most difficult moment came for me in 2002, because I knew then that I would never get another chance," says Batistuta.

Actions speak louder than words

Batistuta has an Indian motif tattooed on his left arm – it was no random choice of body decoration. "I certainly identify with aboriginal Indians. I have always liked them. They don't say much, but they certainly mean what they do say – a little like myself. Their lifestyle is free and independent, which is how I like to live too. I want to live as a free man, and I don't like being ordered around by people who clearly enjoy doing so. I've never been one to say more than I need to. I think that I have built up team spirit more by my example than by my words. In my opinion this is important. In today's world of soccer there are

er ideas. Of course, celebrity status means that you are always in the spotlight."

"Years ago, after I had joined Firenze, I suddenly realised that I had become famous. The press picked up something that I had said and made a big story out of it. That sort of thing had never interested me in the slightest," repeats Batistuta so many times that one has to believe him.

Speed and freedom

Batistuta is just as speedy off the soccer pitch as he ever was on

too many people with too much to say. I believe that straight talking is a good thing, even though the hard truth can be painful."

Batistuta is trying to recapture the feeling of total freedom that he enjoyed on fishing and hunting trips by the banks of the River Parana in his beloved homeland, not because of the catch or the prey but because of the experiences that those happy times gave him. Batistuta says that he likes to go to places where his fame as a soccer player does not mark him out as being different from anyone else.

"I have always been amazed by all the fuss that surrounds me. I have tried to be the same person that I was as a boy back home in Argentina. My outlook on life is the same and I have never used soccer as a vehicle for seeking fame. Deep down, I don't believe that I have changed as a person at all. Perhaps people have oth-

it. Fast cars and aeroplanes testify to his love of speed and freedom. "I would give almost anything to drive a Formula 1 car. I drive micros in Firenze and Rome whenever I have time. I started carting just for fun and I really like it a lot," says Batistuta.

Batistuta runs a large cattle and horse ranch in Argentina. Flying is the easiest way to keep an eye on his lands. Two years ago Batistuta got a pilot's licence entitling him to fly a single-engined Cessna. "I haven't flown with any passengers yet because no-one else dares come up with me," laughs Batistuta, who bets that he will also take up skydiving before long. "I have always wanted to fly. Perhaps this desire comes from my childhood. Our home was near a military airbase and I saw planes taking off and landing every day."

"Scuba diving has added an entirely new dimension to my life. Up until now I have only dived in tropical waters, but I intend to dive

► continues



elsewhere too in the future. For instance, whales and their mysterious world fascinate me.”

Perseverance rewarded

Overcoming the difficulties of the early years has certainly helped Batistuta to prolong his illustrious career. “I have done an enormous amount of work to achieve success in soccer. That’s the only way that I could make it to the top. I had difficulties because I wasn’t any kind of soccer player in the beginning. As a youth I was more interested in volleyball. I didn’t start to play soccer seriously until I was 18 years old, which was much later than many of my team mates.”

“I had to grit my teeth and move forward. No-one is perfect. It would be dangerous to think that one is. Only hard work brings results. I would like to teach this to young people. I would like to teach them perseverance and the lesson that difficulties and obstacles have to be conquered – you must never give up. That’s how to get results; there’s no shortcut to success. Determination is needed at difficult moments. Positive thinking is important at such times.”

“I am still in good shape and I have been fortunate not to have suffered any serious injuries. I still train as enthusiastically today as I did ten years ago. I enjoy training. If my enthusiasm for training starts to flag, then it will be time to stop playing. I haven’t reached that point yet,” says Batistuta.

He believes that he can continue playing at the top level for another two or three years. In the future he might take up a management position with Fiorentina, but hardly as the coach. “A soccer

“I’ve never tried or wanted to imitate anyone. I’ve always tried to make my own way. I’ve tried to develop my skills without losing my own style.”

player can always improve his skills, although I am already satisfied with what I have achieved up to now. I have been playing for so long that I know quite well what I can demand of myself and what my limits are.”

“I don’t have the same deceptive skills as **Ronaldo**, **Luis Figo** or **Zinedine Zidane**, but then I don’t think that they have as hard a shot as me. Everyone has their own individual characteristics. I’ve never tried or wanted to imitate anyone. I’ve always tried to make my own way. I’ve tried to develop my skills without losing my own style.”

One player in the family is enough

Batistuta hopes that his sons will not become soccer players. **Thiago** (11), **Lucas** (7) and **Joaquin** (5) can try if they want, but their father won’t be urging them to do so. Modern soccer at the top level is a long way from the fun and amiability of impromptu street games played by kids.

“The boys play and practice. They all want to be like their father. I am not at all enthused by the prospect of them becoming professional soccer players. In my opinion, one soccer player in our family is enough. I have first-hand experience of how hard soccer can be and how difficult it is to get to the top. Only a few of those aspiring to become professional soccer players ever realise their dream. Perhaps one in a thousand make it – maybe even fewer than that. It fills me apprehension. I want to offer my sons different kinds of opportunities. Then they can make their own choices.”

Batistuta considers himself to be a decent and resolute father. “I want to give my boys good guidance, just as any decent father should. Soccer has made me into a celebrity, even though I never craved or even sought it. I have tried to keep my private life and my work as a soccer player clearly distinct. I have done that quite well, although clashes do occur sometimes.”

