

next



A MAGAZINE BY AMER SPORTS 2. 2005

D9

BELOW THE SURFACE

GOLF

CUSTOM FITTING

TENNIS

IN RUSSIA

PROMOTING WELLNESS

IN MARCH, OUR COMPANY was officially renamed Amer Sports. This name change consolidates our already chosen policy and emphasizes that Amer Sports is now a company fully focused on sports equipment.

We are taking an increasingly broader approach, speaking not only about sports, but also about wellness. In addition to physical exercise, rest and correct eating habits are also fundamental aspects of wellness. We also believe in the importance of sports and physical exercise for children and young people. Sports and physical exercise should be started young, so that their joys and benefits can be enjoyed all through life. As manufacturers of sports equipment, we are naturally interested in those activities that require sports and fitness equipment.

We have formulated our mission as follows: "Amer Sports' mission is to provide sports and fitness equipment that enables everyone from the enthusiastic beginner to the professional athlete to get the best results and most enjoyment from their sports."

We are dedicated to active lifestyles, sports and wellness. We believe that the right equipment is the key to making sports and physical exercise more fun, enjoyable, and effective. We provide athletes at every level with the tools they need to get the best results and most enjoyment from their sports.

At the core of our business is the passion for sports. In addition to this, our primary drive is setting and achieving targets, moving beyond our limits both in business and technology, thereby enabling people to achieve their highest goals in sports and increase well-being in life.

Tea Saari



The magazine is 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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RECORD YOUR GAME.

Suunto G3 is a personal stat-tracker for golfers that want to improve their game. Suunto g3 comes with detailed Suunto Golf Software which stores your game data and key statistics.



TOUR LEVEL.

Wilson's new nTour tennis racquets offer top class performance even for those players who have not previously dared to use competition racquets. Available in two headsizes, Oversize and MidPlus.

LIGHTWEIGHT AND DURABLE. Wilson Trance tennis shoes are exceptionally lightweight and flexible. However, the high quality materials used ensure good durability. Best suited to clay courts.





KEEP TRACK OF YOUR KILOMETERS. Suunto t6 is already the most versatile measuring instrument on the market for active exercisers. Use the Foot Pod sensor for running or the Bike Pod sensor for cycling to get even more out of it. Then Suunto t6 will also tell you the length and speed of your session. Foot Pod is attached to your training shoe, Bike Pod to the pedal. The connection to the wristop computer is wireless.



INSTANT EXTRA DISTANCE.

The Wilson Staff Dd5 driver has been designed with an emphasis on increasing shot distance. The head's Nano Ti structure combines the best features of titanium, carbon fiber, and nanotechnology. The head size is the maximum allowed: 460 cubic centimeters.

FORGIVING IRONS. The Wilson Staff line contains three different sets of irons. The Di5 clubs pictured are distinctly oversize clubs for golfers who are looking for length and accuracy in their shots. The face is thin and reinforced with carbon fiber. The clubs are very forgiving in those less than perfect strikes. Steel or graphite shafts.





Hit and run **superman**

Last year was difficult for Australian squash player **Anthony Ricketts**. But once again he's making his presence felt on the court after an enforced injury break.

■ Text by John Pagni ■ Photos by Steve Line

Being from Down Under, Ricketts possesses the typical 'Crocodile Dundee' personality traits. Off court he's an easy-going, straightforward bloke who likes to relax with family and friends by having a meal together.

When playing, his steely determination combined with a total will to win is immediately apparent. Just contrast the ready smile of the trophy holder with the stony expression of the player. Wilson's latest squash signing feels he is ready to reach the top. Watch out for take-off!

It was a good time to speak to Anthony as he had just returned to his London base after winning the biggest title of his career. At the end of February, he beat current world #1 and reigning world champion, France's **Thierry Lincou**, to take the coveted Tournament of Champions in New York.

In a gruelling 90-minute marathon, Anthony overcame his gritty opponent in 5 games 11-10 (2-0), 7-11, 11-9, 6-11, 11-7. En route, the hard-hitting right-hander conquered tough opposition as the ToC is a Super Series event – equivalent to a tennis major – that attracts the elite players.

An initial muscle-warmer against Dutch qualifier **Laurens Jan Anjema** (3-0) was followed by a squash "Who's who". In the next two rounds, England's world junior champion **James**

Wilstop and ex-world champ **Peter Nichol** put up stiff opposition and were defeated only after 5 tough games. Another former world champion, brilliant Egyptian **Amr Shabana** was the semi-final opponent, but now Anthony had his momentum and won in 4.

"It was a really tough great final to finish off the week. We both played well and were eager to win, so it was a battle," comments Anthony. "In the 5th, which I was lucky to win, endurance played a big part. As I led 2-1, Thierry had to work a lot in the 4th to stay in the match. So I went into the last set really confident I had the strength and the legs to get the better of him."

Wonder kid!

The ToC represents a pinnacle in the 26-year-old's professional career – no surprise to those who have followed the Sydney slugger. Anthony won every junior age-group title in Australia he entered. He started early as his mother managed a squash center.

At nine, he decided to concentrate on squash "As I seemed to be good at it". His collection of junior titles earned him a scholarship at 16 to the Australian Institute of Sport's squash unit in Brisbane. The unit was set up to nurture young talent. There he completed his last two years of schooling while undergoing special training.

After the AIS, he flew to London in 1997 at the tender age of 18 to start the long climb up the world professional rankings. The U.K. capital is an epicenter of squash providing facilities, competitions, management and money. In a taste of things to come he was runner-up in his first competition, the Swiss Open that year.

Hard route on the comeback trail

Unfortunately all the hard work and effort took its ►



Anthony Ricketts

Date: March 12, 1979

Place of birth: Sydney, Australia

Height: 185 cm

Weight: 82 kg

Residence: Reading, west of London

Best Achievements:

- World Tour Titles:
 - Super Series Tournament of Champions (USA) 2005,
 - Dayton Open (USA) 2003,
 - CNS International (Pakistan) 2001,
 - Malaysian Open (Malaysia) 2001,
 - YTL Open (Malaysia) 1999
- Australian Open Champion 2000
- World Team Championship 2003
- Commonwealth Games Doubles Silver Medalist (England) 2002
- Clubs: Cardiff (British Super League), Wolverhampton (English National League), Victoria Squash (Dutch League), and St Cloud (French League).



“I’m very competitive on the court. Australians make a lot of sacrifices to play pro squash - we only leave home to succeed!”

Anthony Ricketts on top of his game – lunging for the ball for a hard backhand.

The strain on the joint, in an already fiercely physical sport, was exacerbated by his favorite shot: the volley. “So when I went into the lunging position (for a low shot), it was catching,” recalls Anthony. A keyhole incision removed the trouble spot.

However, this required another six weeks of rehabilitation concluded by an important decision to be made: continue recuperation in the gym or go back into competition. Naturally, Anthony chose the latter.

“I felt confident on the knee and the best thing was to get back into tournament play, if only to keep my ranking,” explains Anthony. “Squash nowadays is so competitive, it’s hard to go up the list.”

So in August last year the first steps were taken on the road back. First-round exits were followed by quarter- and semi-final defeats, but he finished the year as runner-up in the Pakistan Open. Timing and fitness were on a relentless upward curve.

A positive past, present, and future

During his absence, a change had taken place to his advantage. “Now the scoring is different and this has altered how squash is played. It’s more intense and very aggressive, which suits my style of play. But I changed too: taking the ball shorter and looking to play winning strokes,” Anthony reveals.

His training regime is by necessity less arduous, with most endurance work being on a bike to reduce impact on the knee. But as it improves, Anthony intends to increase the sprint ratio. Nev-

ertheless, “I will probably spend the rest of my life looking after my knee as the rehab is an ongoing thing,” says Anthony.

His Australian roots and coaching are vital factors, too, not to mention an aggressive approach that has raised eyebrows and ire. “I’m very competitive on the court. Australians make a lot of sacrifices to play pro squash - we only leave home to succeed! I have the drive to get my hands on the #1 spot and I am aggressive, which makes you a harder player to beat.”

Thus, a few tricks in the black arts of sports psychology are part of a player’s armory. At 9-9 in the third game of the TOC semi against Shabana, Anthony so irritated the spectators by not handing the ball back to his opponent after a disputed call (as he saw it) that they booed loudly and Shabana walked off the court thinking he had made a mistake!

The team behind the player

Squash is an unusual racquet sport as it is confrontational, unlike tennis and badminton where opponents face each other separated by a net. Playing near each other, contact is unavoidable and mental strength is as much an asset as physical fitness.

