

The Roteiro - Vasco da Gama's ship's log

'When he had eaten he returned to the ships, accompanied by one of the Moors who was no sooner on board, than he said these words "A lucky venture!...Plenty of rubies, plenty of emeralds! You owe great thanks to God for having brought you to a country holding such riches"...We were greatly astonished for we never expected to hear our language spoken so far away from Portugal.'

28th May 1498

At the end of the 15th Century as the acclaimed Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope and landed in Calicut, so opening up the European trade route to the East Indies, an empire was born. In the 16th century Portugal's influence extended right across vast areas of the globe from the Atlantic to the Far East. Now over 500 years later, commencing on June 12th 2004 and for 23 days the world will come to "the land of explorers", in search of different treasures at Euro 2004.

The world comes to Portugal

Euro 2004 may be a European competition, but its impact is unquestionably global. The third biggest sporting tournament in the world, (after the Olympics and World Cup) is expected to be watched by over seven billion television viewers. In addition to the 500,000 fans expected, Portugal will also play host to nearly 2,500 journalists, not only from Europe, but as far a field as Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Venezuela and Japan.

We cannot forget however that the focus will be on 320 professional footballers representing 16 countries aiming to win just one trophy and to become European Champions.

The Challenge

The challenge before the brands supplying kits to each of the national Federations is probably one of the most taxing in the whole field of sports garment technology. The target user and consumer of the main product - the soccer jersey - are more diverse than for any other item of clothing available in the market.

Imagine the brief..."Create a shirt which will...enhance the performance of top athletes...create identity for a nation...look great on television, reduce counterfeiting...be worn by millionaire



Portugal's Figo wearing his personally-tailored Nike shirt.

 Nike

fashion icons used to Gucci and Armani...appeal to football fans from the unemployed to international businessmen...from teenage girls to middle-age men...and all at a cost that is affordable."

To this end, designers, technologists, research engineers and marketers with some of the world's leading sports brands have been exercising their skills to bring us the latest generation of soccer shirt developments which will be showcased in Portugal this summer.

Silverwear - by Umbro (England / Sweden)

"The most technically advanced football shirt ever" is how Rob Griffiths, Umbro's Director of International Apparel, describes the new England away kit made using Noble Fibres high-tech silver fibre X-Static.

Originally used in medical applications for its anti-microbial characteristics, the thermodynamic properties of silver have led to an increase in the use of this process in active sportswear. X-Static is the first textile fibre which has a layer of pure silver bonded to it, retaining traditional textile and tactile qualities.

Due to the reflective nature of silver (infra-red return rating of 95%+), X-Static minimises heat loss by reflecting the body's energy back to the skin making it ideal for cold weather conditions. As silver is the most thermally conductive element on the planet, X-Static is also claimed to be ideal for warm weather conditions by accelerating the conduction of heat from the skin, keeping the wearer cool.

In addition to the performance of the product, Umbro has not forgotten the fans, whether they be wearing replica versions of the shirt in Portugal's summer sunshine or at local pubs in cooler England. Whilst the classic vermilion colour does have a modern silver sheen to it, a subtle hint of the Cross of St George on the shoulder of the shirt and the 1966 World Cup winners gold star placed above the English three lions badge reminds everyone that this shirt has been designed as much to fire up patriotism, as it has been to help players perform.

Total 90 - Zero Distraction by Nike (Portugal / Holland / Russia / Croatia)

Nike's Total 90 apparel, being worn by the host nation, has been engineered to provide total comfort, perfect fit and ultimate functionality. The key concept behind the shirts being worn is 'Zero Distraction' for the players - a football shirt that enhances performance, while players do not even notice they are wearing it.

To achieve this goal Nike is offering the lightest shirt it has ever produced (155gms/5 1/2 oz). A water resistant treatment means that the shirts do not absorb rain water, ensuring they stay lightweight and comfortable, and with mesh ventilation panels in key areas in order to increase airflow where heat build up is concentrated.