“How would I like to be remembered as a player? As a great goal-scorer, which I was, and as a honest player. Quite a lot has already been written about me, but not yet anything very insightful about me as a person. I am a happy man. I would like to pass on a positive attitude, especially to young people.” ■

APPOINTMENTS

Johan Hedberg has been appointed Business Director of Suunto’s European operations with effect from 1.8.2003. Mr. Hedberg was previously Amer Sports’ Country Manager for Sweden and Denmark.

Magnus Johansson has been appointed to succeed Mr. Hedberg as Country Manager for Sweden and Denmark with effect from the same date.

AMER SPORTS MOVES TO NEURIED

Amer Sports moved its German and European head office into new premises in Neuried near Munich at the end of June.

The new head office was officially opened on 30th June on a beautiful summer’s evening during the ISPO Trade Show. More than 350 invited guests including customers, partners and the entire office staff celebrated along with six-time Grand Slam winner **Stefan Edberg**, World Champion Skier **Stephan Eberharter** and former Olympic ski golf medallist **Rosi Mittermair**. The new location houses all the Amer Sports brands including Atomic, Suunto, Precor and Wilson as well as the headquarters of both Amer Sports Germany and Amer Sports Europe.

The opening evening was hosted by the President of Amer Sports Europe, **Kari Kauniskangas**, and the President of Amer Sports Germany, **Otto Steffel**. The programme for the evening included Stefan and Stefan – an interview with Stefan Edberg and Stephan Eberharter, in which the sporting stars talked about their careers, lives and relationships with Amer Sports’ brands. The final activity of the evening was the inauguration of Amer Sports

AMER SPORTS SWITZERLAND’S NEW ADDRESS

Amer Sports Switzerland has moved into new offices.

The new address is:

Amer Sports Switzerland AG

Bachtalen 33

CH-6332 Hagendorn

Tel. +41 41 784 2626, Fax +41 41 800 26 2626

Mr. Heikki Koponen, Master of Laws, Executive MBA, has been appointed as Senior Legal Counsel for Amer Group Plc.

Mr. Derron Sabo, formerly Territory Manager for Wilson Golf, has been promoted to the position of National Account Manager – Golf, Wilson Golf & Racquet Sports in the USA.

Mr. Doug Wright has been appointed as Business Director for Golf in Europe.

Hall of Fame, where the handprints of the visiting Grand Slam, World Champions, Olympic Gold Medallists and Major Title winners were immortalised in stone.

The new Neuried office is in the suburbs of Munich and not far from the former office, which ensured that the 87 head office employees had the smoothest possible move to the new location.

The new office environment is representative of the world’s leading equipment company with an open plan that supports inter company communication and interaction. Five main meeting rooms representing some of the world’s great sporting locations add to the sportive feeling of the new office; such as the US Open, British Open, Mount Everest, Kitzbühel and Champions.

Prior to the opening of the new head office, Amer Sports started up its new European logistics centre, which is located in the German town of Überherrn near the French border. This site guarantees the fastest possible delivery of goods all over Europe.



The building is representative of the latest office architecture.



Over 350 invited guests attended the opening of the new head office in Neuried.



More snowboards than alpine skis are already being rented at many ski centres. Snowboarding is particularly popular among young people, such as the breakdancer in the photo.

New life for the ski rental business

Alpine skiing culture is becoming more diverse and the winds of change are blowing the dust and cobwebs out of the ski rental business. Customers are now being offered equipment to suit every need. Always in a good state of repair, rental equipment of top quality is now also available when requested.

Text by Markku Rimpiläinen ■ Photos by Ville Juurikkala

A wintry Friday evening in Stockholm. Thousands of alpine skiers pack their bags and set off on the 400-kilometre drive to Sälen, Sweden's most popular skiing destination. Arriving later the same evening, they are ready to enjoy two full days of skiing in a magnificent fjeld landscape that one would hardly expect to find in southern Sweden. The line of cars gets longer and more tightly packed as it gets closer to Sälen. Before long, many cars leave the line and turn off the main highway, even though there is still no sign of fjelds. So where are these people going? The answer soon becomes apparent: large roadside buildings with illuminated signs advertising rental ski equipment. There are dozens of vehicles in the car parks of these rental stores. Regular weekend visitors to Sälen know that the prices of these roadside rental stores are lower than those at the ski centre.

Some weekend visitors drive straight to their country cottages. There waiting in the cupboard are the latest models of well-maintained rental skis, which were booked and paid for in advance on the Internet. On Sunday evening the visitors can leave the skis at the cottage and set off on the return journey at their leisure.

These examples from Sälen are clear evidence that fresh winds are blowing through the ski rental business. The old business models are being superseded by new ones, and even these are being constantly developed and improved.

The business is doing well everywhere. Statistics collected from ski centre associations in different countries indicate that the turnover of rental ski stores everywhere has grown 20–30 per cent faster than ski-lift sales. Moreover, at many alpine skiing centres the rental ski stores enjoy margins that are as good as or even better than the ski-lift operators. Alpine skiers have welcomed the new and improved services offered by the ski rental business. No wonder then that so many of the cars driving towards Sälen have no skis on their roofs.