And Anthony continuously thanks his backroom team and all of his coaches from his school-boy mentor **Jeff Roberts** in Sydney to his current UK coach **Mike Johnson**. In between at the AIS, he received (and still does) guidance from Aussie greats **Geoff Hunt, Rodney Martin, and Rodney Eyles** – all world champions in their day.

“We were in awe of what they had achieved. They influenced all aspects of my game, even teaching me how to impose self-confidence,” says Anthony and always insists their contribution be on record.

New horizons

Last January, the 25-year old signed a 3-year contract to use Wilson racquets, apparel, and footwear. He views this in characteristically positive style. “It’s a big moment in my career and a great honor to be behind their promotional push. You can immediately feel the nTour racquet is different and it certainly gives me an extra edge - and I am very happy with the Torque shoes, too,” enthuses Anthony.

Anthony has just reclaimed his highest-ever placing of #6 in the latest PSA rankings. If he continues his current rise next season, his ascension to the peak of men’s squash is only a question of when, not if, his early promise will be totally fulfilled. ■

toll. Anthony divides his career into two phases: pre- and post-operation. In 2004 he was absent from the Professional Squash Association tour for 8 months because of his right knee. The last three months of 2003 had been a period of increasing pain.

“When I lost to Amr Shabana 17-16 after 5 games in the World Open quarter-final in Pakistan in December, I knew the knee had gone. I went to Australia for surgery to remove a small piece of cartilage,” explains Anthony.

But the pain persisted and after three months of physiotherapy at the AIS in Canberra, a bit of swollen tissue was pinpointed as the cause.

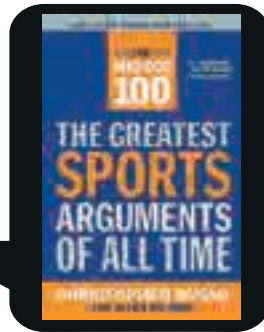


Books

Christopher Russo: THE MAD DOG 100: THE GREATEST SPORTS ARGUMENTS OF ALL TIME, BROADWAY 2005.

Who is the NBA's most dominant center ever? Would Ben Hogan beat Tiger Woods?

Who was the most important athlete of the twentieth century? The answers to these and many similar questions are debated by sports fans all over the world. Now, the popular American sports talk radio presenter **Christopher "Mad Dog" Russo** has collected the one hundred greatest sports arguments of all time in one book. Surprising answers will be found to many a question.



This year, all the male competitors will be dreaming of defeating world number one Roger Federer in either the French Open Championship, May 23 – June 5, or at Wimbledon, June 20 – July 3.

All Over Press



Online

- ▶ **Anthony Ricketts'** official homepage. News, career history, photo gallery, and also the opportunity to enquire about Anthony Ricketts' availability for interviews and promotions. www.anthonyricketts.com
- ▶ Competent and up-to-date squash news service. www.isquashmedia.com
- ▶ Handy guide to the colorful world of Florida's waters. www.fta-keys.com/diving/
- ▶ Here you'll find information about Wilson Staff clubs and balls; and also upcoming demo days, at which you can get a Vector Launch System analysis. www.wilsonstaff.com
- ▶ The complete university basketball databank. Video clips, match commentaries, player profiles, and much more. www.ncaasports.com



All Over Press

BEST QUOTE
 "This might be a springboard to something. I don't know where I'd spring to. Maybe just away." **Bode Miller**, March 13, after winning the Alpine Skiing World Cup in Lenzerheide, Switzerland. The last American to win the World Cup was **Phil Mahre** 22 years ago.



What's on?

MAY

MAY 9 – MAY 13
 SQUASH:
 SUPER SERIES FINALS
 LONDON, ENGLAND
 One of the most esteemed squash tournaments, in which only the best eight Super Series Tour players get to compete.

MAY 23 – JUNE 5
 TENNIS:
 FRENCH OPEN
 PARIS, FRANCE
 Who are the world's best clay court players? This will be decided on the legendary center court at the Roland Garros Tennis Club.

MAY 30 – JUNE 4
 GOLF: BRITISH
 AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP
 ROYAL BIRKDALE,
 ENGLAND
 England's open amateur championships are always followed exceptionally closely: here tomorrow's stars are born.

JUNE

JUNE 16 – JUNE 19
 GOLF:
 US OPEN
 PINEHURST RESORT,
 NORTH CAROLINA, USA
 The classic Pinehurst Resorts is one of the world's most beautiful golf courses and the US Open one of the golfing year's most awaited tournaments.

JUNE 20 – JULY 3
 TENNIS: 2005 WIMBLEDON
 CHAMPIONSHIPS
 WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND
 Summer's second classic tournament, which is played on super fast grass. Unlike most other major tennis tournaments, some of the tickets for Wimbledon are always sold at the venue on match days.

JUNE 27 – JULY 3
 BADMINTON:
 SINGAPORE OPEN,
 SINGAPORE
 One of the hottest badminton championships in the world, in which European players always find it hard to win.



Custom-fitted irons have exactly the right shaft, grip and lie angle.

Clubs made to measure

Wilson offers custom-fitted, factory-direct irons and drivers. The shafts are selected using the extremely accurate Vector Launch Monitor.

- Text by Markku Rimpiläinen
- Photos by Ville Juurikkala and Matti Hietanen

Master Golf pro **Tommi Stude** is casually hitting drives in a golf simulator. Which is turned off. No, there's nothing wrong with this scene. Stude's swings are being analyzed by a much more accurate system: Accusport's Vector Launch Monitor, which measures the launch speed, total spin, vertical angle, side spin and push or pull, all in the blink of an eye. From this data, the Launch Monitor calculates the distance and deviation off line – in other words, whether the ball would have stayed true and how far it would have flown. It is recommended that test sessions be conducted outside.

Stude uses the system to find a suitable shaft and loft for his driver. The system makes it easy to perform comparisons, as it accurately indicates how different shafts affect the player's swings. With some shafts, Stude's hit is straight as an arrow, while with some, the ball veers off to the

right. Stude achieves such high club head speeds that with the wrong shaft, even a tiny error in swing timing makes the ball slice.

Once the session's done, Stude's choice is clear. Next summer, he will use a Wilson Staff Pd5 driver with an 8.5-degree loft. For his shaft, he opted for Grafalloy Blue Pro Launch, which boasts extremely high torsional stability.

The outcome of the test surprised Stude. "The shaft I thought would be good for me turned out to be no good at all. Before the test, I thought that a slightly less torsionally stable shaft would suit me, because my limbs are quite lanky. However, the more torsionally stable shaft gave me straighter shots. When I'm selecting a driver shaft, my most important criterion is that it'll enable me to hit straight enough that I can find the balls afterwards," says Stude with a laugh.

Stude reckons that if it had not been for the test, he would have ordered the wrong kind of shaft for his driver.

"I would've let my impressions make my choice for me. Now, my decision is based on hard data – and also the feel I got for the shaft during the test."

Data with high-speed cameras

The Vector Launch Monitor gleans the launch data with four high-speed digital cameras and a flash that are activated for several milliseconds after the club head has struck the ball. A PC plugged into the launch monitor then analyzes



Thanks to the Vector Launch Monitor, Master Golf pro Tommi Stude found the right shaft for his driver.



Competitive player Sohvi Härkönen testing drivers. A small Vector Launch Monitor is positioned in front of the hitting area. The PC in the foreground displays the measurements.

Once the shaft length has been measured, the optimal lie angle is sought. This is done by sticking tape to the base of the head. After that, the player does a few swings with the taped club on a special plastic mat. If the tape wears off the tip or base of the head, the lie angle must be adjusted.



the photos, calculating the launch speed and angle of the ball.

When using the launch monitor, a ball with a distinct stripe is used. This stripe enables the software to calculate the total spin and side spin of the ball. And also its push or pull.

The Vector Launch Monitor has proven its accuracy. Anyone can try out the system for themselves by participating in an outdoor demonstration on the range.

One of the users of this system is Wilson Staff Player **Padraig Harrington**. Utilizing the monitor he has achieved higher swing consistency with his Wilson Staff Pd5 driver. In fact, this year at the Omega Hong Kong Open, he hit the longest drive at sea level ever recorded by the European Tour's official Reuters stats: 386 yards. He considers the Vector Launch Monitor so important that he has bought one for home use.

Try, analyze, choose

The Vector Launch Monitor yields the greatest

benefits in driver selection. It's important to each and every player – no matter what their handicap – that they can hit as far and straight as possible.

With the Vector Launch Monitor, every player can find the shaft that maximizes his or her shot distance. In addition, it's easy to find out the effect of the clubface angle – or loft – on shot distance. The rule of thumb is that the slower the club head speed, the greater the loft required.

