Business Week
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Swiss World Cup team fights heat with cooling vest

19 June 2006

The Swiss world cup team has been using the Arctic Heat cooling vest to prevent the high temperatures in Germany from affecting its performance. The vests are designed to allow players to cool off before a game and can be used again at half-time as a cooling device.

The vests contain a gel-like substance that can be frozen or chilled, and will maintain that temperature for up to two hours. The vests are manufactured using Woolmark's Sportwool fabric which incorporates Vapour Management Technology.

Nike wins logo lawsuit

19 June 2006

According to reports, a claim filed by a Chinese cartoonist that Nike copied his “Little Match Man” animation had been overturned in court.

Having initially been awarded $36,000 in compensation, the animator will now have to pay more than $5,000 in court fees following the decision by the Beijing High People's Court to overrule the earlier decision.

Perry Ellis names president of Licensing

19 June 2006

Perry Ellis International Inc. has named Mary Gleason as president of licensing. She will report directly to George Feldenkreis, chairman and chief executive officer.

In her new role Ms Gleason will be responsible for growing the company's $23 million licensing business through expansion into new product categories and new markets. The company currently has licence agreements with over 150 licensees, who generate approximately $500 million annually in wholesale sales. Perry Ellis International licenses 20 brands through all distribution channels domestically and overseas including Perry Ellis, Jantzen, Original Penguin and Gotcha.

Ms Gleason's career spans 25 years in fashion apparel, brand management and brand development. Prior to joining Perry Ellis, she served as president of the Exeter Brands Group, a Nike subsidiary dedicated to building brands in the value retail channel.

BASF increases capacity for the intermediate hexane diol

19 June 2006

German chemical company, BASF, is to increase production capacity for 1.6-hexane diol (HDO) at its corporate site in Ludwigshafen, Germany, by more than 20% before the end of 2006, taking the company's annual global capacity to 42,000 metric tons. BASF operates a HDO plant at the corporate site in Freeport, Texas as well as Ludwigshafen.

The capacity expansion comes in response to steadily increasing demand. "With this expansion, we're helping our customers to achieve sustainable growth and supporting them in the development of innovative applications," said Hartwig Michels, head of the Business Unit Diols and Polyalcohols.

HDO's properties are essential in the manufacture of resins for coatings, plastics and binding agents.

EU textile overview: Impact of liberalisation has been limited

19 June 2006

According to an overview of the European textile industry, released by the EU, the disruptive impact of liberalisation of Chinese textile exports to the EU in 2005 has been limited to a fairly narrow range of product categories. However, in the categories affected, there have been absolute rises in textile imports and steep falls in unit prices.

The report states that, “China’s share of exports to the EU in the textile categories liberalised on January 1, 2005, has increased sharply at the expense of traditional EU suppliers, mainly in Asia but also in North Africa. There has, however, been only a modest rise in textile imports to the EU, either in the 35 products liberalised on January 1, 2005, or in total textile imports.”

According to the statement, in 2005, China increased its exports to the EU by 42% in value and by 36% in volume. For categories liberalised in 2005 there was an increase in China’s market share by 130% in volume and 82% in value, which suggests significant falls in unit prices. In these products China, India the US and Turkey were the only significant suppliers to have increased their exports in 2005. India’s increase in exports by value

was 18%; the US's 14% and Turkey's 4%.

This has been at the expense of other suppliers to the EU. All other major suppliers have suffered export displacement in products liberalised in 2005. Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao have all seen exports fall in value.and the most significant displacement by China has been exports previously originating from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan.

During the first quarter of 2006 world exports in all textile categories to the EU decreased by 11% in volume. As far as China is concerned there is an overall decrease in exports to the EU of -12% in volume while unit prices increased by 9%. This was said to be largely due to the quantitative limits introduced in June 2005 which cover the ten most sensitive textile categories.

On a positive note, China is becoming a key growth market for European textiles. EU exports to China were up 15 % in 2005 and 16% in value for the first quarter of 2006— although yearly exports still account for less than €1 billion.

FESI expands membership

19 June 2006

The Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI) has announced the affiliation of a new Associated Member, Siport.

Established in 1981 and based in Italy, Siport is the licensee of several children's footwear brands, including Barbie, Fisher-Price, Hot Wheels, United Colors of Benetton and Polly Pocket. The company specialises in children's footwear, mainly sport and sport casual, producing around five million pairs of shoes per year.