Carving skis are also suitable for seniors.

► continues

You can't buy everything

Diversification of the alpine ski culture in the 1990s gave fresh impetus to the development of the ski rental business. Snowboards and telemarks made a big impact on the market. At the same time the equipment manufacturers started making alpine skis for different purposes. Skiers were interested in the new alternatives.

"However, it was quite clear that consumers could not buy all the new equipment for themselves," says **Guy Catani**, Executive Director of the Association of Finnish Ski Centres.

The equipment manufacturers were quick to notice that the new types of skis did not move from the store shelves unless consumers had an opportunity to try them out in practice. Different kinds of test centres were set up in connection with ski rental stores, firstly in the United States and then later in Europe.

The equipment revolution forced the rental companies to get rid of their old skis and replace them with new ones. The initial investment was considerable, but it paid off. Consumers were quick to notice that new skis in tip-top condition really could be rented at reasonable cost. Demand for rental skis started to grow rapidly.

At the same time the rental companies began to develop new business models. They started selling skis and developing different combinations of testing, renting and selling arrangements.

The increase in demand also persuaded the big retail chains to get into the rental business. In Austria, Intersport established 40 new rental stores in 2000–2001. In 2002, Intersport had over 100 rental outlets in the Austrian Alps and their combined turnover exceeded EUR 100 million.

The fact that there are over 60,000 pairs of new carving skis in Intersport's Austrian rental stores is indicative of the volume of business.

Shorter holidays

The trend towards shorter skiing holidays has also increased interest in rental skis. A skiing break in the mountains or fjelds need not necessarily last a whole week. More and more people are making shorter trips, e.g. Thursday to Sunday.

Many of those travelling by aeroplane do not want to take their own skis with them. Struggling through a congested airport terminal with suitcases is bad enough, cumbersome and heavy skis are something the holidaymaker could well do without.

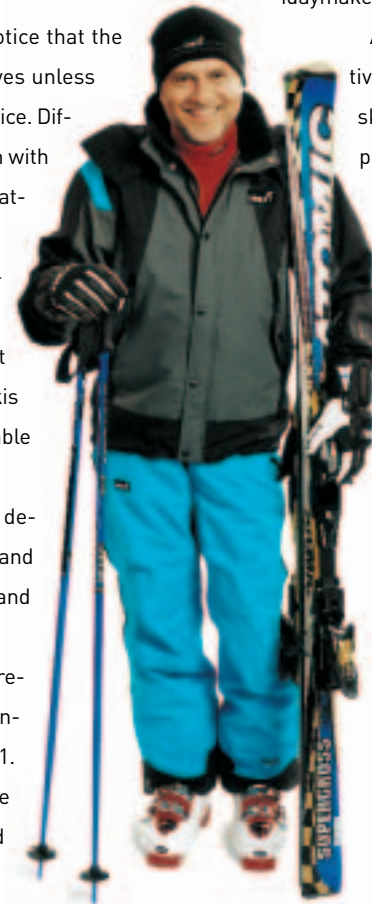
A large proportion of alpine skiers take to the slopes relatively seldom. "Studies indicate that two-thirds of alpine skiers take to the slopes less than three times a month," points out Guy Catani.

If you ski infrequently or for just a few days at a time, owning your own skis is not necessarily a sensible option. Nowadays many infrequent skiers are realising that it makes more sense to rent ski equipment than to purchase it.

The ski centres and equipment manufacturers have noted this trend. Ski centres in the United States have already launched inventive marketing campaigns designed to lure infrequent skiers onto the slopes more often. The campaigns focus on offering reasonable priced packages that also include the necessary skiing equipment. For example, at Bogus Basin you can rent a new snowboard or new skis for the whole season. The package costs USD 199 for adults and USD 99 for kids. At the end of the season the rented equipment can be purchased at reasonable cost.

Selling or renting?

Most of the rental stores at ski centres sell skis, and many specialist ski stores also have their own rental businesses. The emphasis of the business ultimately dictates whether it is primarily a seller or renter.



Ski rental stores also offer slightly more aggressive skis, such as the Super Cross equipment shown in the photo.

SPECIAL PRODUCT VERSIONS FOR RENTAL USE

Rental equipment is in continuous use, but consumers do not want to use worn-looking skis. For this reason the base and top surface materials of Atomic's rental skis are very resistant to wear. They also have a bar code already on the skis, which speeds up the work of the rental store. The surface material of Atomic's rental ski boots is also very wear-resistant, and particular attention has been paid to hygiene in the design of the lining. Rental versions are available in the following product families: RaceCarve, AllroundCarve, Freeride, AllMountain, EasyCarve and beginners' equipment. Snowboards intended for rental use have easy-to-use bindings which take up little space in the equipment rack.

The rental stores' interest in retail sales has not yet decisively altered the structure of the ski trade. Skis are still being sold in urban ski shops, specialist stores and big chain stores. However, competition between shops in towns and cities is fiercer than ever. The sales staff in the ski rental stores almost always knows their products very well.

Ski shops and rental stores at ski centres also have an unbeatable competitive advantage: the customer can always try out skis on the slopes before deciding whether or not to buy them.