In addition to this players have the option to wear a Nike Dri-FIT or Nike Sphere technical undershirt that draws sweat away from the skin through the material where it evaporates away.

The most interesting development in the shirts, however, is Nike's innovative Zero Distraction seam technology which totally changes the way that shirts are constructed. In certain parts of the garment, instead of using traditional thread stitching, material sections are bonded together. A laminate film is placed between two material sections and is then heated to a specific



temperature to secure bonding. This creates a smooth, flat joint between the materials. A thin topstitch is then added for extra strength. This process further reduces weight and bulk and ensures that seams are comfortable against a player's skin.

Finally, as a result of "elite" level feedback, Nike has also given the shirts a closer fit more tailored to players' own physiques. (Naturally top Swedish model Helene Svedin wouldn't want her husband, Portuguese captain, Luis Figo to look anything other than his best as he strides the world stage!)

Enter the Gladiators - by Puma (Italy / Czech Republic / Bulgaria / Switzerland)

Puma has focused on the close bond that unites the players and the supporters in the development of a new kit for the Italian national team, as can be seen by its latest advertising campaign. "Forza Tifosi...Forza Azzuri...We do it for the passion, our journey, our nation and our dreams. We are players. We are fans. Two sides. One Goal."

Inspired by the protective armour worn by Roman Gladiators, the Italia shirts attribute both Italy and Italian football with a number of unique details. The Italian flag and crest branding are featured on the chest along with three stars representing the number of World Cup wins by the national team. Made using distressed washes and treatments providing a comfortable and fashionable aged look, Puma says that this kit will have the fans ready for a game of football or for cheering from the stands.

Goalkeeper's, men's and women's variations of Umbro's patriotic England away strip.

 Umbro



DLC - by adidas (France/Germany/Spain/Greece/Latvia)

A second generation of the Dynamic Layering Concept (DLC), first introduced by adidas in Japan for the 2002 World Cup, will be seen at Euro 2004. These shirts feature two layers to create 3-D access and exit vents, to ensure dynamic ventilation where it is needed most at critical heat zones on the body. Unlike previous jerseys, in which mesh was used under the arm only, these shirts have mesh across most of the chest and back. In addition, the adidas existing Climacool technology draws sweat away from the body, ensuring that the players remain dry and comfortable.

Vasco da Gama's globe

Although these international sportsmen and fashion icons will be kitted out this summer in the most technical and stylish soccer apparel ever seen, there is one small piece of equipment which every player, official and supporter will be focusing on more intensely than anything else... The Soccer Ball. What happens to this small globe less than 700 mm in circumference... where it flies... how fast it moves... where it lands... will bring screams of delight from some and tears of anguish to others.

Such importance has not been overlooked and this ball will be like no other used before. Supplied by adidas, the ball for Euro 2004 has been developed using a new production concept. A 42-stage manufacturing process, consisting of a thermal bonding production technique, means that there is no stitching, thus providing a seamless surface design. A PU surface material offers maximum abrasion resistance, while the Power Balance Technology and an innovative carcass offer better rebound.

Goal-keepers beware

Leading soccer superstar, and probably the greatest free-kick taker ever, David Beckham, was involved in the testing of the new ball. "The most important thing for me is to know that I can rely

on the ball to go exactly where I want it to go. I've noticed that the accuracy of my corners, my passing, and of course my free-kicks improved from using this ball."

Even here however style has not been overlooked. The unique and dynamic design features an aqua metallic base colour which represents the sky, a blue globe colour reminiscent of the sea, and silver lines to signify the co-ordinate system perfected by the Portuguese explorers such as Vasco da Gama.

And the name of this most essential piece of equipment: the official match ball for Euro 2004...The Roteiro

*The Italian squad
complete with Puma kit.
Said to be styled on
Roman armour.*



adidas developed the Roteiro ball technology specifically for Euro 2004.

