Business Week
11 Dec - 17 Dec

Interstoff Asia to rebrand from next year

11 Dec 2006

Germany-based specialist manufacturer of laminates, coatings, finishing processes and membrane systems Ploucquet Holding GmbH has made several managerial changes.

Interstoff Asia will be rebranded as Interstoff Asia Essential from 2007 onwards, with the new name designed to reflect the fair's increased focus on fabrics that are innovative, new to the market, and occupy a niche in the fashion industry.

With a strong emphasis on functional fabrics and eco-textiles, the 'rebranded' fair in 2007 will include a number of new initiatives including a special display area, entitled 'The 21st Century Wardrobe', which will showcase multi-functional fabrics from leading textile producers from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, France and Italy. There will also be a designated trend area—Eco-Textiles: Fabrics That Care—focusing on fabrics made from natural and environmentally-friendly materials, or produced using environmentally sound processes.

The first Interstoff Asia Essential will take place on March 14-16, 2007, at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Nike's Air Force 1 celebrates 25th anniversary

11 Dec 2006

Nike has celebrated the 25th anniversary of its Air Force 1 basketball shoe with a celebrity-packed event, where a collection of 1,040 custom pairs of Air Force 1's, from the Nike archives and collectors were displayed together for the first time ever. This collection featured some of the most popular shoes from the Air Force 1's past and the yet to be released Air Force 25.

Nike released the Air Force 1 twenty-five years ago to meet the heavy demands of the top players in the game of basketball and in 1982 it became the first basketball shoe to feature Nike Air technology.

In celebration of the anniversary pf the Air Force 1, Nike will introduce a new performance basketball shoe, the Air Force 25 in 2007.

Canada to save apparel manufacturers up to $4.5 million in tariffs

11 Dec 2006

Canada's new government is implementing measures to reduce or eliminate tariffs on a number of textile fabrics used in apparel manufacturing. The measures will provide Canadian apparel producers with up to $4.5 million in annual duty savings.

Under the new measures, tariffs will be eliminated on a variety of apparel fabrics which are unavailable from domestic producers. There will also be further tariff relief on a number of apparel fabrics where domestic production averages less than $5,000 annually. The measures are retro-active to January 1, 2005, to coincide with the elimination of World Trade Organization import quotas on textiles and apparel.

As of the end of November 23 this year, duties have also been eliminated on certain woven lining fabrics in the manufacture of specified apparel.

Kookaburra purchases new cricket balls testing system

11 Dec 2006

Australian sports equipment manufacturer, Kookaburra Sports, has recently purchased a new Mecmesin force testing system for various quality control tests in the production of its international test match quality cricket balls.

After many years using Mecmesin MDD Manual test stand with an AFG force gauge, the company has upgraded to the Mecmesin MultiTest 2.5-i computer-controlled test frame in response to the increased complexities of its cricket ball production process and the ever-increasing quality of play.

Kookaburra is using the system to assess the compressive strength of the finished ball and for a variety of quality testing on raw materials. These include tensile tests of leather, cork, wool and thread samples, as well as separate compression testing of the ball's cork core to ensure it conforms to the company's in-house test standards.

Odlo wins MedTec award

11 Dec 2006

Swiss functional sports underwear company with Norwegian roots Odlo recently won the MedTec Award.

Some 40 projects were submitted for the combination, of which four were nominated for the award.

Odlo's winning project was aimed at the conceptualisation of a 'Sensor-shirt' with which the wearer's heartbeat can be monitored over a long period of time by means of an electrocardiogram (ECG).

Electrodes are mounted on an Odlo garment (e.g. running shirt or sports bra) and the signals are transmitted through conductive fibres in the fabric to a data-logger and from there to a receiving device, such as a watch. The technology excludes the need to wear cumbersome belts and electrodes stuck to the skin.

The product is expected to be ready for the market in the second half of 2007.

H&M to open in Japan

11 Dec 2006

H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB has signed a contract for its first store in Japan.