Functional e-business

Widespread use of the Internet and information technology in general offers the ski rental business many previously unexplored opportunities.

The reservation of skis in advance on the Internet is the most common IT-based business model. For example, Intersport's Intersport Rent chain in Austria, Germany, France and Italy has a comprehensive and very easy-to-use service that enables customers to select and reserve skis on the Internet. The Sport 2000 and SnowRental chains in France give hefty discounts on skis reserved on the Internet.

For the consumer, using the Internet brings plenty of benefits. You can spend as long as you like choosing the right skis from your own computer at home or in the workplace. The reservation can be made well in advance of the planned holiday, and there's no need to carry heavy skis and other equipment with you on the trip. If you forget to book the skis before leaving home, at least in Britain you can make a last-minute reservation at the airport before boarding your flight.

Information technology is also exploited at the ski centres themselves. Once a renter's details are recorded in the rental store's information system, skis can be exchanged for others quickly in the middle of a day's skiing and without any extra charge. Skis can also be returned to any other store of the same chain, perhaps in the next valley. ■

Additional information: www.rentaski.com,
www.sport2000rent.com



Home

from home

A two-storey suburban family town house located a stone's throw from the Wimbledon tennis stadium serves as the support base for Wilson's team of tennis professionals during the championships. The rented house is well stocked with racquets, bags and other necessary equipment for the tour, but it is also the temporary home of an understanding friend who keeps the players' spirits high.

Text by Arja Vartia ■ Photos by Kari Kuukka

A couple of days before the Wimbledon Championships begin, Joakim Appelqvist is busily organising the piles of rackets and bags. He and Global Tour Director Michael Wallace are the people who make sure that the members of Team Wilson have enough of the right racquets and other equipment for the championships and the rest of their season. Joakim and Michael are always on hand 24 hours a day during all four Grand Slam events, Wimbledon, Australian, French and US Open.

Joakim is on the road for many days of the year, so he's used to setting up home anywhere. This year's Wimbledon Championships was no exception, no sooner had he himself crossed the threshold than two pallet-loads of tennis equipment arrived on the doorstep.

Before the championship begins Joakim Appelqvist waits at his temporary home for the players to drop by and pick up their racquets and other equipment. It's also an opportunity for a good chat. Wilson player Sandra Kleinova checks her new gear.



"It's a real luxury to have this much room," he says. "In Paris and at many other tournament venues all the gear has to be crammed into a couple of hotel rooms."

Joakim makes sure there are snacks and light refreshments in the house to offer the players when they drop in. It is important that between matches and practice sessions, the players have a little time to sit and chat in a relaxed atmosphere away from the eyes of competitors and the press. "Here, we are all members of the same team."

The many players and coaches on tour have become personal friends of Joakim – a fact that becomes abun-

dantly clear when he walks through the players' enclosure. Cheerful greetings and relaxed conversation testify to his obvious popularity. It's a wonder that Joakim keeps to his schedule because he never gets very far before someone stops him to chat. He has good friends among many players and coaches.

Racquet tuning

In the house Joakim arranges rows of racquets by name: Roger Federer, Justin Henin-Hardenne, Serena Williams, Venus Williams, etc.

Many things get sorted out during breaks in training. This time Joakim is chatting with Switzerland's Roger Federer. The old friends talk about other things than tennis too.

► continues



A happy reunion: Austria's Stefan Koubek relaxes in an still empty picnic area on the eve of the championships.

A couple of weeks before the tournament the players or their agents make the order request. The racquets are in most cases standard models off the production line, but with certain weight and balance according to the individual player's preferences. The work is done with great care by **Ron Rocchi** in Wilson's tech center in Chicago and the final

racquet specifications are accurate to the gram. Top players have about six racquets prepared for a tournament. The racket stringing is handled by the tournament's official stringer according to the player's preference. Joakim has hundreds of Wilson strings with him, so there's no need for the players to order them in advance.

All the team members are given brand new red and white Wilson racquet bags before big tournaments. You will never see a shabby-looking bag at the top level.

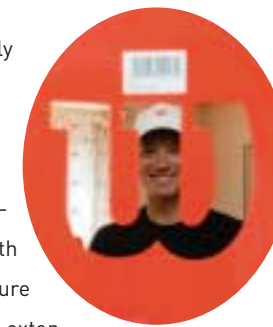
Negotiations between matches

The commercial side of things is taken care of in



The Wimbledon Championships will soon begin. The tournament lasts for two weeks, so relaxing moments in good company are important for the players.

The commercial side of things is taken care of in the same friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Tournaments offer a perfect opportunity to negotiate with agents for example about future events and contract extensions.



the same friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Tournaments offer a perfect opportunity to negotiate with agents about future events, contract extensions, and so on.

Joakim and Michael also keep their eyes open for potential new player signings, even though they are scouted more at a younger age at national level. European Junior Tour Manager, **Massimo Calvelli** and Wilson's local promotion people are responsible for player recruitment in each country and region. But Joakim and Michael takes care of the touring pro players from all over the world.

Wilson wants as many good players on its team as possible.

"The contracts and bonuses paid to players for using a particular brand of racquet are not particularly high compared, for example, with the contracts for clothing and shoes. Players look for the equipment, especially the racket, with which they can play their best tennis and win the most matches. With the best products in the market we focus on this and the quality of the service that we provide them," says Joakim.