That said, many of today's top players have opted for higher loft. Modern drivers and balls are designed to enable the ball to reach the peak of its trajectory quickly and maximize air distance. Long rolls are less desirable, because a bouncing ball could end up bouncing off the fairway. As Pádraig Harrington put it: "As long as the ball is in the air, it's under control."

Wilson uses the Vector Launch Monitor at product demonstrations. To begin with, an expert asks the customer questions to find out his basic skill level. After that, they start looking for the most suitable head and shaft combination. If the tester is experienced, the best solution can often be found in 15 minutes. This process can be summarized in three words: try, analyze, choose.

The players who can get the most out of the launch monitor are those who have achieved a consistent swing. The swings of novices are so inconsistent that it might not even be worth it to start comparing alternative shafts.

The key physical variables in a driver shaft are its length, flex, torsional stability, and, in the case of advanced players, kick point. In addition, it has been noted that one's feel for the club is also a factor. If a club feels good in one's hand, it also performs well.

The right shafts for irons

Wilson also offers custom-fitted, unique Performance Fit irons. The shaft length, material and flex are tailored to the player. In addition, the clubs are equipped with fitted grips and lie angles selected to suit the player's swing.

Performance Fit measurements are made by authorized and trained Wilson Staff dealers and pro shops. The process begins with an evaluation of the player's physical attributes. The most suitable shaft is determined by the speed of the swing and ball flight and the player's objectives.

Players can try out many alternatives, as the Performance Fit series of test clubs features 34 different six-irons. Numerous graphite and steel shafts in different flexes are available for testing.

In practice, the six-iron is the best choice for evaluating club performance. With shorter irons, shaft differences are not very distinct. And with longer irons, many players find it difficult to keep

their swing so stable that the shaft differences can become truly apparent.

In borderline cases, it helps to test the clubs outdoors. This best highlights the real differences between shot parameters.

Clubs delivered in 2-3 weeks

A player of non-average height might consider lengthening or shortening the dimensions of the shaft. Most 170–185 centimeter tall people play best with normal-length shafts. However, if one's arms, legs or back, for example, are shorter or longer than average, a different sized shaft may be required. Naturally enough, one's swing style has a bearing on the matter, too.

Once the shaft length has been measured, the optimal lie angle is sought. This is done by sticking tape to the base of the head. After that, the player does a few swings with the taped club on a special plastic mat. If the tape wears off the tip or base of the head, the lie angle must be adjusted.

Finally, the proper grip thickness is measured. Grip thickness can be adjusted practically steplessly. Once the measurements have been made, the club set is ordered from The Wilson factory in Irvine, Scotland. The set is delivered in 2-3 weeks. ■

More information on demo events on www.wilsonstaff.com

The Vector Launch Monitor measures a ball's launch speed, direction, and spin using four super fast cameras.



HE SCORES!



Year after year
the final games
of college basketball
make the whole
nation crazy.

■ Text by Mikko Simolin ■ Photos by NCAA archive

Every year, at 11:59 a.m. on the third Thursday of March, productivity in offices around the United States comes to a screeching halt. Meetings are re-scheduled, calls and emails go unanswered, and a surprising number of “sick” days are reported. The cause is a uniquely American malady: “March Madness.” For the last two weeks of March, there is only one thing on most American sports fans’ minds: college basketball.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men’s and Women’s Basketball Tournaments run over the course of three weeks from the middle of March through the first Monday of April. After the first weekend of games, only 16 of the 65 remain, and the following Sunday the group is whittled down to the top four teams in the land earning the coveted prize: a trip to the “Final Four” and a shot at the national championship.

All American sports event

March Madness has grown over the past half-decade into what is in many circles considered the best of all American sports events. While the Super Bowl in American football has the greatest number of viewers, and the World Series of baseball is a fall tradition, the NCAA men’s basketball tournament is truly a nation-wide passion. School marching bands rock the stands, cheerleaders dance and lead the crowd in supporting their alma mater, and television sets across the nation are tuned to the games from the opening tip to the final buzzer.

Another aspect of March Madness that fuels many viewers’ passions is trying to predict the winning teams. Newspapers print

the full tournament brackets so people can take a shot at determining each game’s outcome, online competitions have millions of participants, and millions of people organize their own “pools” with friends and family to see who is the most knowledgeable (or lucky) of them all.

Cinderella stories

The 2004–05 college basketball season was dominated by a few prominent teams and a few big surprises. When the first tournament game tipped off this March, everyone was waiting to see what the first big surprise would be. Schools ranging from large state universities to small private institutions compete for one trophy in head-to-head battle, with each round featuring the opportunity for a David to knock off a mighty Goliath.

In 1982, there was a “Cinderella Story” featuring the North Carolina Tar Heels and the Georgetown Hoyas. Georgetown had the most intimidating player in freshman **Patrick Ewing**, while the North Carolina Tar Heels played forward **James Worthy**, center **Sam Perkins** and a freshman guard named **Michael Jordan**. Jordan sunk the game winning jump shot, from 16 feet, to give North Carolina a 63–62 win over Georgetown in the 1982 NCAA National Championship and granted Coach Dean Smith his first national title.

Future stars

In the Elite Eight, three of four games went into overtime, with Michigan State winning a classic double-overtime game against perennial powerhouse Kentucky. In the Final Four, Illinois defeated



upstart Louisville, while North Carolina ran away from Michigan State. TV ratings for the tournament were up 10%, with great games going down to the wire.

The championship game pitted the top two teams in the national rankings against one another for the first time since 1975. North Carolina opened strong with great inside play from **Sean May**, but Illinois was not the top-ranked team for nothing. Despite being down by 15 points in the second half, the "Fighting Illini" rallied to tie the game with two minutes left. But Illinois' strength, outside shooting, vanished at the wrong time, and North Carolina captured its first title in 12 years with a 75-70 victory.

The win was also the first title for head coach **Roy Williams**, who had been to two previous championship games as head coach of Kansas. Sean May, surpassing his father's achievements, was named tournament MVP.

Wilson – Official Ball of the NCAA Championship

Breaking 60-plus years of NCAA tradition and earning the respect of players and coaches alike, the Wilson Official NCAA Game Ball is the governing body's first non-leather basketball. Made of moisture-absorbing composite leather, the Wilson NCAA Game Ball picks up where traditional basketballs fall short, delivering improved grip as players sweat. Once players use the Wilson basketball, they find every other game ball feels inferior.

As Wilson enters its third tournament, the NCAA continues to receive outstanding feedback regarding the feel and performance of the Wilson game ball. ■

A slice of history: Young Michael Jordan sinks the jump shot that earns North Carolina the 1982 championship victory by a single point.



Meteoric rise of

tennis in Russia

Russian tennis players rose to the top of the world by giving it their all. The Russians are still firm believers in training hard.

- Text by Riitta Närhi
- Photos by Wilson

The Russian Tennis Federation and Wilson start up strategic cooperation

At the end of February, Wilson and the Russian Tennis Federation made an extensive cooperation agreement. One of the aims is to keep growing tennis in Russia.

Tennis is white-hot in Russia – the sport has never before seen such a massive surge of popularity in any other country.

“Right now, there is no other tennis market in the world with the same growth potential and we would like to make this party even more exciting,” said **Werner Schneider**, General Manager of Amer Sports Russia, when the agreement was announced.

Wilson supports the Russian Tennis Federation through tournament sponsorships and a substantial product donation intended for junior development projects throughout the nation.

Last year, young female players from Russia became the talk of the tennis world. Russian players won three of the four women’s doubles in the Grand Slam Tournament. Players from other countries were in the minority at the WTA Championships in November – five of the eight players were Russian. And at year’s end, Russia came on top in the Fed Cup, the international women’s world team competition.

The Belgian tennis star **Justine Henin-Hardenne** has jokingly complained that, these days, the only language you hear in the women’s locker rooms is Russian. An American reporter wrote that women’s tournaments are now competitions between “members of the same team”, like long-distance running is for Kenyan men.

That’s not to say that the success of Russian women has come as a total surprise. After all, in recent years, they’d already scored impressive victories in international junior tennis. The real surprise is the staggering magnitude of their achievement: Russia has 70 players on the women’s WTA ranking list.

What’s behind the meteoric rise of Russian tennis? One of the factors is that sports are important in Russian society – this has its roots in the Soviet era. Another is that the country’s male and female athletes view each other as equals. On the other hand, tennis did not enjoy support from the State. Only the sport’s return to the Olympics in Seoul in 1988 improved its standing in Russia. After that, society granted more support to the sport, both in terms of money and junior tennis development programs. This ensured growth in the ranks of the sport’s devotees.