The store will be located in one of Tokyo's prime shopping districts, Harajuku. The building is under construction and the store is expected to open in the autumn of 2008.

The company is also negotiating for further contracts in Tokyo.

Spentex consolidates Uzbekistan presence

11 Dec 2006

India-based textile company Spentex Industries Limited has acquired the fixed assets of Farg'ona Ip-Gazlama Ishlab Chiqarish in Uzbekistan to set up a processing project through its Dutch subsidiary in collaboration with British Millerain, UK.

The process house at the Mergalan factory in Uzbekistan will produce dye- finished fabric for use in workwear, outdoor fabrics, military use, uniforms, industrial fabrics and home furnishing fabrics.

Advantages of the new unit include its proximity to the Eastern European market and the low cost of operations. It will have the capacity to dye 30,000 metres of fabric per day, with the potential for even greater production in the future.

Spentex already has two plants in Uzbekistan, with a workforce of more than 3,500, and a further six facilities in India. It has a total production capacity of 350,000 spindles in India and 220,000 spindles in Uzbekistan along with 236 air-jet weaving looms. It recently expanded its Baramati and Sholapur plants.

ILO welcomes EU promotion of 'Decent Work for All'

11 Dec 2006

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has welcomed the European Council of Ministers' decision to promote 'decent work' in the European Union and across the world.

The ILO said the decision was the most recent in a series of moves that have strengthened links between the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and EU policies, and would pave the way for cooperation that could "realise the innovative power of productive and decent work."

At a recent conference, 'Promoting Decent Work in the World: the Contribution of the EU', held in Brussels on December 4-5, ILO regional director for Europe and Central Asia, Friedrich Buttler, said the partnership was critical and that this was a crucial time for the campaign. He commented that unemployment in Europe was "disturbingly high" at 17 million—especially amongst under-25s—while half the world's workers were unable to rise above the $2 per person, per day, poverty line.

Puma partners with Detroit Ignition

11 Dec 2006

Puma North America is to partner The Detroit Ignition, the newest club to join the US Major Indoor Soccer League (MISL), as its official uniform and apparel provider. The agreement gives Puma exclusive branding for all on and off-field player apparel, including match uniforms, game-day warm ups, travel suits and training gear.

Puma entered a four-year agreement to be the official ball supplier of the MISLin October. The Detroit Ignition is the first club from North America's professional indoor soccer league to establish an apparel partnership with the company.

Strong fourth quarter results for Gildan

12 Dec 2006

Canada-based Gildan Activewear Inc. has reported fourth quarter net earnings before restructuring and other charges of $36.8 million, up 25.6% from $29.3 million in the comparable quarter last year. Sales in the fourth quarter reached $235.2 million, up 30.2% from $180.7 million.

Sales for the 2006 fiscal year totalled $773.2 million, up 18.2% from the previous year, and net earnings amounted to $106.8 million—a 24.2% increase on the $86 million reported in 2005.

Record attendance expected at Couromoda

12 Dec 2006

International shoe, sporting goods and leathergoods fair Couromoda is to be held January 15-18, in São Paulo, Brazil. 1,200 exhibitors from the fashion footwear, leathergoods, garments and accessories sectors will participate, occupying 80,000 m² in area.

The fair will be spread over the whole Anhembi Exhibition Center as well as three guestroom floors at the Holiday Inn Parque Anhembi Hotel and two other halls specially built to house the garment area and a new food court.

A record number of exhibitors and over 65,000 professional visitors are expected to attend.

Higher revenues at Veltex Corporation

12 Dec 2006

California-based apparel and textile company Veltex Corporation has reported higher revenues for the third quarter, totalling $19.2 million. Revenues for the nine months ended September 30 totalled $53.2 million and gross profit for the period was $15.7 million. Net income totalled $5.8 million.

The company expects total revenue for the year to be $70 million with over $7 million net profit.

The acquisition of Veltex-Canada earlier in the year helped revenue growth in this period.