"The players know this and appreciate what Team Wilson can do for them."

Product development

The players' contracts also include a certain number of appearances at events organised by the racquet manufacturer. Joakim says that the players are, depending on their schedules, generally very enthusiastic about participating in sales and marketing events organized by their partners.

The players also have an important role to play in product development. Their feedback and observations are very valuable in making game improvement products. For instance, the Pro Staff Tour 90 used by Roger Federer has actually been developed very largely according to his wishes. The sweet spot has been enlarged and the racquet made suitable for power tennis, i.e. Hyper carbon has been added to make it stiffer and more powerful.

"Some other players have wanted a racquet in which greater stiffness and power is combined with less weight. Wilson has managed to successfully develop such a racquet technology with Iso-Grid technology, used in the new H series"

"From the marketing standpoint it is important that racquets launched in the spring are on view here at Wimbledon. In late summer they will appear on the shelves of pro-shops and sports stores all around the world." ■

INTERIM REPORT 1-6/2003

For the period 1 January to 30 June 2003, Amer Group's net sales were EUR 535.7 million (January-June 2002: EUR 552.2 million). Operating profit amounted to EUR 24.8 million (2002: EUR 38.5 million). Profit before extraordinary items totalled EUR 20.7 million (2002: EUR 35.5 million) and earnings per share were EUR 0.61 (2002: EUR 1.10). Amer Group's net sales for 2003 as a whole are expected to be similar to last year (2002: EUR 1,101.9 million), whereas operating profit is expected to be around EUR 70-80 million (2002: EUR 103.0 million).

Continued weak demand for sports equipment, especially in the USA, negatively impacted on Amer Group's operations during the first half of 2003. In particular, the Group's golf equipment sales were clearly below expectations. Furthermore, the strong euro, especially against the US dollar, is also having a negative impact on the Group's growth. Foreign exchange rate movements reduced net sales by EUR 66 million but had no major impact on operating profit. The acquisition of Precor increased net sales by EUR 85.8 million.

Winter Sports gears up for the coming season

The seasonality of the Group's businesses was clearly in evidence in the second quarter, which is low season for Winter Sports and high season for Golf. Thus the Winter Sports Division is focusing on producing its products for the coming winter sports season, for which deliveries mainly take place in the latter part of the year.

Second-quarter net sales were EUR 251.8 million (2002: EUR 262.8 million). Sales of golf equipment in particular were slower than expected. Foreign exchange rate movements reduced net sales by EUR 34 million. Operating profit was EUR 9.5 million (2002: EUR 23.2 million). Profit before extraordinary items totalled EUR 7.6 million (2002: EUR 20.8 million).

Series H tennis racquets launched

In local currencies, the Racquet Sports Division's net sales were

down 6% and operating profit declined by 19%. The Company estimates that the overall tennis market continued to decline and the average selling price of a tennis racquet also continued to fall. Sales of Wilson tennis balls decreased by 4% and tennis racquets by 10%.

During the period under review, shipments of Wilson's new Triad racquets as well as its new Pro Staff racquets started. Shipments of the new Hammer racquet model, Series H, commenced in May. New footwear was also brought to market during the period.

The Team Sports Division continued to perform well during the first half of 2003. In local currencies, the Team Sports Division's net sales grew by 6%. Operating profit was similar to last year's H1 level. The fastest growing product categories in Team Sports were basketballs (13%), and baseball and softball bats (23%). The bat category sales growth comes from product line extension into the youth baseball market.

Golf Division facing challenges

In the Golf Division, net sales and operating profit were clearly below expectations. Net sales in local currencies declined by 17%.

Sales of Wilson golf clubs decreased by 16%. The golf ball market continued to be extremely competitive and Wilson golf ball sales were down by 25% as a result. Operating profit declined significantly due to falling sales as well as lower prices, especially for golf balls.

In the USA, although sales of golf clubs to the trade grew by 5%, sales of golf balls declined by 13.5% [source: National Golf Foun-

ation, July 2003]. Also the number of rounds played declined in the USA. In Europe the market remained flat whilst the Japanese market continued to be challenging.

In order to ensure its competitiveness and to increase efficiency, Wilson was re-organised during the second quarter. This is expected to lower Amer Group's overall cost base by approximately EUR 10 million in 2004 with most of the savings coming from the Golf Division.

Sales of treadmills continue to grow

In line with the winter sports' business cycle, the Winter Sports Division focused on producing next season's lines during the second quarter of the year. Due to its seasonality, Winter Sports' operating losses during the first half of 2003 were EUR 12.6 million. Net sales in local currencies declined by 18% as poor snow conditions in Austria and Germany resulted in lower re-orders.

The level of pre-orders suggests there will be a slight downturn in the market in 2003, reflecting the cautious mood of the trade. In addition, lower price point products have increased as a proportion of total sales. Most of Winter Sports' pre-orders for the coming season have now been received and in volume terms the order book is close to last year's level.

Fitness Equipment's net sales and operating profit in local currencies were similar to last year's H1 levels. Sales of treadmills and cycles grew.