President of FESI and vice president of Puma, Horst Widmann said, "I am delighted to welcome Siport to our Federation, this affiliation is a further step towards an important goal for FESI. Our federation is expanding its platform within European Union affairs and is confirming its essential role as interlocutor between the Sporting Goods Industry and the European Union decision-making bodies".

FESI represents the interests of approximately 1,800 sporting goods manufacturers (85% of the European market) through its ten National Sporting Goods Industry Federations and its directly affiliated member companies.

Black Diamond expands in Asia

20 June 2006

Climbing, ski and backcountry gear company Black Diamond Equipment Ltd. has opened a new operation in Zhuhai, China.

The Asian expansion completes a two-year, multi-million dollar capital investment programme that also saw the expansion of Black Diamond's offices in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, as well as at the company's European headquarters in Basel, Switzerland.

President and CEO Peter Metcalf commented, "As Black Diamond nears the end of its fiscal year, we're seeing North American growth of roughly 20% complemented by 20% growth in most pre-season categories for Fall 2007 while pan Asian growth is running over 25%."

Columbia Sportswear appoints new sales representative

20 June 2006

Outdoor active apparel and footwear provider Columbia Sportswear Company has completed the restructuring of its UK sales division and has appointed Simon Turner to the position of northern sales representative.

Helly Hansen appoints new footwear executive

20 June 2006

Tony Rawlings has been appointed southern area sales executive for footwear at technical sport and survival apparel company Helly Hansen Distribution. The footwear division is now being represented as a separate entity within the organisation for the first time.

Wellman announces price increase

20 June 2006

Manufacturer of polyester products Wellman, Inc. has increased the price of its chemical-based Fortrel polyester staple fibre products by four cents/lb, effective for July 16 shipments.

Joe Tucker, vice president, fibres and recycled products group, noted, "This price increase is made necessary by the continued escalation in the cost of our petrochemical-based raw materials and their feedstocks."

Celanese raises emulsion prices

20 June 2006

Polymer emulsions company Celanese Chemicals will increase the price of all PVAc homopolymer, VAE co-polymer, acrylic, vinyl-acrylic and styrene-acrylic

emulsions by 5-10%. This increase applies to all applications world-wide. The increase will be effective for shipments on or after July 1, or as contracts allow.

"Unprecedented and sustained increases in raw materials, freight and energy costs have primarily caused the need for us to increase prices on emulsions," said Chris Hoffman, global sales director for the Emulsions business.

Product applications include adhesives, coatings, engineered fabrics, glass fibres, paper and textiles.

Golf Galaxy elects new board member

20 June 2006

Specialty golf apparel, equipment and accessories company Golf Galaxy, Inc. has appointed Douglas Neve to the company's board of directors effective June 15.

The company said it expects Mr Neve to be appointed to the Audit Committee concurrent with the company's Annual Meeting of Shareholders on August 9.

Mr Neve has been the executive vice president and chief financial officer of information services company Ceridian Corporation since February 2005.

Kraton makes breakthrough in bicomponent fibre technology

20 June 2006

Specialty chemicals company Kraton Polymers LLC has taken a step towards commercialisation of its next generation of styrenic block copolymers (SBCs) in fibre offerings for industrial, personal hygiene and textile applications.

Kraton’s advancement in bicomponent fibre enables the combination of elastic spunbond grades offering biaxial stretch which are said to require no additional drying, offer excellent process stability, and can be spun at high speeds.

From an application standpoint, Kraton’s spunbond grades are compatible with polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP) for elastic bicomponent spunbond fabrics. Fabrics made with bicomponent fibres—a PP or PE sheath and a Kraton polymer core—are elastic in both the machine and cross direction, and offer better drape character. In addition, the fabric's coefficient of friction can be controlled using various bicomponent fibre configurations.

Brazilian distribution centre opened in Lisbon

20 June 2006

A new Brazilian distribution centre has been opened in Lisbon, Portugal, by Luiz Fernando Furlan, Brazil’s minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade. Similar centres have already been established in Miami, USA, and Frankfurt, Germany.

The centre is designed to support the markets of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula and will initially accommodate 80 companies, with a further 85 companies having already shown an interest in using the space.

Sectors represented in the new centre will include leather goods, clothes and textiles, shoes and machinery.

New Balance joins FESI

21 June 2006

New Balance has joined the Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI) as a new Regular Member.
Established over 100 years ago in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, New Balance manufactures high performance footwear and apparel.

The President of FESI and Vice-President of Puma, Horst Widmann said, “I am delighted to welcome New Balance to our Federation, this affiliation is a further step towards an important goal for FESI. Our Federation is expanding its platform within European Union affairs and is confirming its essential role as interlocutor between the Sporting Goods Industry and the European Union decision-making bodies.”