The company has distribution centres in the USA, Canada and factories in Bangladesh. It is a vertical manufacturing and import/export company with five subsidiaries. It designs and manufactures brand named apparel and caps for the promotional products industry. It manufactures custom headwear for Tommy Hilfiger, specialised textiles primarily for use by manufacturers of automobile interiors, upholstery for furniture manufacturers, and ready-to-wear garments. It specialises in denim, microfilament, velvet, twill, canvas, duck and pinpoints oxford fabrics.

Puma opens North India mega store

12 Dec 2006

Puma Sports India Ltd. has launched a new mega store in New Delhi, described as the largest store in North India. It features the official company colours, red and white, covers over 3,000 sq. ft. and will offer the entire international collection of apparel, shoes and accessories.

AAFA appoints new board directors

12 Dec 2006

The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) has appointed Emanuel Chirico, CEO at Phillips-Van Heusen; David Edelman, chief financial officer (CFO) at Kenneth Cole; Rick Helfenbein, president at Luen Thai USA; and James McMurray, senior vice president (VP) and general manager at SAP Retail, Inc. to its board of directors.

AAFA is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, including a number of global US textile companies.

John Forzani retires from Forzani's executive team

12 Dec 2006

John Forzani will retire from his position as executive chairman from Canadian sporting goods retailer The Forzani Group Ltd., effective January 29, 2007. He will remain on the board of directors as chairman.

He has served over thirty years at the company and was the founder in 1974 with the first store opening in Calgary, Alberta.

The business has is now worth $1.3 billion company and provides access to sporting goods products across the country.

Business, charitable and academic communities have recognised Mr Forzani (and FGL) for his contributions, including the following awards: Alberta Venture Magazine Alberta's Business Person of the Year; University of Calgary and the Calgary Chamber of Commerce: Distinguished Business Leader Award; Retail Council of Canada Distinguished Canadian Retailer Award; Canadian Institute of Retailing Services/Henry Singer Award; Prairies Region Entrepreneur of the Year; and Calgary Regional Health Association and CFCN Television The Leaders in Business Award.

New high-tech sports collection from Falke

12 Dec 2006

Technical apparel company Falke Ergonomic Sport System has launched new trends in functional sportswear for spring/summer 2007. The focus of the range is on the high-tech jackets with two-way stretch and zip-off sleeves and shirts with an integrated sleeve pocket for mp3 payers or mobile phones.

The company won the award for 'exceptional' sports apparel at last season's ispo trade show. Products in the

line range from underwear, second layers and outerwear.

Running, walking and trekking are the inspiration for its latest trends and items are designed to provide climate control in changing weather conditions.

The Raleigh jacket is made from breathable microfibre, is wind- and water-repellent and features the removable sleeves. Elastic two-way stretch inserts offer freedom of movement during exercise and comfortable fit. Other features include an invisible clip-down zip with a chin cup, extended reverse with adjustable drawstrings, reflective prints and numerous pouches.

The ladies' Denver jacket includes two-way stretch for body-contoured fit and freedom of movement. It features invisible front and sleeve zip pouches, pre-shaped extended sleeves over the back of the hand with adjustable cuffs and a zip pouch with chin cup.

Changes to Lanxess' management board

13 Dec 2006

German chemical company Lanxess AG has announced several changes in its board of management. Effective July 1, 2007, chairman of the Board Dr Axel Heitmann's contract, which expires in spring 2008, will be extended by five years. Chief financial officer Matthias Zachert's contract has also been extended for another five years.

Dr Rainier van Roessel has been appointed as a new member of the board. He presently heads the Rubber Chemicals Business Unit and the company's Belgian organisation. From January 2007, he will become responsible for three business units from the Performance Chemicals Group segment as well as for all of the company's international organisations and Group Functions for IT, logistics, supply chain and procurement and other important group initiatives. He has 20 years of international management experience in the chemical business.