Wristop sales up 6 per cent

Sales of Suunto's wristop computers grew by 6%. The global diving market declined and sales of Suunto's diving instruments fell by 17% as a result. Wristop computers and diving instruments accounted for 58% of Suunto's net sales. Overall, in local currencies, Suunto's net sales declined by 5%.

At the end of 2003, a new Suunto n3 sports wristop will be launched in North America. ■

Group Results, € mill. (unaudited)

	1-6/2003	1-6/2002	CHANGE, %	1-12/2002
NET SALES	535.7	552.2	-3	1,101.9
DEPRECIATION	19.2	16.7		34.4
OPERATING PROFIT	24.8	38.5	-36	103.0
NET FINANCING EXPENSES	-4.1	-3.0		-7.4
PROFIT BEFORE EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	20.7	35.5	-42	95.6
EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS	-	-		-
PROFIT BEFORE TAXES	20.7	35.5		95.6
TAXES	-6.2	-10.0		-26.5
MINORITY INTEREST	-0.2	0.0		-0.6
PROFIT	14.3	25.5		68.5
EARNINGS PER SHARE, EUR	0.61	1.10		2.95
ADJUSTED AVERAGE NUMBER				
OF SHARES IN ISSUE, MILLION	23.3	23.2		23.2
EQUITY PER SHARE, EUR	17.69	17.96		19.17
ROCE, % *)	15.2	16.1		18.3
ROE, %	6.6	11.7		15.5
AVERAGE RATES USED: EUR 1,00 = USD	1.10	0.90		0.94
AVERAGE PERSONNEL	4,115	3,813		3,827

*) 12-MONTH ROLLING AVERAGE

THE RELATIVE PROPORTION OF THE ESTIMATED TAX CHARGE FOR THE FULL FINANCIAL YEAR HAS BEEN CHARGED AGAINST THE RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD. IN FINANCIAL RATIOS SHAREHOLDER'S EQUITY AND NUMBER OF SHARES EXCLUDE OWN SHARES.

Operating Profit by Business Areas

	1-6/2003	1-6/2002	MUUTOS, %	1-12/2002
RACQUET SPORTS	10.7	15.8	-32	25.6
GOLF	2.3	12.8	-82	7.1
TEAM SPORTS	14.9	18.3	-19	24.0
WINTER SPORTS	-12.6	-8.3	-52	39.6
FITNESS EQUIPMENT	11.8	-	-	6.3
SPORTS INSTRUMENTS	4.0	4.7	-15	10.5
TOBACCO	4.7	5.0	-6	9.2
HEADQUARTERS	-3.5	-5.2		-9.2
GROUP GOODWILL	-7.5	-4.6		-10.1
TOTAL	24.8	38.5	-36	103.0



Peter Schmock has been a personal trainer for twenty years.

“My wife urged me to do this. I had surgery on my right knee and it never really healed. My left knee was also painful and walking was difficult,” says **Ernie Prien** (89) from the saddle of an exercise bike at LiftFitness Studio in Mountain View, California. Drugs didn’t help Prien, who is actually a retired pharmacist. Relief was found in exercise and the support of personal trainer **Joseph Camp**. The pair have now been meeting and working together once a week for the past three years.

A typical session begins with a warm-up on an exercise bike, after which Camp guides Prien through a series of muscle conditioning and stretching exercises, often on the reformer machine used by practitioners of the Pilates method. “Elbows away from the ears, shoulder blades back,” instructs Camp.

Prien leads a very active outdoor life for a man of his age. He fishes in Alaska and hunts in Arizona. Prien illustrates the improvement in his muscle condition by describing how he was recently able to haul a 25 kg halibut into his fishing boat. He says that such an effort would have left him completely exhausted just a couple of years ago. Joseph Camp is more than satisfied with the

progress that his client has made. “It’s not your chronological age that matters, it’s your physiological age,” he stresses.

Camp, whose background includes art studies and a chiropractor’s diploma, likes to compare the human body to clay – like clay, the body is a living, mouldable material. Camp’s faith in the possibilities of the human body is inspiring and infectious. “Even on a bad day, I feel much better after a training session with Joseph,” says **Richard Aceves** (44), who has been training under Camp’s guidance for over seven years.

“Right from the start the most important goal has been to take care of my body and to relieve stress – I’m not a body-builder,” says Aceves, an executive with a hi-tech company. But Aceves has achieved more than just a balanced and healthy state of mind: for four straight years he has cycled the 600 miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles for a charitable cause.

Towards smarter exercise

“Functionalism, creativity and holisticity are the predominant trends in the field,” says Peter Schmock, a personal trainer, fitness club owner and former Olympic athlete.

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Well-being guides

Why pay someone to supervise your physical fitness? In the United States fewer and fewer people are asking that question. For a growing number of Americans, paying for a personal trainer is a worthwhile investment in their health.

Text by Marita Seulamo ■ Photos by Jason Koski



Personal trainers nowadays favour full-body exercise. Besides aerobics and strength training, lessons also include stretching and relaxation.

Pilates instructor Carol Appel guides Pete Abrahams, whose interest in physical training was sparked during rehabilitation.