It remains a mystery just how heavy-hitting Soviet tennis players actually were – the Soviet Union rarely let its top athletes take part in com-

petitions abroad. The rest of the world only got to see a handful of Soviet players. For example, some 30 years ago, **Olga Morozova** played in the French Open twice and once in the Wimbledon Finals.

Conditions for playing tennis in Russia weren’t optimal, either. Equipment and accessories were in short supply. And the number of tennis courts in the whole wide country was only around a couple of hundred.

Yeltsin – tennis advocate

Sometimes a seemingly insignificant event can kick off sweeping changes. So it was at the beginning of the Nineties, when a photo was taken of President **Boris Yeltsin** playing tennis. The press printed that photo the world over. Almost overnight, tennis became an accepted sport in Russia. Television coverage of the game increased. Newspapers devoted more column space to the sport.

The business world saw that investments in both tennis infrastructure and competitions could be highly lucrative. The people heard how much money there is at stake in professional tennis. Tennis fever swept the country.

There are now over two and a half thousand tennis courts in Russia, and not just in the large metropolises, but in small burgs as well. Tennis is played at both exclusive and ordinary clubs. Registered players under the age of 18 already number about 20,000. Children’s tennis schools are so popular that they’re even forced to turn kids away.

The Russians still believe in training hard. In interviews, local coaches have stated that a player’s future career hinges on how well he or she trained before the age of 12. ►



In addition to singles, Elena Likhovtseva has been successful in doubles, with over 20 tournament wins to her credit.



Alina Jidkova's best ranking this year has been 51.

Last year, about 2,000 competitions were held in 80 Russian cities – as compared to slightly over 100 in the Soviet Era. And these days, anyone who wishes to compete abroad is free to do so, as long as he or she can afford to. In addition, many of the best Russian female players left their homeland at a young age in search of better conditions and coaching abroad.

Likhovtseva was most impressive newcomer

One of the first Russian players to rise to the top was **Elena Likhovtseva**, who was awarded the WTA's Most Impressive Newcomer Award in 1994. She has played in the Olympics three times. In 2004, she had a doubles ranking of three in the world.

Many of the Russian players who've risen to the top are – whether coincidentally or not – the children of top athletes. For example **Elena Bovina's** father won Olympic silver in water polo in 1968 and **Nadia Petrova's** mother took home Olympic bronze in the 4x400 meter relay in 1976.

The secret of the Russian women's success is their dedication to working hard and their love of competing – and winning. Living the tennis life is worth it because success (=money) means independence and a comfortable future.

International management agencies have been quick to take gifted Russian girls under their wing, helping them to forge careers as professionals from an early age. Numerous Russian coaches have affirmed that many of the juniors who are currently training in the tennis schools and clubs of their country are more talented than the professionals currently dominating the international arena. ■

Amer Sports sets itself up in Russia

Amer Sports' new Russian company went into business in Moscow at the beginning of January. Werner Schneider started out as the General Manager of the company. He has long experience in the winter sports and racquet sports businesses, and has launched business operations in the sports equipment trade in Russia.

During the spring, ten employees were hired for the company. All of them have prior experience of working in the sports equipment trade in Russia.

At the beginning of May, Amer Sports Russia moved from its temporary location to new business premises in the Mega 1 Shopping Center. Mega 1 is Russia's largest mall, housing outlets such as an Ikea superstore and many of Moscow's leading sports equipment shops.

"We're highly confident that Mega 1 is the right setting for us, locating us in a modern European retail environment," says Werner Schneider.



Lehtikuva

Wilson Staff balls fly farther

- Text by Arja Vartia
- Photos by Wilson

Wilson's new Wilson Staff family of golf balls allows different types of players to find just the right ball for them, whether they are shooting for the fairway, green, or flag. Flight and spin characteristics have been fundamentally improved compared to earlier models. New materials and material combinations have been applied more precisely than ever. The new balls have been through rigorous wind tunnel tests.

The nanotechnology used throughout the entire Wilson golf product line is to be found at the core of the balls – nano particles reinforce the rubber core. Because of this, the core is remarkably soft and reacts precisely, and the balls travel long distances.

PhD (Pan Head Design) Advanced Golf Ball Aerodynamics is a new, totally unique dimple design from Wilson that will help players gain additional distance with their shots. The PhD dimple pattern features just 312 dimples, each larger and almost 50% shallower than most standard dimples. This unique pattern produces higher lift and tighter trajectories. It also keeps the ball flight stable at lower speeds.

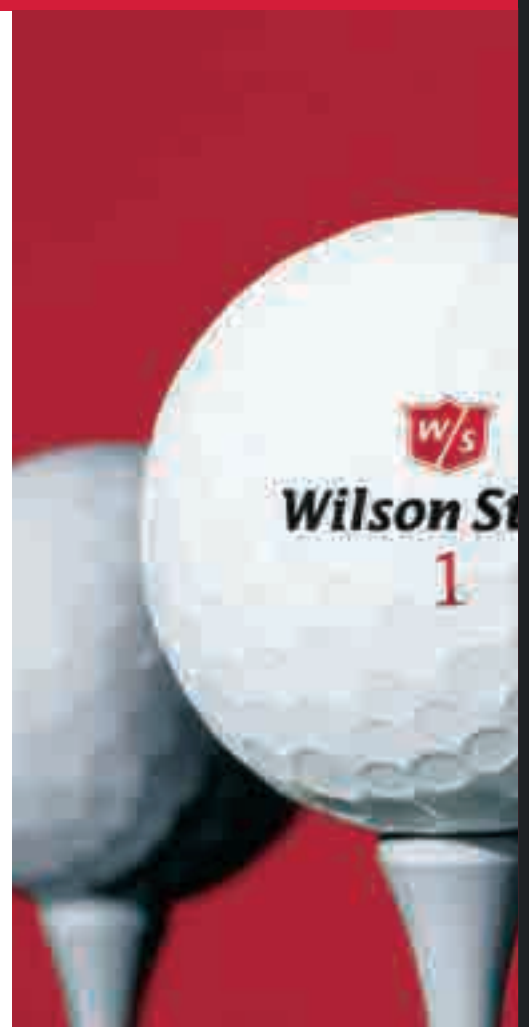
The product names of the balls already tell you a lot about the ball's structure and number of layers. Intended for competitive golfers, the TX4 Tour is made from four separate layers. In addition to the cover and core, it features a Performance layer, which increases the ball's launch speed – especially in driver shots. In iron shots, it increases the spin. The urethane cover increases both the TX4's spin characteristics and the ball's softness, thereby adding extra control, particularly in approach shots. The ball is designed for professional players: it goes long distances. Wilson wants to market the TX4 with the tag line "straight to the flag".

The PX3 Performance model is made from three layers, which are the same as the TX4's except for the urethane cover. The ball is especially suited to players who favor spin on iron shots. The feel on approach shots and when putting is, thanks to the soft cover, very good.

The two-layered DX2 Distance suits those who want long straight shots. It has an aerodynamic surface and a nano particle-reinforced core. Golfers who hunger for particularly long tee-shots down the center of the fairway will definitely appreciate this ball's flight characteristics.

The ladies' model, the two-layered LX2, brings a glow to the lady golfer's round. The glittering pearl finished surface is soft and the feel in shots pleasant. The aerodynamic surface and nano-core also send this model long distances.

Top players' first experiences of the new product line have been positive. The softness of the balls is both heard and felt in shots, say the testers. The competition TX4 Tour ball has also been found to be very durable. The balls are already available for purchase around the world. ■



Top players' first impressions of the new line have been positive. Redesigned dimples are one of the new features of the Wilson Staff balls.



Two-layered structure of the DX2 and LX2 balls.



In addition to the cover and core, the PX3 ball features a Performance layer, which increases the ball's launch speed.