Dr Martin Wienkenhöver and Dr Ulrich Koemm will continue their responsibilities within the framework of their mandates expiring in spring 2008.

Ecco named official footwear supplier at Pebble Beach

13 Dec 2006

Danish shoemaker Ecco has been named 'Official Footwear Supplier' to the 2007 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am, to be held on February 5-11, in California. The company will provide footwear for a number of sports personalities and celebrities at the event from its new 2007 golf collection.

It will also showcase its line of men's and women's luxury golf shoes at the on-site product pavilion. The collection includes classic, casual and sport models in a variety of new styles and colours. They are made from ultra-soft, high-grade leathers with hydrophobic treatments for extra water-resistance. They feature a direct-injection process to provide durability, comfort and shock-absorption. An internal stabiliser reduces torque and creates a stable swing platform while the double-layer insole provides extra cushion and absorbs heel force to reduce stress on the knees, hip and back. The Internal Air-Circulation System is said to maintain a fresh, dry and cool foot environment and the Dynamic Energy Return System produces a trampoline effect during foot-strike and follow-through to reduce fatigue. Advanced grip systems include Eclipse cleats with the Fast Twist insert system, Stinger cleats with the Q-Lok insert system and moulded traction bars.

Participants will include Ecco staff players Fred Couples and Aaron Baddeley, and other celebrities likely to participate include Justin Timberlake, Bill Murray, Mark Wahlberg, Samuel L. Jackson, Donald Trump, Dennis Quaid, Andy Garcia and Carson Daly.

Brasher appoints new managing director

13 Dec 2006

UK-based outdoor performance footwear manufacturer Brasher has appointed Andy Loeber as managing director. He will officially join the company from January 2, 2007. Mr Loeber has extensive experience in the UK footwear market.

He joins Brasher from Rockport where he has served for eight years, initially as managing director for Rockport UK and finally as senior director for Rockport Europe where he was responsible for the activities of six subsidiaries.

Bayer expands MDI production capacity

13 Dec 2006

German chemical company Bayer MaterialScience AG has now completed the expansion of its production facilities for methylene diphenyl diisocyanate (MDI) in Tarragona, Spain, by 50,000 tons a year to an annual capacity of 150,000 tons. As a result, the company has a global production capacity of almost 1.1 million tons per year. Capacity for the intermediates carbon monoxide (CO) and methylene diphenyl diamine (MDA) has also been expanded at Tarragona.

The company is currently building production facilities capable of producing 350,000 tons of MDI each year at its integrated Shanghai site. The facilities are expected to be operational in 2008 and will mainly supply customers in the Asia-Pacific region.

With sales of €10.7 billion in 2005, the company is one of the world's largest polymer manufacturers.

International Apparel Federation relocates

13 Dec 2006

The International Apparel Federation (IAF) is to move its headquarters from London to Amsterdam (Zeist), the Netherlands. The move is part of an overall restructuring programme, which includes a review of the Federation's Charter and Articles of Association. The IAF is the international association of national associations of apparel and textiles. Founded in 1972 at Williamsburg, USA, by the trade federations of Europe, the USA and Japan, its membership includes apparel associations from 33 countries representing over 150,000 apparel companies and over five million employees.

Under the new rules, which were unanimously approved at the recent members' meeting in Zeist, the IAF will accept individual companies, whose core business is the manufacturing and/or marketing of apparel or other sewn products, as corporate members with full voting rights.

The members meeting appointed the first Executive Committee which will lead the federation for the next two years. The committee includes president Vassilis Masselos (Hellenic Clothing Association, Greece) and two vice presidents— Roland Tsai, (TTF, Taiwan) and Harry van Dalfsen, (MODINT, Netherlands). Kevin Burke (AAFA, USA) will continue to serve as treasurer.

The IAF also announced a new 'IAF student award' that will be presented to a student in fashion design and/or technology with an exceptional academic record and course work. The award will include a six-month traineeship in an IAF member company.