“Some movements which are not presented in the field’s literature are really inventive. For instance, therapy balls were hardly ever used in gyms ten years ago,” says Shmock. A trainer for some twenty years, Shmock’s clients have included the Seattle Mariners baseball team and the Pacific Northwest Ballet. Nowadays Shmock runs his own fitness club, ClubZum, in Seattle and gives private lessons.

Shmock is well known for his innovative, challenging but also enjoyable fitness programmes. Shmock says that he has been looking for different ways to develop muscles. He takes his clients out to do endurance and agility exercises. Inside the club itself, the more unorthodox pieces of equipment include climbing ropes and a sand box, which Shmock uses to develop his clients’ balance and leg strength.

“Most people start to laugh when, standing on one leg, they finally lose their balance,” says Shmock with a smile. “A trainer must be able to observe and understand the way in which a person moves. As children we all move naturally, but with age we lose this ability. Bodily injuries and mental burdens leave their mark.”

Shmock’s own philosophy is a model example of the holistic approach: “Staying in good shape is more than physiology. It’s a question of how well you take care of yourself both physically and mentally. How do you want to live in your body – what is your vision of your future life?”

Joseph Camp believes that personal training has been developing in a more intelligent direction. “The old adage was ‘no pain, no gain’; now our motto is rather ‘train, don’t strain’.”

“The emphasis used to be on muscle development and weight gain. Now we focus more on strengthening the abdomen. Movement starts from the core of the body.”

Trainers no longer concentrate on one aspect of good fitness. They seek to combine all the necessary areas of training, i.e. muscle conditioning, respiratory development and stretching. The particular goals or injuries of each client add a further dimension to the training programme. Nutrition is an essential part of taking care of yourself. A qualified personal trainer can give dietary advice or at least put you in touch with a professional who can. ClubZum provides its clients with the services of a physician specialised in nutrition. Joseph Camp’s smaller-scale LiftFitness Studio offers free apples after training – Camp believes in fruit, not energy bars.

Title is no guarantee of competence

It is difficult to estimate the number of personal trainers working in the United States because of the plethora of professional diplomas, not to mention the wide disparity in competence that they indicate. One of the most well-established organisations in the field is the

American Council on Exercise, ACE. It has trained over 45,000 personal trainers in the United States.

According to the most pessimistic estimate, only a handful of the hundreds of associations and enterprises offering the title of personal trainer are entirely reliable. As is the American way, some of these ‘diploma factories’ entice people through their doors with the promise of high earnings. It is even possible to get a personal trainer’s diploma from the Internet without any teaching whatsoever.

“The standard of trainer education is a burning issue,” says Pilates instructor **Carol Appel**, who is a member of the Board of Directors of the Pilates Method Alliance (PMA), a non-profit organisation striving to establish certification and continuing education standards for Pilates professionals. Appel and her two partners own the Body Kinetics gym in San Francisco and the Mill Valley Health Club in Northern California.

“There are dozens and dozens of diplomas, but very few national standards. Some diplomas can be gained in a single weekend,” says Appel. Her greatest concern is the client’s safety. Pilates equipment is especially designed for the method and it can cause serious injury to an unwary user.

The Pilates method was brought to New York in the 1920s by German-born Joseph Pilates. It has been one of the fastest grow-

According to a recent trendwatch report, personal trainers nowadays favour elliptical equipment, exercise bikes, equipment designed to strengthen the abdomen, and Pilates equipment.

ing branches of the fitness business in recent years. Pilates strengthens especially the abdominal muscles and improves the body’s flexibility.

“It takes a long time for a trainee instructor to master the Pilates method,” says former professional dancer Carol Appel, who was trained for five years by one of Joseph Pilates’s protégés. Nowadays Appel herself trains new Pilates professionals in addition to her other work.

Pilates satisfies many needs

A recent trendwatch report indicates that personal trainers nowadays favour elliptical equipment, exercise bikes, equipment designed to strengthen the abdomen, and Pilates equipment. According to IDEA, the world’s leading membership organization of

▶ continues



Sometimes a helping hand is required even in stretching exercises.

Effectiveness, safety, risk-taking

On the west coast of the United States a personal trainer charges about the same hourly rate as a masseuse, i.e. on average USD 60-70 an hour, although personal instruction from a top name costs as least USD 100 an hour.

Few clients complain about the price, and the high cost can even provide an added incentive. "I wouldn't have been able to do this alone," says Richard Aceves, who cycles hundreds of miles in his free time. "It would have been too easy to skip training and think, 'Now I'll have time to write one more report.' But as I pay for the lessons in advance, I have a real incentive to attend."

Busy Aceves is happy that he doesn't have to think in the gym. "Sometimes I'm so mentally exhausted that I don't want to have to make any decisions. I don't want to think whether I should train my leg or arm muscles. Joseph knows what my goals are, and he puts together a different combination of exercises every time."

health and fitness professionals, the most popular exercises include balance, flexibility and posture improvement, yoga and stretching.

Pilates is responding to many pre-vailing trends, which perhaps explains its rapidly growing popularity. "Ninety per cent of the inquiries we receive concern Pilates," says Camp.

Pete Abrahams's first came into contact with the Pilates method three and a half years ago following an accident in which he broke both of his arms. Abrahams (64) attributes his full recovery and present great shape to the guidance of Carol Appel.