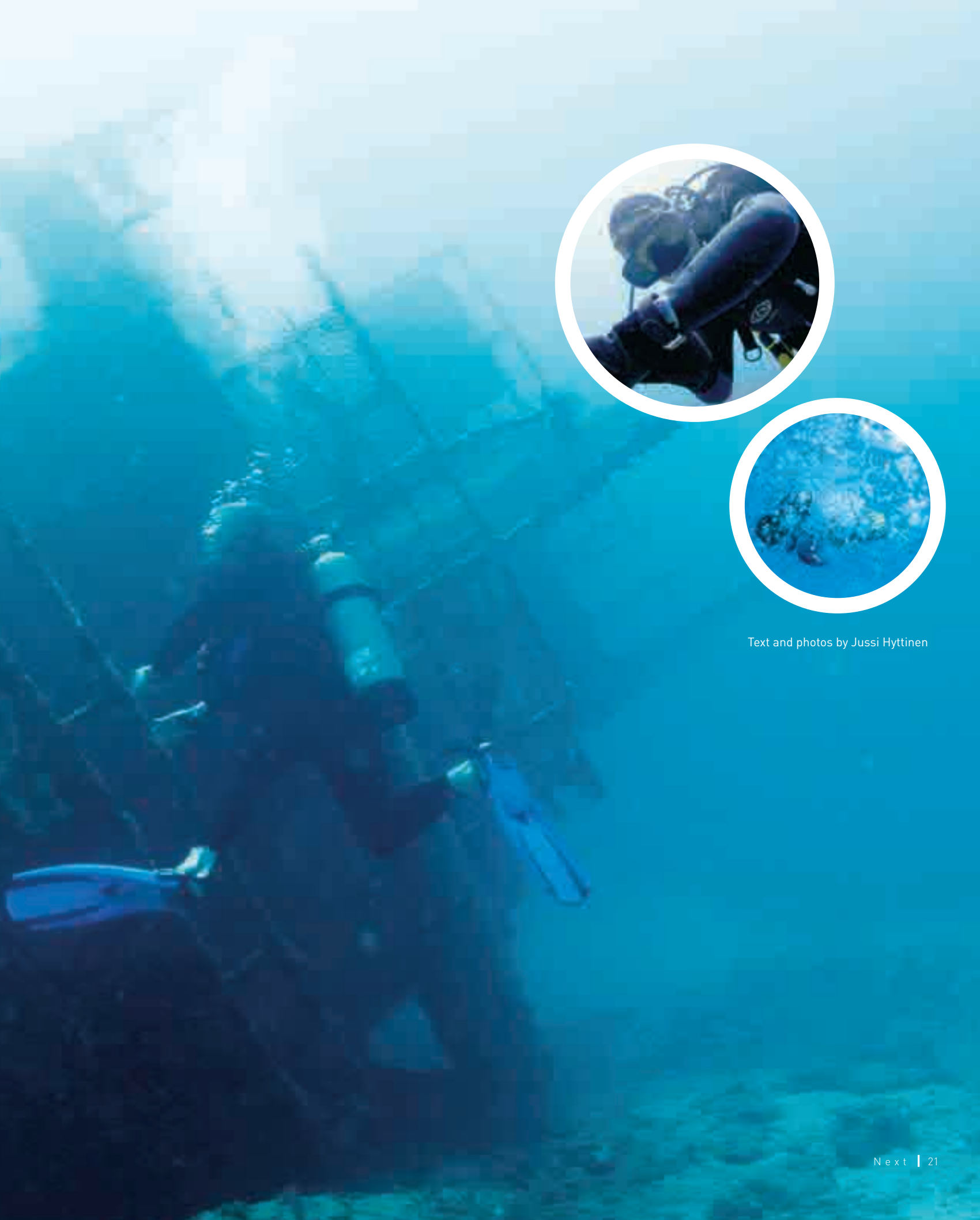
The TX4 ball features not only a Performance layer, but also a urethane cover that improves its spin characteristics.



Suunto D9

How does the dive computer Suunto D9 perform in real conditions? We found out in the turbulent currents of Florida's waters.

in a real life test



Text and photos by Jussi Hyttinen

The last time I dived was a week earlier, in poor visibility beneath the ice. On that dive, I was equipped with the works: two deco gases and an argon-inflated drysuit. This time I was kitted out in a five-millimeter wetsuit on the rolling deck of a charterboat a couple of miles east of Riviera Beach. But the atmosphere was no more relaxed, as I had not dived with a single tank and scuba vest for a long time. The new Ikelite camera system, which was now going into the water for the first time, brought me yet more worries.

The point of my trip was not just to dive, but also to test the new Suunto D9 dive computer. Whilst still in Finland, I had already been in contact with the local diving center, Force-E, to arrange a diving photo shoot. Suunto was known to Force-E and the Suunto D9 was hot stuff. The divers who were serving as models had not actually seen the D9 yet, and were evidently interested in the device when we were putting the settings in order for the dives. The compass seemed particularly to the local divers' liking.

Adjusting the basic settings was easy, and we got the settings for gases in place quickly. For this photo shoot dive, everyone had with them only one bottle of nitrogen and oxygen mix – that is, nitrox – and no deco gases (used to shorten decompression times) at all; so this time not all of the features of the D9 could be exploited.

Towards the wreck

We were diving to the wreck of a small cargo vessel that had been used for drug smuggling. The boat had been sunk on purpose, because the local drug baron had grown bored of redeeming it from the authorities time and again. I had planned a peaceful entry into the water with my new camera, but the dive leader told us that

it was a drift dive and everyone had to get into the water at the same time. I was, of course, still half-dressed and setting up my camera, whereas the others were standing at the stern edge, ready to go.

The water boiled when twelve divers plopped into the sea at once. I glanced at the stern of the boat to recheck its name, so that I could make it back to the right boat. "The Narcosis" – nice. I began my descent toward the wreck alone, finding that I had already lost the pair who were to be my models. To my relief, I established that at least the case was watertight and the camera was functioning. At the same time, a great, dark shape flitted beneath me: the wreck! The current was quite strong, and I saw one pair striving to reach the wreck.

I descended right behind the wreck and floated in the back eddy. Because my models were not in sight, I photographed other divers and the wreck. The wreck itself had been badly hammered by hurricanes and had broken into three pieces during the previous storm. In spite of this, sea creatures thrived around the wreck and in its nooks and crannies. There was a large shoal of barracuda, and a couple of lemon sharks dropped by. I was eventually reunited with my models, and snapped some shots as we zigzagged our way through the pieces of the wreck.

When a ship becomes a reef

I had read on the Internet about a sunken warship to the east of Key Largo that ought to be impressive. The ship was the USS Spiegel Grove, the world's largest artificial reef created from a sunken ship. This had to be seen. To avoid standing out from the locals, I rented a tank-sized off-road vehicle and set off toward the Florida Keys.

The crystal clear waters of the famous Florida Keys reefs.



I stayed in Key Largo, at the Kelly's on the Bay motel. The Aqua-Nut Divers diving center also operated out of there. They had a handsome glass display cabinet full of Suunto products.

Unfortunately, the center did not offer any trips to the Spiegel Grove, but the staff did everything possible to get me there. They managed to organize a trip leaving in two days' time. The following day, I would dive to the wreck of another ship, the USS Duane. As dawn broke, I drove my GMC at full speed into the Horizon Divers' yard.

After the paperwork formalities had been completed, I hauled my gear into the support boat and prepared to dive. I reset the oxygen percentage and oxygen maximum partial pressure for my breathing gas on my dive computers. This time, I would be diving without any actual models, so I got to wear the Suunto D9 on my own wrist again. Next to the new D9, I also had my own favorite device, the Vytex, whose push-buttons are more suited to cold waters and drysuit gloves. Those more used to warmer waters seemed to favor wristwatch-sized dive computers. Many had Stingers and Mosquitos, and the D9 attracted a lot of interest.

The sea became rougher the farther away we got from the shore. I became increasingly concerned over the Ikelite in my equipment bag making it in once piece. We moored to a buoy over the wreck. A thick rope descended from the buoy to the wreck's bow. I agreed to go as the third wheel with one pair, and we sank down in a strong current. At a depth of forty meters, the wreck, laying upright, could soon be seen as the rope guided us to front side of the anchor windlass. We let ourselves go with the current and drifted quickly along the 130-meter side toward the ship's stern. The wreck had been sunk in 1987 and was quite full of life. I missed half of it, as I was trying to get my camera to function. Finally, we popped onto the poop deck and my camera began to work.

One of the pair I was with hurtled toward me, indicating that he was worried about his friend's gases. Time, then, to return against

the strong current. I stayed very close to the deck and the back eddy created by the railings in order to minimize resistance from the current, allowing me a half-free ride back to the fore deck. Above me, a pair of strongly kicking divers blew over in the strong current. My friends set off at high speed along the rope to the surface. I followed at a more leisurely pace, and paused to make the deep stop suggested by the D9 before rising to the surface, my tank still half-full.

Important deep stops

The deep stop functionality is without doubt the best new feature on the D9 when compared to the Vytex. Several parties have studied the effects of deep stops, and their positive effect on reducing the risk of the bends is unquestioned. However, there are still varying opinions on the amount, depth, and duration of stops. For example, there is a large difference in the recommendations made by **Richard Pyle**, the developer of deep stops, and the WKPP diving organization.

