

## PRESS RELEASE

Specialist media for sport, trade | May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019

### SPORT 2000 INTERNATIONAL

## Next Steps in Running: Connectivity & Community

**SPORT 2000 International Category Manager André Navratil anticipates great potential for sport retailers from the current developments in the sport of running. The fields of connectivity and community in particular are becoming increasingly important to customers.**

All of Europe is running—in marathons, city runs, or just as a leisure activity. And no wonder, because with the right clothing and shoes, this is a sport that can be practiced anywhere and at any time of the year. Gadgets that were only used by professional athletes in the past—smart equipment like training watches and trackers—have become part of all runners' basic equipment now, no matter at what level they are running. They measure every step taken, the speed, pulse and distance run, and form the basic foundation for connectivity in the sport of running. Virtually no other field is seeing as rapid a development as this one. And beyond the technology, runners are looking for a sense of belonging. Running communities are increasingly becoming a way of life for dedicated runners and have great potential for sport retailers, too. *“Technical and personal connectivity is gaining ground fast in the sport of running. For sport retailers this represents a great opportunity to differentiate themselves from conventional stores by building communities and through technological features. Specialized running stores are not just there to provide goods, but have become a popular meeting place for keen runners of all ages and abilities”* explains André Navratil, who has been responsible for footwear and equipment for running, training, leisure, team sports and roller sports as category manager at SPORT 2000 International since 2018. The community building offer has many aspects. Group training courses for various skill levels, seminars about running and high-tech equipment for individual foot analyses are all popular with customers who are keen runners.

### **Absolute Run: A Specialist with Much to Offer**

A store that has uncompromisingly implemented community building in addition to its core skills of outstanding consultation, individual service and high-quality sporting items is the SPORT 2000 store Absolute Run in Bonn, Germany, which opened at the beginning of April. With floor space of around 210 m<sup>2</sup>, this store specializes in running and offers customers weekly training runs together with a professional partner. The store also features a 14-meter running track, including a high-speed camera, where customers can test running shoes directly. The additional sporting offers are complemented by regular in-store seminars on running. *“Runners have quite a need to discuss the topic. In addition to individual advice and outstanding service, the retailer’s future tasks will also be to cover this customer need. The ability to combine all this in one package, connecting all areas perfectly, will be what makes sport retailers successful in the future”,* says Navratil.

### **Brands Are Focusing on Lightweight Products, Shock Absorption and Sustainability**

Comfort, shock absorption and the efficient use of energy provide the greatest opportunity for the manufacturers of running shoes to differentiate themselves on the market. In particular, the trend towards lighter but better shock-absorbing shoes that also improve the rolling tendency of the feet is developing fast. Sustainability, too, is becoming increasingly important in the running business. Brands are increasingly taking responsibility for ensuring the entire supply chain—from production of the goods to the final disposal of the goods by the end customer—is as sustainable as possible. The first results from well-known brands are running shoes made partially of recycled materials and the manufacturing of more sustainable sporting fashion.

### **Category Manager André Navratil**

André Navratil is the category manager for footwear and equipment for running, training, leisure, team sports and roller sports. As most of his working time is dedicated to running, he prefers more variety in his leisure sporting activities: Some of his most favorite activities include cycling, snowboarding and e-gaming. He trained as an office clerk and retail specialist at ANWR GROUP eG. Navratil worked for SPORT 2000 Germany as product manager for the snowboarding division until 2014, and gained his first experience in e-commerce as joint head of the platform boardscout.de.

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**SPORT 2000 International**

With 3,555 businesses in 25 countries, SPORT 2000 International is the second largest buying group of independent sports retailers in Europe. In 2017, the sports retail company generated a total revenue of EUR 3.818 billion.

More information is available at: [www.sport2000.com](http://www.sport2000.com)



**Image 1:**



**Image 2:**

**Image text 1:** Since 2018 André Navratil has been responsible for footwear & equipment for running, training, leisure, team sports and roller sports as category manager. He considers community building to be an opportunity for specialist sport retailers

**Image text 2:** The newly opened Absolute Run Running Shop in Bonn offers weekly training runs for its running community

**Image rights 1:** SPORT 2000 International (photo may be reproduced if cited)

**Image rights 2:** Absolute Run Laufladen Bonn (photo may be reproduced if cited)



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