"I was 10 kilos overweight and suffering from chronic back pain. Now I can honestly say that I am almost in as good shape as when I was a young paratrooper. It's quite amazing."

"Carol has over 20 years of experience; she fully understands how the body works," says Abrahams. "She knows how to prepare a safe programme, but she also motivates me to take risks - to rise to the next level." Abrahams's fitness training is not based solely on Pilates. His routine also includes aerobics 2-3 times a week and an equal measure of muscle conditioning work.

Nutrition is an essential part of taking care of yourself. A qualified personal trainer can give dietary advice or at least put you in touch with a professional who can.

Grace Davis, 35, vice-chairman of an international market research institute, also stresses the importance of commitment. "I have to reserve time in my diary for my health in the same way that I book appointments with my customers."

Davis has been training with Peter Shmock for six months. Having already shed almost 20 kilos, Davis says that she feels

stronger and has a more positive state of mind. She does not believe that she would have achieved the same degree of success training on her own. "Working together with a personal trainer is more effective. For example, before I was doing bicep movements incorrectly. I didn't know how to do squats right either; I didn't think that I would ever get it right." Carol Davis says that she derives great pleasure from helping people to concentrate on their well-being for one hour, twice a week. However, almost 90 year old Ernie Prien isn't continuing with his own personal trainer because he enjoys it.

"I can't say that I like this," chuckles Prien. "But I have to admit that it is good for me. Joseph is excellent. He gets me to do things I didn't believe were possible." ■

WAL-MART CHOOSES WILSON

In May the US supermarket chain Wal-Mart chose Wilson Team Sports as its Supplier of the First Quarter 2003. The choice was based on a survey of Wal-Mart's purchasers, who appreciated the quality of Wilson's products and the company's understanding of the market. Wal-Mart has almost 3,000 stores in the United States.

WILSON REORGANISED

Amer Group has reorganised Wilson's operations in the United States. At the beginning of June, Wilson's operations were divided into two business areas: Golf & Racquet Sports, and Team Sports. Wilson's central administration functions have been discontinued and decentralised.

In connection with the reorganisation the following appointments have been made:

Steve Millea, President, Golf & Racquet Sports, will be responsible for the Golf & Racquet Sports business globally. Mr Millea was previously Vice President of Wilson's international operations.

John Embree will be responsible in the US for Golf & Racquet Sports' sales. He has been appointed Sales Director, Golf & Racquet Sports.

Angus Moir takes over Golf's global businesses and has accordingly been appointed Global Business Director, Golf. Previously he was responsible for the Wilson's golf business in Europe.

Brian Dillman has been appointed Global Business Director, Racquet Sports.

Dave Martyn has been appointed Director, Operations, Golf & Racquet Sports.

John Belcik has been appointed Vice President, Finance, Golf & Racquet Sports.

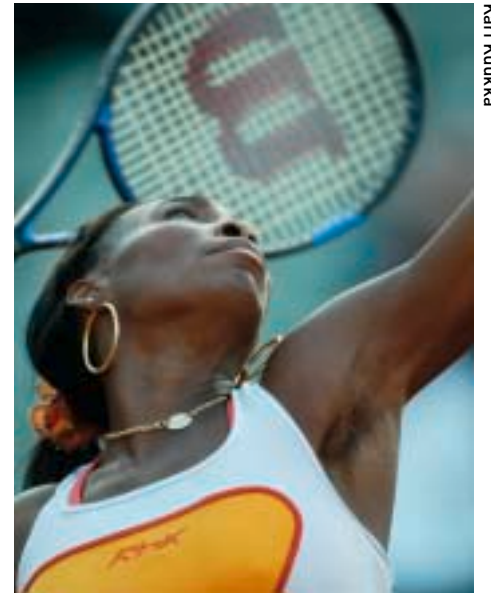
Team Sports will continue as a separately managed business unit under the leadership of Chris Considine, President, Team Sports. He will report to **Roger Talermo**.

WILSON NO. 1 AT WIMBLEDON

Wilson was the most successful racquet manufacturer at this year's Wimbledon Championships. No fewer than 47 per cent of the finalists played with Wilson racquets.

From the ranks of Team Wilson's finalists came the Men's Singles Champion Roger Federer (Pro Staff Tour 90), the Women's Singles Champion Serena Williams (Hammer 6), the Men's Doubles Champions Jonas Björkman and Todd Woodbridge (Pro Staff 6.1) and the Boys' Singles Champion Florin Mergea (Pro Staff Tour).

Wilson was also the most popular racquet brand at Wimbledon. Thirty-one per cent of all the players in the tournament used Wilson racquets. The second most popular brand was used by 19 per cent of the players.



Kari Kuikka

SCUBA SKIERS

Practically all of the employees at Atomic's Altenmarkt factory are skiers - now some of them are divers as well. In the spring 29 Altenmarkt employees took part in a diving course that culminated in a diving trip to Vrsar in Croatia. The course participants included Atomic's Managing Director Michael Schineis and alpine skiing star Beni Raich. The course leader was found in house: Atomic's Director of Legal and Personnel Affairs, Renuat Capek, happens to be a qualified diving instructor.



Atomic's trainee divers on their Adriatic diving trip.