FESI represents approximately 1,800 sporting goods manufacturers (85% of the European market) through its ten National Sporting Goods Industry Federations and its directly affiliated member companies.

BASF receives award for the environment

21 June 2006

German chemical company BASF has been awarded the national business award for the environment by the Federation of German Industries (BDI) in Berlin. The award was given for the “Partners for Sustainable Development” project, a public-private partnership involving UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation), UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) and BASF in Africa.

BASF and its partners started teaching eco-efficient production management to African textile and leather manufacturers in 2002. The company runs workshops for textile finishers and manufacturers of ready-mades that show how the eco-efficiency analysis can be used to develop production processes that are cost-effective while minimising the burden on the environment.

Together with its project partners, BASF developed a computer programme for the African textiles industry based on its eco-efficiency analysis. The “Eco-efficiency Manager” shows how to enhance the cost-effectiveness and environmental compatibility of work processes, thereby helping businesses to independently calculate and compare the cost and environmental impact of their production processes. The businesses are supported in their efforts by National Cleaner Production Centres (NCPCs) set up by UNIDO and UNEP and NCPC experts provide local support in environmental issues.

Rocky Brands signs agreement for new footwear line

21 June 2006

Designer and manufacturer of footwear and apparel Rocky Brands, Inc. has signed a licensing agreement with footwear company Sole Matters, LLC, whereby Rocky will produce, market and distribute a line of men's and women's casual footwear under the brand name Zumfoot.

Zumfoot products feature newly developed orthopaedic technologies including multiple interchangeable and modifiable footbeds made from cork; modelled on an anatomically correct last, which are said to provide extreme comfort. The Zumfoot footbed and leather linings are treated with an anti-microbial silver compound to prevent the growth of bacteria and fungus. In addition, several Zumfoot styles will feature unique leather, specially developed to reduce the environmental impact.

US Sublimation launches JetTran HR transfer papers

21 June 2006

Distributor of wide-format dye sublimation ink and transfer paper US Sublimation, a division of PrintVillage, has introduced a new brand of affordable high release coated transfer papers for wide-format digital dye sublimation called JetTranHR. Designed to release the highest amount of ink received to the substrate, JetTran HR is said to reduce ink consumption while improving image quality.

Textile printers and custom sportswear and apparel manufacturers are set to benefit from the transfer papers which are said to offer vibrant, sharp and saturated colours and images.

JetTran HR has a special coating that receives ink but prevents it from penetrating the paper’s inner layers and therefore facilitating the ink’s migration to the substrate during the sublimation process.

Gildan Nicaragua facility destroyed by fire

21 June 2006

One of US sportswear manufacturer Gildan Activewear Inc.’s sewing facilities, located in San Marcos, Nicaragua, has been destroyed following a fire at the plant. No Gildan employees were injured, and at this stage the company's assessment is that the economic impact to Gildan will be negligible.

Gildan has implemented contingency plans to replace production from this facility through increased production by external contractors and other Gildan sewing plants, including a second Gildan sewing facility located nearby in Nicaragua.

Vietnamese workers face serious health problems

21 June 2006

According to reports, an unusually high number of health problems are being diagnosed among workers in Vietnam.

Female employees at footwear assembly plants are said to be prone to anaemia and endocrine problems, affecting bones, muscles and joints. This could be a result of repeated arm and hand movements and uncomfortable sitting positions.

Overall, 37.9% of employees included in the survey suffered from headaches, while 35.9% experienced dizziness, respiratory problems and visual impairment.

Doctors have stipulated that working environments need to be changed in order to improve the health of many workers.

The study, conducted by the Hanoi Medical College in association with the Textile and Garment Medical Centre, also discovered that 40.7% of garment workers and 42.1% of workers in other fields suffered from workplace stress, partly connected with unethical pay conditions.

EU-US Summit to fight against counterfeiting

21 June 2006

US commerce secretary Carlos Gutierrez, European commission vice president and commissioner for industry Gunter Verheugen and EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson have launched a joint EU-US action

programme to tackle global intellectual property piracy.

The programme was conceived in 2005 and will be endorsed by the EU-US Summit in Vienna on June 21. The joint strategy is said to be an important reinforcement of the global fight against counterfeiting and intellectual property theft. It is the first EU-US joint enforcement programme of its kind.

The number of counterfeit items seized at EU borders increased by more than 1000% between 1998 and 2004, rising from 10 million in 1998 to over 103 million in 2004.