Textile Days India includes first ever Techtextil India

13 Dec 2006

The first Techtextil India is to take place at Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai, concurrently with Heimtextil India and Texworld India, October 10-12, 2007. The three events combined will be called 'Textile Days India'.

Technical textiles account for 17% of technical production in the country. In an attempt to help the industry, the government has cut customs duties and has also planned investments for the sector. According to the Indian Ministry of Textiles, the domestic market for technical textiles is expected to be worth approximately $7 billion by 2007.

Joint stands from both Germany and Canada will participate at the fair. Around 100 exhibitors and 3,000 visitors are expected to attend.

Parallel to the fair, the Techtextil Symposium will offer lectures, presentations and discussion forums.

Stephon Marbury and Steve & Barry's to donate 3,000 pairs of Starbury Ones

13 Dec 2006

US NBA basketball player Stephon Marbury and national casual apparel retailer Steve & Barry's University Sportswear are donating a free pair of Starbury One basketball sneakers to every varsity high school boy's basketball player in New York City.

The donation is part of a new agreement that makes the Starbury brand a partner of the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL), which directs athletic competition among the 193 public high schools in the city's five boroughs.

The Starbury One is part of the Starbury Collection of clothes and footwear launched by Mr Marbury and Steve & Barry's this summer.

Cutter & Buck to launch new collection

13 Dec 2006

US manufacturer of golf-inspired sportswear and outerwear Cutter & Buck will launch its new collection of CB Drytec polo shirts at the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship in January.

Volunteers and officials of the four-day championship will be the first in the region to wear the new line and will also receive the newly designed WindTec wind vest and cap. The shirts and wind vests have a quick-dry finish to keep wearers cool and dry.

This is the first event that Cutter & Buck has provided apparel sponsorship for in the Middle East.

The Abu Dhabi Golf Championship runs from January 18-21, at the Abu Dhabi Golf Club.

Coolmax sponsors 3,500-mile charity run

13 Dec 2006

Performance fabric brand Coolmax—produced by Invista—is sponsoring a 3,500-mile run across the United States, led by Connecticut high school teacher Christian McEvoy.

Mr McEvoy began the run in July to raise awareness and funds for those battling cancer. He will end his epic

journey on December 16.

Coolmax has produced limited edition shirts to commemorate the run and will distribute them to all runners on the final leg—a marathon in Rhode Island.

Mr McEvoy and his team have raised over $120,000 to date.

Fashion set to dominate at PGA Merchandise Show

14 Dec 2006

Fashion will be a key focus at the 2007 PGA Merchandise Show in January, which will showcase over 200 top names in golf apparel and sportswear, and will include daily fashion shows, a new fashion collection review, plus apparel and retailing workshops. Fashion merchandising will also be featured within the new 'By the Professionals for the Professionals' conference which will include a presentation 'Merchandising & Design Center' by Bauer International.

The event, which will be held at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, on January 25-27, is set to attract over 43,000 international golf industry professionals, and will showcase merchandise from more than 1,250 manufacturers.

Schoeller wins Frost & Sullivan product innovation of the year award

14 Dec 2006

Swiss developer and manufacturer of functional fabrics and innovative textile technologies Schoeller Textil AG, has received the 2006 Frost & Sullivan 'Product Innovation of the Year' award for its bionic climate membrane, c_change. The award is presented each year to a company that has demonstrated excellence in new products and technologies within their industry.

c_change is a water and wind-proof membrane technology that adapts to temperature and humidity changes, and offers a high level of breathability and comfort to the wearer. Set to a predetermined temperature range, as soon as the climate inside a garment becomes warmer, the membrane's flexible polymer structure opens and allows water vapour to escape quickly to the outside. When the body begins to cool and produce less moisture, the polymer structure reverts to its original position. Body heat is stored during the process which is used to warm the body when necessary.

Schoeller uses the membrane in combination with its range of fabrics and technologies.

Shoes and sporting goods amongst top retail performers

14 Dec 2006

The latest Quarterly Business Barometer by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business shows that small- and medium-sized business confidence is returning.