Another tremendous new feature of the Suunto D9 is realtime recording of gas consumption. The Dive Manager's dive profile displays gas usage at every point during the dive. Gas consumption is a good indicator of how peacefully the dive has proceeded. If inordinate gas consumption is evident during descent, but little on ascent, it can indicate too much flailing around when entering the water. Similarly, high consumption at maximum



Diving in the current.

Three men and a wreck. The rope guides divers to the wreck. Hand signals are used to communicate what should be done next.





One feature well-known from the Vytec and also offered by the D9 is the gas pressure transmitter. It is particularly useful when traveling. The consoles were calibrated in US units; screwing the transmitter into the high pressure port allowed more familiar readings to be followed on the D9's screen.

depth on a deep dive can indicate tension and stress, and therefore that the dive was too demanding for the diver's abilities. And if consumption gets high on a long swim, it's time to get jogging in the evenings.

High gas consumption increases the absorption of nitrogen and other inert gases into the tissues, consequently increasing the risk of getting the bends. Used correctly, the D9 therefore significantly reduces a diver's risk of getting the bends.

One feature well-known from the Vytec and also offered by the D9 is the gas pressure transmitter. It is particularly useful when traveling. On occasion, I was forced to leave my DIN-connection Suunto Tenos in my bag and rent a regulator from the locals. The consoles were calibrated in US units; screwing the transmitter into the high pressure port allowed more familiar readings to be followed on the D9's screen. I didn't really need the D9's compass in my dives, because all our targets were easily visible in the clear waters. However, I calibrated the compass before diving anyway, to show the correct procedure to my models.

Strong currents

The most important dive of the trip was still ahead. I had come to Florida for the Spiegel Grove. Our small, swift support boat wound away from the protection of the shore through the labyrinth of mangroves and out into the open sea, powered by two 250 horsepower outboard motors. As we drew away from the shore, the sea became rougher, as usual, and all seven divers kept a tight hold in order to stay aboard. There were several buoys on the wreck, and on the first dive we went down from the bow. I was the fourth wheel with a trio that consisted of an instructor and two diving course students. I was suitably amazed when they disappeared under the surface while I was still standing on deck.

According to the skipper, the current was strong, and you had to enter the water with the rope under your arm. I rolled into the water back first and the current hit with full force. I really had to keep hold in order to stay in place as the skipper handed me my camera over the boat's side. I set out after my friends. The current was stronger than any I had experienced. My mask didn't want to stay on my face and the purge button on both regulators became fully depressed and bubbles gushed to the surface. After a small adjustment, I got the situation under control and set off down toward the wreck with feelings of uncertainty. The descent was hard, because although I had put extra lead in my Suunto Equilite vest pockets, the strong current prevented a peaceful sink. I was forced to pull myself down with one hand while keeping a tight hold on my camera with the other.



Eventually, I reached the massive bow of the Spiegel Grove, which was lying on its starboard side and leaning at an angle of 45 degrees at a depth of 40 meters. I rested in the back eddy for a moment before setting off to find my friends, proceeding along the colossal fore deck toward the bridge. Things began to calm down and I found my friends doing some exercises in the vicinity of the bridge.

We took advantage of the protection of the bow for a moment before starting our ascent. The current hit again with full force, and we couldn't let go of the rope. My other hand was tightly squeezed around the handle of my camera, so I had to slide my remaining hand up and along the rope. To my misfortune, there were sharp barnacles encrusted on the rope, and red trails gushed from between my fingers. The sea looked surreal as it surged past us with all its jellyfish as we hung horizontally from the taut rope. So beautiful, and so powerful.

On deck, we fixed new tanks onto our vests, and drank water and juice to kill our surface time. Dehydration would leave a diver susceptible to the bends and sea sickness. We moved to the other buoy at the wreck's stern.

On the second dive, I was much more mentally prepared for the strong current when I descended second with the others following. After resting for a moment in the back eddy, we shot one at a time over the port side toward the ship's bottom and keel. The ship's port axle and enormous propeller were above the keel. We glided downstream with the current to the ship's stern and well deck.

Time stood still, and it became quiet and gloomy. I took snaps one after the other as we progressed towards the center of the ship under the watchful eyes of shoals of fish. Our journey through the silent gloom gradually neared its end as we approached the wall of the well deck. Above us, a United States flag attached to a lifeboat davit fluttered in the turbulent current. Our bubble trails rose straight for a moment, after which the current swept them almost horizontally away with it towards the surface and the sun. ■

The author is a freelance photographer and journalist who has been diving actively since 1990. Hyttinen contributes regularly to diving magazines.

www.itsadive.com
www.spiegelgrove.com
www.horizondivers.com
www.aqua-nuts.com
www.force-e.com

First quarter in the sports equipment market was in line with expectations

In the January-March 2005 period, Amer Sports' net sales rose by 2% to EUR 277.8 million (January-March 2004: EUR 271.6 million). In local currencies, net sales grew by 5%.

With the exception of the Winter Sports Division and Golf Division, sales of all business areas grew in local currency terms.

In 2005, Amer Sports' comparable net sales in local currencies are expected to grow by 3-5% compared with last year. The company expects that the growth in demand for sports equipment will plateau in the United States, while demand is anticipated to keep recovering slowly in Europe and Japan. Earnings per share for 2005 are forecast to be EUR 0.90-1.05 (2004, continuing operations: EUR 0.96).

Racquet Sports Division's sales were in line with objectives

The Racquet Sports Division continued to perform well. In local currencies, the Racquet Sports Division's net sales grew by 6% compared to the corresponding period of last year. Sales grew by 6% in the Americas and by 22% in Asia Pacific. In EMEA, sales declined by 2%. EBIT grew by 25% and was EUR 9.0 million. Better gross margins contributed to this good performance.

In the review period, the US tennis markets remained at the previous year's level. Wilson remained strongly positioned as the global market leader in tennis rackets. During the period under review, sales of Wilson's tennis rackets grew by 10% as sales of premium rackets increased by 6%. The new nCode rackets that feature nanotechnology continue to be popular the world over. Sales of tennis balls increased by 5%. Sales of footwear declined by 8%. In addition to tennis, the Racquet Sports Division will continue to invest in and focus on badminton equipment.

Golf equipment season is now getting under swing

In the Golf Division, net sales in local currencies in the January-March period remained on a par with last year. Sales declined by 6% in the Americas and by 2% in EMEA. In Asia Pacific, sales grew by 30%.

According to the Company's own estimates, the overall size of the global golf market remained about the same as last year. In January - March, overall sales of golf equipment to the trade declined by 3% in the US compared with the corresponding period of the previous year and the number of rounds played fell by 3.5% (January-February).

Sales of golf clubs rose by 4%. Global shipments of the new Wilson Staff product line started. Sales of these premium clubs increased by 23%, which in turn benefited EBIT in the first few months of the year. The golf ball market continued to be extremely competitive, and Wilson golf ball sales were similar to last year.

Team Sports Division continued to perform well

Stated in local currencies, the Team Sports Division's net sales grew by 9%. Sales rose by 7% in the Americas, 9% in EMEA, and 120% in Asia Pacific. Outside the United States, sales saw exceptionally buoyant growth in Japan. EBIT grew by 7% in local currency terms.

The fastest growing product categories in Team Sports were baseball and softball bats (34%). In the US, baseball continued to grow in popularity. The DeMarini bats have been well-received the world over. Sales of training equipment were boosted by better use of the Company's extensive sales and distribution network as well as by new product launches.

In Winter Sports, deliveries are heavily weighted towards the latter part of the year

The Winter Sports Division's net sales in local currencies decreased by 8% in January-March compared with the corresponding period of 2004. In line with its business cycle, the Winter Sports Division's deliveries are heavily weighted towards the latter part of the year, the busiest months for deliveries being September and October.