11th MÜSIAD international trade fair

22 June 2006

The 11th Müsiad International Trade Fair will take place from November 23-26 in CNR Yesilköy-Istanbul, Turkey and will incorporate Mutex 2006 for the textile, leather and garment industries.

160,000 visitors attended the last show.

Lanxess raises nitrotoluene price

22 June 2006

German chemical company Lanxess has increased prices world-wide for its nitrotoluenes and their derivatives by at least 10%, with immediate effect.

These basic chemicals cover a very wide range of applications and are used in the manufacture of products such as pigments and fluorescent whitening agents.

The increase is said to be the result of stark rises in raw material and energy costs.

Golf Galaxy records positive Q1 results

22 June 2006

Specialty golf apparel, equipment and accessories company Golf Galaxy has posted its financial results for the first quarter ended May 27 with net sales of $82.5 million, an increase of 40.9% compared with $58.6 million for the same period in 2005. Comparable store sales increased 1% in the first quarter, compared with an increase of 10.5% for the corresponding period last year. Net income for the quarter was $2.6 million compared with $1.7 million the previous year.

Golf Galaxy opened eleven new stores during its fiscal first quarter, including its first stores in the Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Oklahoma City and the New York City metro markets. The company currently operates 61 stores in 24 states.

Sir Chris Bonington to lecture at Keswick mountain festival

22 June 2006

Mountaineer Sir Chris Bonington will headline the series of ‘Hero’ lectures taking place at the Keswick Mountain Festival (KMF) in the UK on May 16–19, 2007.

Statistics from the Cumbria Tourist Board indicate that the Keswick (Allerdale District) area attracts over 2.7 million visitors annually. KMF will highlight the wide range of outdoor activities available in the area and encourage visitors to try new activities.

The activity timetable is still being developed in order to accommodate the high level of support the KMF is receiving from local businesses, activity providers and outdoor brands.

China focuses on IPR issues in WTO standardisation

22 June 2006

In order to promote work on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Issues in WTO Standardisation, the Department of WTO Affairs in China has called governmental departments together to discuss various solutions. The conference, hosted by Zhang Xiangchen, director of the Department of WTO Affairs of the Ministry of Commerce, was attended by the State Council Legislative Office, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Information Industry, among others.

Conditions of the 40th General Conference of the WTO Committee were announced during the conference and research regarding further development of work was presented.

Representatives from all units concluded that IPR issues in standardisation were significant to China’s economy, technological development and foreign trade and felt that all departments should pull together in the preparation for a December seminar on IPR Issues in WTO Standardisation.

Puma starts countdown to World Cup 2010

22 June 2006

With the 2006 World Cup still to run its course, German sports apparel and footwear company Puma has already kicked off preparations for the World Cup 2010 which will take place in South Africa. Puma currently sponsors

more than ten African national football teams.

Biotechnology to go on display at World Congress

22 June 2006

Industrial biotechnology is enabling a whole new wave of cleaner and greener consumer products and a variety of bio-based products will be on display in two venues at the third annual World Congress on Industrial Biotechnology and Bioprocessing, to be held July 11-14, 2006 at the Toronto Westin Harbour Castle Hotel.

A fashion show featuring bio-based clothing and fabrics made with industrial biotechnology will be staged at the event and will feature dresses from top designers Halston, Oscar de la Renta, Stephen Burrows, Heatherette, and Elisa Jimenez, all made with Ingeo fabric—which is spun from polylactic acid (PLA), a compostable biopolymer made from dextrose corn sugar.

Gildan Activewear acquires hosiery company

22 June 2006

Sportswear manufacturer Gildan Activewear Inc. has entered into an agreement to purchase 100% of the equity of Kentucky Derby Hosiery Co. Inc., based in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The total purchase price, including the assumption of all of Kentucky Derby's debt, is approximately $45 million. The acquisition is expected to close on or around July 3, 2006, the beginning of the fourth quarter of Gildan's fiscal year.

Kentucky Derby has annual sales in excess of $130 million, primarily consisting of private label programmes for US mass-market retailers. The company intends to utilise Kentucky Derby's experience and distribution with mass-market retailers to enhance its platform to build the Gildan brand in hosiery, underwear and activewear. Gildan is also currently constructing two new facilities at its Rio Nance manufacturing complex in Honduras, including a facility for the large-scale production of athletic socks, as well as completing the enhancement of its new Dominican Republic textile facility.