Compared with last year, 42% of retailers stronger results, whilst 25% claimed worse performance than in the prior year. The remaining 33% reported little change. The strongest retail performance this season was reported by footwear, sporting goods, general clothing and auto accessory retailers.

In the longer term, 47% of all business owners expect performance to improve in a year's time, while 39% expect it to remain stable. The remaining 14% expect a weakening in business during 2007.

Focus on eco-friendly fibres at Yarn Expo Spring

14 Dec 2006

Exhibitors will showcase a wide range of fibres and yarns including eco-friendly fibres at the China International Trade Fair for Fibres and Yarns, Yarn Expo Spring, which will take place on March 22-24, 2007.

Yarn Expo attracts buyers from fabric manufacturers across China and abroad, including those exhibiting at the concurrent Intertextile Beijing Apparel Fabrics trade show. Nearly 5,000 visitors from 47 countries participated at the 2006 event.

Products on display will include cotton, wool, silk linen; regenerated and synthetic man-made fibres and yarns; specialty products; elastic, fancy and blended yarns; and computer-related services.

China remains the world's leading apparel producer. In 2005, its garment exports grew by 20% and in the first nine months of 2006, garment exports increased by 32%. The country's per capita fibre consumption grew from 7.5kg in 2000 to 14kg in 2005.

Tablas kitesurfing chooses Bayer aliphatic TPU films

14 Dec 2006

Swedish kitesurfing champion Christian Dittrich, who manufactures kiteboards through his company Tablas Boards, is using decorative films for the boards made of an aliphatic variant of the thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU), Desmopan, from Bayer MaterialScience. The

films, which are manufactured for Tablas by Finnish sports equipment makers Exel, are lightfast and scratchproof.

Mr Dittrich, who recently won the 'Most Technical Kiteloop' category at this year's kite event at Laboe, said that unlike aromatic TPU films, the Bayer product doesn't turn yellow even after long exposure to the sun. Furthermore, because aliphatic TPU is lightfast, an additional UV protective coating is not required, thus reducing production costs.

Black Diamond launches new freeride ski

14 Dec 2006

Black Diamond has launched the KiloWatt freeride ski, featuring new technology, new materials and new design. Described by the company as a fat, agile freeride ski, it has an integrated 3-D damping and a solid CNC treated wood core embedded in a torsion box design.

The ski will be officially introduced at the 2007 winter ispo.

BASF raises methylamines prices

14 Dec 2006

German chemical company BASF is raising its prices for methylamines and methylamine derivatives as well as butylamines in Europe with immediate effect, unless existing contracts state otherwise. The company stated that the increases are due to increased costs for raw materials, energy and logistics. Prices will increase by €20/ton for Methyldiethanolamine and N-Methylethanolamine, €50/ton for Dimethylethanolamine, €80/ton for Dimethylformamide, €90/ton for Dimethylacetamide, €100/ton for Dimethylaminopropylamine, €120/ton for Monomethylamine, €140/ton for Dimethylamine, €150/ton for Trimethylamine and Trimethylamine-Hydrochloride and €200/ton for Butylamines.

The high-grade specialty amines, which include mono-, di- and trimethylamine, are starting materials for solvents, especially for dimethylformamide (DMF). DMF is used mainly as an additive in making polyacrylonitrile fibres and leather substitutes based on polyurethane.

Gander Mountain names new chairman

14 Dec 2006

Hunting, camping, marine and outdoor products retailer Gander Mountain Company has named David Pratt, founder of United Industries, as chairman of the company's board of directors, effective December 13. Ronald Erickson was elected vice chairman. One of the founders of the company, he has been chairman since 1997.

The company also announced that it intends to open more than a dozen new stores in fiscal 2007 and upgrade a number of existing stores.

AAFA applauds approval of trade bill

14 Dec 2006

President and CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) Kevin Burke has applauded the US Congress for its approval of a package of trade measures (HR 6111) that AAFA considers to be critical for the US apparel, footwear and textile industries.