Consolidated Results, (IFRS), EUR million

	1-3/2005	1-3/2004	CHANGE, %	1-12/2004
CONTINUING OPERATIONS				
NET SALES	277.8	271.6	2	1,035.9
COST OF GOODS SOLD	-164.5	-158.2		-600.1
GROSS PROFIT	113.3	113.4		435.8
LICENCE INCOME	3.8	3.8		14.3
OTHER OPERATING INCOME	0.7	1.9		3.3
R&D EXPENSES	-7.4	-7.4		-31.3
SELLING AND MARKETING EXPENSES	-69.0	-65.7		-245.5
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OTHER EXPENSES	-19.9	-18.6		-76.1
EARNINGS BEFORE INTEREST AND TAXES	21.5	27.4	-22	100.5
FINANCING INCOME AND EXPENSES	-0.7	-1.7		-3.5
EARNINGS BEFORE TAXES	20.8	25.7	-19	97.0
TAXES	-6.6	-8.9		-28.1
MINORITY INTEREST	-0.0	-0.1		-0.3
NET RESULT FROM CONTINUING OPERATIONS	14.2	16.7	-15	68.6
DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS				
NET RESULT FROM DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS	-	13.5		14.0
NET RESULT	14.2	30.2		82.6
EARNINGS PER SHARE,				
CONTINUING OPERATIONS, EUR				
EARNINGS PER SHARE, DILUTED,	0.20	0.24		0.96
CONTINUING OPERATIONS, EUR				
EARNINGS PER SHARE,	0.20	0.23		0.96
DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS, EUR				
EARNINGS PER SHARE, DILUTED,	-	0.19		0.20
DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS, EUR				
EARNINGS PER SHARE, DILUTED,	-	0.19		0.20
ADJUSTED AVERAGE NUMBER				
OF SHARES IN ISSUE, MILLION				
ADJUSTED AVERAGE NUMBER	71.4	70.6		71.1
ADJUSTED AVERAGE NUMBER				
OF SHARES IN ISSUE, DILUTED, MILLION				
EQUITY PER SHARE, EUR	71.8	71.2		71.3
ROCE, % *)	6.26	6.01		6.41
ROE, % **)	16.4	22.5		17.7
AVERAGE RATES USED: EUR 1.00 = USD	12.4	28.4		18.7
EMPLOYEES, AVERAGE NUMBER	1.31	1.25		1.24
	4,278	4,177		4,174

*) 12 MONTHS ROLLING AVERAGE **) BASED ON TOTAL NET RESULT UNAUDITED. THE NUMBERS OF SHARES IN ISSUE AND OTHER SHARE-BASED KEY INDICATORS HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED FOR THE DECEMBER 2004 BONUS ISSUE, 1:2. THE RELATIVE PROPORTION OF THE ESTIMATED TAX CHARGE FOR THE FULL FINANCIAL YEAR HAS BEEN CHARGED AGAINST THE RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD.

EBIT by Business Area

	1-3/2005	1-3/2004	CHANGE, %	1-12/2004
RACQUET SPORTS	9.0	7.2	25	26.9
GOLF	4.5	3.2	41	0.5
TEAM SPORTS	12.6	12.3	2	24.6
WINTER SPORTS	-8.4	-5.1	-	29.6
FITNESS EQUIPMENT	5.8	9.5	-39	23.9
SPORTS INSTRUMENTS	1.7	1.8	-6	8.0
HEADQUARTERS	-3.7	-1.5	-	-13.0
EBIT, TOTAL	21.5	27.4	-22	100.5

Sales fell by 4% in EMEA and 27% in the Americas. Poor weather conditions reduced the amount of additional orders received in the US. EBIT was EUR -8.4 million (-5.1). Two of the main factors affecting EBIT were increased investment in sales and marketing as well as the sales decline in North America.

The Winter Sports Division will continue to develop innovative products. During the period under review, Atomic launched the IZOR ski line, which utilizes nanotechnology. From the beginning of the year, sales of Winter Sports' products in Italy and Russia have been handled by its new locally based Amer Sports sales and distribution companies.

For the Fitness Equipment Division, the first and last quarters are the most critical periods of the year

The Fitness Equipment Division's net sales increased by 12% in local currency terms. The fastest growing product categories were treadmills and stationary cycles. Sales of audio/video entertainment, hardware, and systems have all developed positively. The Fitness Equipment Division is investing heavily in developing its business outside the US market. During the period under review, sales outside the Americas grew by 14%.

Stated in local currencies, the Fitness Equipment Division's EBIT declined by 36% due to investment in sales and marketing. In addition, the Company hasn't been able to pass on in full increased steel and freight costs in its selling prices. The profitability of the businesses that were integrated last year has not as yet reached its objective.

The fitness sector continued to grow in North America. Growth was seen in sales of fitness equipment to fitness clubs and for home use. The division's position as a major international full-line supplier of fitness equipment was bolstered by expanding its product range into commercial strength, entertainment systems and services.

Sales of diving instruments grew by 15%

In the Sports Instruments Division, net sales in the January-March period grew by 7% in local currency terms. Sales rose by 10% in EMEA and 5% in the Americas. Sales of Suunto's diving instruments grew by 15% during the review period. Sales were boosted especially by the Suunto D9 dive computer, which has attracted great interest in the market. Sales of wristop computers grew by 2%. Wristop computers and diving instruments accounted for 62% of Suunto's net sales in the review period. Diving and Watersports Suits grew by 10%.

Adoption of new IFRS standards

The application of the new IFRS standards affects the presentation of the comparative information for 2004 such that the net effect of discontinued operations on the results for the period is presented on a single line as a separate item from continuing operations. ■



- Text by Arja Vartia
- Photos by All Over Press

The Davis Cup – tennis' team event

In 1900, American Dwight Davis developed a team version of the game of tennis that became an enormous success. We are talking, of course, about the Davis Cup.

It is said about Harvard and Boston that they have the same significance for tennis as Vienna has for music or Florence has for fine art. At the end of the nineteenth century, Harvard was the veritable Mecca of tennis. According to statistics for the year 1900, 790 students played tennis of total, 640 rowed, and about 250 reported their sport as soccer or baseball.

One of the most enthusiastic tennis players was **Dwight Davis**, who succeeded better at tennis than he did at his studies. He approached tennis like a researcher and in 1898, his first year at Harvard, he noticed how important the serve is in deciding a game. At that time, overhead

serves and especially spin serves did not rule the game; therefore, Davis and **Holcombe Ward** (a fellow student and doubles friend) began to try to develop overhead serving – with great success. The game improved and already that same year they won the USA championship.

Davis was a better doubles than singles player. In 1898, he made it to the USA championship finals, but never gained a singles championship win. He won several doubles championships.

Davis claimed his place in tennis history when he had the idea for a team championship in which tennis teams from different countries could get the measure of each other. Davis

developed a Cup which was named after him. He ordered a magnificent silver cup as the trophy, the quest for which has already lasted over a hundred years. In Davis' opinion, a sportsman should also travel, get to know different nationalities and players from different countries. That wish has been granted for tennis players.

The first Davis Cup match was played in August 1900 in Boston. In the beginning, the only country to answer the USA's challenge was England. The first two wins went to the USA. Dwight was on both teams. Four years later, France joined in, and then Australia the year after.

Selected Davis Cup History

- 1900: The first match was played in Boston. The USA beat Great Britain.
- 1904: France joined the Davis Cup.
- 1905: Australia joined.
- 1927: France's four 'Musketeers' won the Cup, and also won for the next five years in a row.
- 1933: Fred Perry led Great Britain to four consecutive victories.
- 1967: Australian captain Harry Hopman won for the 16th time.
- 1970: 50 countries were already taking part in the Cup.
- 1982: The longest match in the Davis Cup was played between John McEnroe (USA) and Mats Wilander (SWE). The match lasted 6 hours and 22 minutes. McEnroe won 9-7, 6-2, 15-17, 3-6, 8-6. The USA beat Sweden 3-2.
- 1995: The USA beat Russia and reached a record 31 wins.
- 1996: France beat Sweden in Malmö in the fifth set of the fifth game of the match.
- 2001: 142 countries were now taking part in the Cup.
- 2004: The spectator record was broken in the Spain-USA final, in which 26,000 people packed the spectator stands of a soccer stadium on every one of the three days of the final.

The US Team in 1995, the year they beat the Russians to win the Davis Cup for the 31st time. The record is still unbeaten. Pictured from left to right: **Richie Reneberg**, **Jim Courier**, **Andre Agassi**, coach **Tom Gullikson**, **Pete Sampras**, and **Todd Martin**.

The hundred year plus history of the Davis Cup has room for heroes and heroics. Almost without exception, all of tennis' great names praise the significance of the Davis Cup in their own careers. Even players of individual sports sometimes yearn to be part of a team and represent their countries.

The great winners include the famous French 'Musketeers' **Jean Borotra**, **Jacques Brugnon**, **Henri Cochet**, and **René Lacoste**, who won the Cup six times in a row from 1927-32. Fred Perry led England to four consecutive victories in the 1930s.

Australian legend **Harry Hopman** took part 22 times, 16 of which as a winner. In 1970, there were already 50 countries taking part; nowadays competing countries number 142.

Italian **Nicola Pietrangeli** has played the most matches. In 1972, he played his 164th match. His record of 120 wins is still unbeaten.



Tennis legend **Jack Kramer** led the US team to victory from 1946-47. He has several tournament wins from both his amateur and professional careers. Victory was his at Wimbledon in 1947.



The French Musketeers, winners of six consecutive Davis Cups from 1927-1932. Three of them, pictured from left to right: **Henri Cochet**, **Jean Borotra** and **Jacques Brugnon**. Far right: **Christian Boussois**.