DuPont introduces new chemical protective solutions brochure

22 June 2006

DuPont Personal Protection has launched a new brochure on its range of Tychem, Tyvek and Proshield chemical protective apparel for the workplace. The guide is aimed at all health and safety and clothing specifiers responsible for protecting people at risk of exposure to dirt, liquid splashes, chemicals, biological agents, dusts, gases, vapours or mists during their working duties.

The brochure contains advice on factors to consider when selecting protective garments; information on the definition of CE marking, protective clothing type, design, fit and sizing; and the use of chemical protective clothing in explosive protection zones.

Dow introduces new development in olefin elastomers

23 June 2006

The Dow Chemical Company has introduced Infuse Olefin Block Coploymers (OBCs), a new development in olefin elastomers. The block architecture of Infuse OBCs is said to deliver enhanced performance and processing properties beyond current olefin elastomers, including high temperature performance, faster set-up in processing (reduced cycle times), improved abrasion resistance, and elasticity and compression set properties at both room and elevated temperatures.

Infuse will enable olefin elastomers to expand into a wide range of market applications including flexible moulded goods, profile extruded products, elastic fibres and films, foams, coated fabrics, and adhesives and tapes.

US FTA negotiations under scrutiny

23 June 2006

According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers' Association (SGMA), the prospects for concluding US bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with South Korea and Malaysia by early next year appear strong. This would allow agreements to be considered by the US Congress before July 1, 2007, the expiration date of the current trade promotion authority, and permit them to take effect as early as January 1, 2008.

However, the outlook for the FTA negotiations with Thailand is less promising, notwithstanding the fact they started over a year earlier. Recent political turmoil in Bangkok has made the likelihood of negotiations resuming in earnest less likely in the near future.

Thailand, South Korea and Malaysia are major suppliers of sporting goods equipment, athletic footwear and sports apparel to the US market. The three countries also represent significant potential export markets.

New head of subsidiaries at Nike

23 June 2006

Nike, Inc. has appointed Lee Bird as president,

subsidiaries as of July 10, reporting to CEO Mark Parker. Mr Bird will lead new business development and long-term growth strategies for the company's Converse, Cole Haan, Hurley International and Exeter Brands Group businesses.

He has more than 20 years of operations, finance, and business development experience at multinational companies. Most recently, he held the position of executive vice president of new business development for Gap Inc. Prior to that, he was chief operating officer of Gap and chief financial officer of Old Navy.

WSA magazine launches ezine

23 June 2006

Leading international sports and performance materials magazine WSA has launched a new ezine to enable readers to receive the magazine in electronic format direct to their computer.

The complete magazine can be downloaded, including cutting edge technical articles, in a fast and convenient format offering access to the latest developments in the industry at the click of a button.

The first issue of the ezine can be found on the homepage of www.sportstextiles.com where it can be downloaded absolutely free of charge.

Finish Line reports Q1 sales decrease

23 June 2006

Athletic retailer of apparel, footwear and accessories The Finish Line, Inc. has published lower sales for the first quarter ended May 27.

Consolidated net sales decreased 1% to $289 million compared with $291.3 million in the corresponding period in the previous year.

Net income for the thirteen-week period was $4.4 million versus $12.7 million for the thirteen weeks ended May 28, 2005.

South African and Chinese trade cooperation

23 June 2006

A series of bilateral agreements have been signed by representatives from South Africa and the People's Republic of China, including South Africa’s President Thabo Mbeki and the Premier of the People's Republic of China Wen Jiabao.

Speaking during the ceremony, President Mbeki said the number of agreements signed "underlines the importance of the strategic relationship that we have with the People's Republic of China and also underlines the extent of those relations".

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1998, trade between China and South Africa has grown significantly with China becoming South Africa's second largest import partner in 2005.

The signing of the cooperative agreements took place against a backdrop of mounting concern over the damage being caused by Chinese textile products to the South African textile industry with several clothing factories having been forced to close down and thousands of workers losing their jobs.

"President Mbeki and I both agree that the issue of textiles should not be allowed to compromise the overall economic trade between the two countries,” commented Premier Wen. He also said there were a number of moves being made by his country to minimise the economic damage that China's textile products in South Africa might have on domestic industries. He added that China would do its best to help relevant countries, including South Africa, to enhance their competitiveness in the production of textiles.

Dunning Golf sponsors junior golf programme

24 June 2006

Canadian performance golf apparel company Dunning Golf is to sponsor a special Youth Day programme at the John Deere Classic at TPC Deere Run in Silvis, Illinois, on July 11.

All children 17-and-under will receive free entry to the tournament site.