"Passage of this important piece of legislation enables the stable and beneficial linkages between US apparel, footwear and textile companies and their partners in countries throughout the Western Hemisphere, Africa and Asia to not only continue, but to grow into the future", Mr Burke said.

HR 6111 includes a conditional one-year extension of the Andean trade preference programme, originally set to expire at the end of this year. It also includes temporary duty reductions or suspensions on US imports of a wide variety of footwear, textiles and apparel.

The package also includes new trade preferences for apparel made in Haiti and an extension of the third-country fabric provisions under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) until 2012. Finally, it includes a provision extending the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme for two years and a provision that grants Vietnam Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status.

Canada's NDP motion to protect textile workers moves forward

15 Dec 2006

A motion put forward by Canada's New Democratic Party (NDP) calling on the Conservative government to contain the dramatic growth of clothing imports from China has been passed by the House of Commons Standing Committee on International Trade. It will now go on to the House of Commons.

With almost 50,000 workers employed in the apparel industry having lost in the last three-and-a-half years, the motion should protect those who have been adversely affected by the influx of clothing imports from China.

The safeguards envisioned would cap the quantity of

clothing imports allowed into Canada, in the hope of protecting jobs.

NBA reinstates leather basketball

15 Dec 2006

After complaints from players about the way it gripped, performed and even hurt their skin, the US National Basketball Association (NBA) has decided to abandon the microfibre composite ball that was introduced this year and reinstate the ‘old faithful’ leather ball.

NBA commissioner David Stern said that although testing performed by Spalding, the association’s official basketball supplier, and the NBA demonstrated that the new composite basketball was more consistent than leather, and statistically there had been an improvement in shooting, scoring, and ball–related turnovers, the most important statistic was the view of the players.

The leather ball will be reinstated for official matches as of January 1, 2007. Spalding has 450 new leather balls ready for use; however, the switch during the season could be a difficult adjustment as leather balls need time to be broken in.

Following the decision, Spalding group president and CEO Scott Creelman said, “For 130 years, Spalding’s commitment has been and remains providing the best players in the world with the best product for the game. We believe the microfibre composite ball offers many superior characteristics to leather; however, we firmly support any decision that improves player satisfaction. We will work closely with the NBA to ensure a smooth transition and to determine the best product going forward.”

Changes to Slide attract strong exhibitor interest

15 Dec 2006

Following the changes to UK action sport and streetwear retailer trade show, Slide, over 90 companies have signed up to showcase their winter 2007/08 products and services at the next show to be held in February.

The show, which changed its name from Soltex to Slide, now has a shorter three-day format, a new floor plan and lower level booths, in order to offer visitors an easier and more focused view of the show and exhibitor collections.

Brands such as Vans, Rossignol, Salomon and 32 Snowboard Boots will be exhibiting again, alongside several first time exhibitors such as Moah, Brenda Sport and Fire Skin.

Slide will take place at the G-Mex Exhibition Centre in Manchester on February 18-20.

Burton launches full line of products featuring Outlast technology

15 Dec 2006

Burton Snowboards is expanding its Outlast offering from traditional boot linings to a full range of apparel for the 2007 Burton collection. Burton has introduced 2007 outerwear (jacket and pants), base layers (shirts and pants) and socks that feature Outlast technology to regulate body temperature.

Outlast technology a patented formulation of Thermocules or microencapsulated phase-change materials that are applied to fibres, fabrics and coatings. Products equipped with Outlast phase-change material (PCM) balance temperature fluctuations as the Thermocules continuously absorb excess body heat and release it to maintain a more constant body temperature.

In addition, Burton uses Outlast technology throughout its snowboard boot line to offer riders comfortable boots. Outlast temperature-buffering boot linings are available in many of the models worn by the world’s leading riders including Olympic medalists Shaun White (Shaun White), Ross Powers (Ion), and Kelly Clark (Supreme).