80s star **John McEnroe** played on the US team for 12 years, collecting 41 singles wins and 8 defeats. His ratio in doubles, with partner **Peter Fleming**, is 14-1.

The coveted Silver Cup

Dwight Davis could surely never have dreamed of the level of popularity the international team game he launched would attain, nor how esteemed and coveted the silver trophy he ordered would become.

He ordered the trophy from a renowned Boston firm. The trophy's actual designer was **Rowland Rhodes**, an Englishman who had made his name both in Paris and New York, designing among other things the White House's silver ornaments.

Rowland conjured up the large, florid silver cup. In the early years, players were allowed to take the trophy home. However, not everyone

was eternally enamoured with it. For example, the wife of Australian legend **Norman Brooks** became bored with the huge trophy that dominated their living room for six years at the beginning of the last century. She placed the trophy a little to one side of the room and made it seem a little less obtrusive by planting red peonies in it. History also contains colorful stories about how the French players dragged the trophy around Paris at night.

Nowadays, the trophy is cared for by the ITF (International Tennis Federation) and is only in the winners' possession for part of the time.

It is not only the value of the trophy that has grown over the years, but also its size. The pedestal has had to be enlarged so that all the winners' names can be fitted on. The trophy is on show behind the umpire's chair in every finals match and is watched by four guards. It is also present at the draw every fall. ■

Wilson is the Official Ball of the Australian Open

Wilson and Tennis Australia announced a cooperation agreement in April which will make Wilson the Official Ball of the Australian Open. The agreement is for 2006 and the five years following.

After the agreement has come into force, Wilson will be the Official Ball of two Grand Slam tournaments, the Davis Cup, and 70 ATP and WTA tour events.

New generation elliptical from Precor

Precor has brought to market the new Elliptical Crosstrainer EFX 576i: the first combination of total body exercise and the patented CrossRamp system. Thanks to CrossRamp, the ramp angle and resistance can be set steplessly.

The EFX 576i features 14 different pre-set exercise programs, including a maximal rate of oxygen consumption test (VO₂ Max). Intended for demanding fitness club use, the elliptical boasts great durability and ease of maintenance.

Lehtikuva



Skiers' heart rates on TV broadcasts

Suunto's long range heart rate detection system was in general use for the first time in March during the Nordic Combined World Cup in Lahti. The system provides TV spectators information about athletes' heart rates during the competition. The competitors wore Suunto's heart rate belts, from which heart rate readouts were transferred to TV via special receivers placed along the ski track.

The new service was also used in the last two events of the Nordic Combined World Cup in Oslo. During the skiing sections, athletes' heart rates were displayed on international TV broadcasts.

Timekeeping and TV graphics are produced in cooperation with Wige Data and Epson. Both companies have been partners in cooperation with the FIS (International Ski Federation) for many years in the disciplines of Crosscountry and Nordic Combined racing.

By the end of the year, Suunto will also make the heart rate detection system available to teams and coaches. For the first time, simultaneous monitoring of many athletes' heart rates will be possible during practice at distances of up to 100 meters.

Atomic's ski boots are the leading brand

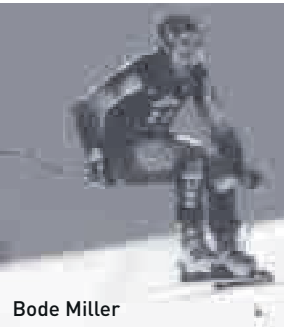
The Alpine Skiing World Cup culminating in the Lenzerheide finals was one of the all time best for Atomic.

Not only did **Bode Miller** win the overall World Cup, but all the men's single discipline winners came from the Atomic Team. **Michael Walchhofer** won the Downhill, Bode Miller the Super-G, **Benni Raich** both the Giant Slalom and Slalom.

The Atomic ski/binding system gained a total of 76 podium places in last season's Alpine Skiing World Cup, 70 with Atomic ski boots. Atomic therefore became the World Cup's most successful brand in both skis and boots.

Among those who changed over to Atomic's new RaceTec ski boots for the first time last season were **Hermann Maier**, **Benni Raich**, **Michael Walchhofer**, **Bode Miller**, **Daron Rahlves**, and **Anna Ottosson**.

Getty Images



Bode Miller

NCAA finals played using Wilson balls

In 2003, the Wilson Official NCAA Game Ball was the first basketball manufactured from synthetic material ever to be used in USA university series finals. The ball was also used this year in both men's and women's Division I, II, and III championship matches.

The ball's greatest advantage is the good grip it offers. The surface never feels slippery, even when players' hands are sweaty.

Among the many top universities who use the ball are the University of Kansas, Boston College, the University of Louisville, and the University of Florida.



Padraig Harrington

First PGA win for Harrington

Wins for European golfers on the PGA Tour have been rare in the last few years. One of the finest was seen at the beginning of March, when Padraig Harrington climbed back from a seven-stroke deficit to victory. Harrington played the Honda Classic final round in only 63 and rose from 21st place to the top with Vijay Singh and Joe Ogilvie. And so Harrington gained the first PGA win of his career.

This first win was sweet for Harrington, as he has been placed second three times on the PGA Tour. At the same time, Harrington earned the largest check of his career: 990,000 dollars.

Before the Honda Classic, Harrington was ranked eighth in the world. His win raised him to sixth.

The Wilson Staff clubs used by Harrington are Pi5 Irons, Pd5 Driver, Kc4 Putter, Tw5 Wedge, and FwC 5-Wood.

Suunto coach seminars during the IAAF World Championships in Helsinki

The IAAF World Championships in Athletics will be held in Helsinki this summer. It will be the biggest sports event in the world this year, gathering all the world's leading athletes and their coaches to Helsinki.

Suunto will arrange two world-wide coach seminars on the advantages of Suunto t6 during the Championships. Both are half-day seminars (AM) and will take place on August 8 and August 11 in the very heart of Helsinki.

The keynote speakers at the seminars will be worldwide recognized professor **Tim Noakes**, author of "Lore of Running", and famous sports scientist **Dr. Heikki Rusko**.

Amer Sports acquires Salomon

Amer Sports Corporation has made an agreement with adidas-Salomon AG to acquire Salomon, including the brands Salomon, Mavic, Bonfire, Arc'Teryx, and Cliché. The combined business will create a leading global sports equipment company with combined sales of EUR 1.7 billion and 6,800 employees.

The enterprise value of the transaction amounts to approximately EUR 485 million based on year-end 2004 net assets, and includes EUR 144 million in goodwill. Amer Sports is financing the transaction with debt, which is expected to bring its gearing ratio to approximately 110 percent at the Company's financial year end, December 31, 2005. Amer Sports expects that the acquisition will have a slightly positive impact on earnings per share in the current fiscal year as well as in 2006.

The acquisition is subject to customary conditions including regulatory approvals. It is expected that the transaction will be completed by the end of September 2005.

Headquartered in Annecy, France, Salomon achieved total sales of EUR 653 million and an operating profit of EUR 9 million in 2004 which included a restructuring provision of EUR 19 million. Salomon is a significant player

in freedom action sports equipment and is well-established in technical apparel and footwear.

"Salomon fits perfectly with our own portfolio. The leading freedom action sport brands open up great new potential for Amer Sports. In winter sports, Salomon and Amer Sports' Atomic complement each other very well. Furthermore, the two companies and their brands complement each other well in geographical terms, making our geographical coverage more balanced," says Mr **Roger Talermo**, CEO and President, Amer Sports. "As a result of this transaction, we will become the leading sports equipment company."

Jean-Luc Diard, the President of Salomon since 1998, will continue to lead the Salomon organization, reporting directly to Roger Talermo. The management of Mavic, Bonfire, Arc'Teryx, and Cliché will also remain unchanged, reporting to Jean-Luc Diard.

Amer Sports and Salomon will continue to serve their customers around the world as before with their own separate sales forces. To assure Salomon's smooth separation from the adidas-Salomon organization, it has been agreed that the parties will cooperate during a transition period of up to three years.



Salomon: winter sports, including alpine and crosscountry skis, snowboards, boots and bindings, inline skates, footwear, and apparel

Mavic: bicycle components

Bonfire: snowboard apparel

Arc'Teryx: technical outdoor, harnesses, layering systems and backpacks

Cliché: skateboard equipment and apparel



Anja Pärson



Analysis of the
TRAINING EFFECT
 by Sweat and Tears

Would have made a difference.

Felt proud.

Showed off to the lady next door.

Thought about quitting.

Started to hurt.



MODEL

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*) Excess Post-exercise Oxygen Consumption



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