The apparel industry worldwide is well covered with awards and competitions, all designed to stimulate one sector or another. The sports industry probably has its fair share of similar initiatives but, in January this year, the giant ispo exhibition decided on a new approach. In conjunction with DuPont and its various brands serving the industry, it introduced BrandNew-NewBrands. The rewards for its winners are tangible, providing them with the international forum to present their concepts to buyers who appear to be permanently hungry for innovation. Vanessa Knowles, *World Sports Activewear* manager, was delighted to accept the invitation to join the BrandNew-NewBrands judging panel and explains how it works.



Winning sportswear entry from Drape.

Sitting in judgement

Sitting on a jury sounds a daunting task but, when it is to decide which are the most innovative products of start-up companies serving the sports industry, then it becomes more of a pleasure. As a new member of the jury for the BrandNew-NewBrands competition organised by ispo and DuPont, I was unsure what to expect, either from the other jury members or the entries.

The idea behind this innovative competition is to offer experimenters and inventors marketing support so that they can make contacts in an international marketplace and thus develop their circle of customers. It's a way to help young companies and brands to gain exposure in the industry, exposure gained by being given the opportunity to participate at ispo and receive attention from the media and trade visitors to the Munich-based exhibition.

Deciding

Selecting winners is not an easy task, especially when faced by 83 entries from 12 countries, split into four categories, Wheelies – products with rollers or wheels; Surf and Summer Hardwear – innovations from surfing, windsurfing and other summer sports; Sportswear – new trends in function and style; Others – useful accessories, functional items and innovations; and all to be considered in just one day. There was an extra award to be decided this time - the winner of the newly created DuPont SHE Award, which stands for security, health, environment, three important components in the multi-national's corporate philosophy, and which is presented for outstanding achievement in any of the fields making up the acronym SHE.

Christiane Rauch, Sports Manager Europe for DuPont Tactel and Supplex, said enthusiastically: "The standard of the entries has increased tremendously, compared with the first ispo BrandNew-NewBrands competition. Completely new sports and product groups are represented this time."

First, the jurors decide who they feel has reached the required criteria - and, a tip here for anyone thinking of submitting for the next competition, is please ensure that you give us information, samples and any video material you have. Don't expect us to look at your work/design sheet and think - hey this is a fantastic idea; assume nothing, treat us as dummies, because we know nothing about your company and less about your product. We know the industry and we think we know what is new and innovative, but you really have to sell us your product.

How do you win?

To win, your company or product must have been established after January 1st 1996*, you must have invented a new kind of product or you can present a brand-new idea and product.

What do you win?

Five young entrepreneurs can look forward to having a free trade fair stand, being honoured officially at the ispo Reception and receiving corresponding media coverage. Thirty-eight other winners will benefit from a trade fair stand at a special rate and can also expect strong attention from the media and ispo trade visitors.

So who won this time?

SCOOMO was victor twice over. The revolutionary electro scooter sets the new standard for city-mobility, it won not only the BrandNew-NewBrands competition, but also the SHE Award. Driven almost invisibly, by a new 'hub engine' - the powerful accumulator is concealed beneath the foot board - it cruises almost silently at 25km/h and has a range of up to 40 kilometres per charge (it takes four hours to recharge). This performance is combined with energy costs for riding 100 kilometres of as little as $0.1, just one cent. In addition to these incredible statistics, riding the SCOOMO is pure fun: it moves fast and turns easily. It's like surfing the streets. Forget about sport, the SCOOMO has the potential to improve city traffic significantly.

Group winners

Two young inventors, Andi Felsl and Stephan Albrecht, set a new standard for mountain bikes. Their BIONICON was outright winner of the Wheelie group. Whether on the flat, going up or down steep slopes, the BIONICON system permits infinitely variable adjustment of the bike to suit all kinds of terrain. Thanks to the ergonomic design, the biker sits more comfortably and saves energy. The bike also 'sits' better on and off the road.

The spectacular winner of the surf and summer hardware group was FREESKY, a small, 120cm-wide carbon wing. With the wing on your back, you can start from a hot-air balloon or plane. Speeds of up to 350kph (that's about 220mph) and radical manoeuvres, such as sharp turns or even three-sixty's, are possible. Test pilot Felix Baumgartner aims to fly over the Channel from England to France later this year (rather him than me).

DRAPE is the name of the brand-new sportswear by women for women. The Berlin designer, Rosa Müller-Dombois, and the business economist, Elleni Karageorgoudis, only founded the Drape sportswear company this year. Their bike jersey dress is particularly impressive. It is a fashionably cut two-piece with mesh inserts for better ventilation of the arm and shoulder region and reflector edging for traffic safety and aesthetic lines.

In the "Others" group, a classic product has been reinvented to light up the darkness: the NIGHTEYE, a 125g forehead lamp with which bikers, joggers and outdoor sports enthusiasts can see and be seen. The high-tech Xenon lamp shines brightly into the distance and the red rear light can be seen 500m away.



The jurors considering entries for the Wheelies category.

So who are the Jury

The members of the international jury are all experts, but in many different fields: Wolfgang Block, managing director of B&D Publishing; Sebastian de Diesbach, president of Promostyl Paris; Reinhard Hansen, Hansen + Heinz Sports Marketing; Harry Hodge, president of Quiksilver Europe; Christiane Rauch, sports manager Europe, DuPont Tactel and Supplex; Rolf G. Schmid, managing director of Mammut Alpine and Outdoor Sports; Leon Widdison, designer of sports products; Jürgen Wolf, president of OverLook Textil GmbH; Manfred Wutzlhofer, president & CEO of Messe München GmbH and me. The list may look awe inspiring but we're quite approachable - ask any of this year's competitors.



Two members of the jury scoot off for lunch on the Scoomo, which won two awards.

I would like to encourage all young entrepreneurs (including students) to take part. You never know, you may just win and to quote Robby Naish of Naish Kites, Hawaii, the winner of the first BrandNew – NewBrands competition: "This competition is great. It is a tremendous opportunity for each of us exhibitors to present our brands and products to large numbers of customers - far more quickly and efficiently than we could manage with our own modest means. BrandNew - NewBrands provides real help and support for young entrepreneurs whose new ideas have a strong influence on the sports market. I recommend every newcomer brand, every experimenter and inventor to take part in the competition and make the most of this opportunity."

From a purely selfish point of view, it also ensures that *World Sports Activewear* will always have something new and fresh to bring to its international audience.

**The starting date will move forward for the next competition, so entries for ispo in January 2001 will come from those established by January 1, 1997. The closing date for entries is November 8, 2000; the categories are High Function Sportswear; Young Fashion Sportswear; Winterhardwear; New Sports Media; Others. In addition there will also be an award in the DuPont SHE category.*