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FIFA hit with class-action lawsuit by parents and players over soccer's handling of concussions

The federal class-action suit calls for a court injunction to ban the heading of soccer balls for players under 14, citing the risk of long-term brain damage from concussions and sub-concussive impacts.

A new concussions lawsuit will soon be served upon FIFA, soccer's Blatter-led international governing body, as well as several affiliated organizations in the United States that oversee youth participation in the sport.

The federal class-action suit calls for a court injunction to ban the heading of soccer balls for players under 14, citing the risk of long-term brain damage from concussions and sub-concussive impacts.

"FIFA and each defendant acted carelessly and negligently in their positions as the regulator bodies for soccer and soccer players," says the 138-page complaint, filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Northern California. "FIFA and U.S. Soccer...had the power to direct and influence how the rest of the defendants treat concussion management issues."



Instead of monetary damages, the suit seeks changes to the game's rules and the establishment of a medical monitoring program, paid for by the soccer authorities, in which players and former players who believe they may have had a lingering concussion problem could get tested free medical testing.

"(FIFA) could say 'we agree, we could do a better job,'" said Steve Berman, an attorney at Hagens Berman in Seattle who brought the suit. "On the other hand, they're a very kind of imperial body, and I believe they've taken the position that there's no jurisdiction."

FIFA is based in Switzerland, but does extensive business in the United States, where the new suit says there are approximately eight million youth players.

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**Sports Goods
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FIFA’s co-defendants in the case are all American-based organizations. They are the U.S. Soccer Federation, the US Youth Soccer Association, the American Youth Soccer Organization, the National Association of Competitive Soccer Clubs and the California Youth Soccer Association, also known as Cal North, based in Pleasanton, California.

The plaintiffs in the suit, whose numbers will likely grow, are all soccer players or parents of players. Berman is an attorney who has had success with a similar lawsuit against the NCAA – a case in which the parties are waiting for a judge to give preliminary approval to a settlement that includes upgrades to NCAA’s practices in concussion management.



Seven pages in the middle of the suit outline how soccer can cause concussions and sub-concussive impacts that can lead to serious pathological and metabolic changes in the human brain.

“Former United States women’s national team members Brandi Chastain, Cindy Parlow Cone, and Joy Fawcett each played in hundreds of domestic and international competitions on behalf of the United States and each won the FIFA Women’s World Cup,” the suit says. “They no longer allow the players they coach, or their own children, to head the ball before high school.”

Source: nydailynews.com

Mattel Named Founding Champion and Official Partner of Special Olympics World Games Los Angeles 2015

Building on its longstanding support of Special Olympics, Mattel MAT, recently announced that it has been named an Official Partner of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles (LA2015). Mattel has committed volunteer and financial support to the 2015 World Games, which are dedicated to creating a better world by encouraging the acceptance of all people, including those with intellectual disabilities, through the power of sports.

“We are honored to help make the 2015 World Games a success,” said Bryan G. Stockton, chairman and CEO of Mattel. “Like Special Olympics, our fundamental goal at Mattel is to have a positive impact on children and families around the world. We look forward to helping celebrate and support the incredibly talented athletes who will join us in Los Angeles next year to compete in the Special Olympics World Games.”

Since the inception of its partnership with Special Olympics in 2005, Mattel has contributed nearly \$10 million to support events and programs around the world.

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More than 8,000 Mattel employees in nearly 50 countries have participated in Special Olympics volunteer activities, making “Team Mattel” the organization’s single largest global corporate volunteer force. Through programs that engage children with intellectual disabilities – like the Special Olympics Young Athletes™ program – Mattel and the Mattel Children’s Foundation have partnered with Special Olympics to expand the involvement of children with intellectual disabilities in Special Olympics activities around the world.

As one of the largest supporters of employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities in California, Mattel is committed to inspiring children and adults with intellectual disabilities throughout the world. This commitment extends to the company’s executive team, many members of which are personally involved with Special Olympics. Notably, Bryan Stockton, Mattel’s CEO, serves as a member of the board of directors of the 2015 Special Olympics World Games, and Kevin Farr, the company’s CFO, sits on the Special Olympics International board of directors.

“Mattel has made an incredible commitment to Special Olympics and LA2015,” said Patrick McClenahan, president and CEO of LA2015. “With a corporate partner like Mattel, we can continue with our mission of changing lives through the power of sports by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities.”

Source: <http://www.marketwatch.com>

Everything Is Awesome: Lego Leaps Barbie For World's Largest Toy Maker

The Lego Movie didn’t just kill it at the box office — it also took over the toy store.

Thanks to the hit Warner Bros. movie, Lego announced recently that sales jumped 11% in the first six months of the year to just over \$2 billion, making the Danish brick builder the world’s largest toy maker in the world for the first time. Lego surpassed Mattel, the owner of Barbie.



Lego’s results were boosted by merchandise tied to The Lego Movie, which made nearly \$470 million at the global box office, but they represent a larger trend. Lego’s sales have tripled in the last six years and the company has branched out into new markets. While revenues from Europe and the Americas were up by double digits, sales in China increased the most, by more than 50% since a year ago. Lego just opened its first factory in Jiaxing and a new office in Shanghai.

Lego’s rise has occurred over the same period that has seen Mattel struggle. In July, Barbie’s company announced declining sales for its flagship, along with other key brands like Hot Wheels and Fisher-Price. Earlier this year, Mattel bought the company behind Lego competitor Mega Bloks for \$460 million, including debt.

There’s still the lucrative holiday season for Mattel to catch up. The majority of toy sales occur in the second half of the year, and the movie’s effect may have worn off by then.

Source: Forbes.com

SGEPC organizes seminar on Financing schemes and subsidies by SIDBI & NSIC in Jalandhar & Meerut

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SGEPC organized seminars on financing schemes and subsidies by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) on 13th August, 2014 at Jalandhar and on 1st September, 2014 at Meerut. The seminars also included a presentation on 'India Sports 2014' being organized by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) from 6th- 8th November 2014.



The seminars were well attended by over 60 industry representatives from the Sports goods sector at Jalandhar and by 25 representatives at Meerut. At the seminars, various finance schemes and subsidies by SIDBI and NSIC were discussed.

Mr Praveen Mittal (Joint Director, FICCI) gave a brief about the INDIA SPORTS 2014 which is being organized by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports along with FICCI in association with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) with support of SGEPC from 6th -8th Nov, 2014 at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi.



Mr R.S. Rana (Vice Chairman, SGEPC) and Mr Manish Mahajan (Regional Director, SGEPC) stressed on technology up gradation in Sports goods sector by using the available schemes of SIDBI and NSIC. They also emphasized on need to develop Indian Sports goods sector by participating in International events with the help of NSIC so that the Indian Sports goods sector increases its market share in the International market.

Snapdeal sniffs Rs 1K crore from sports goods

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Like books, electronics and fashion, sports goods too are now fast moving to the online space. India's e-commerce biggie Snapdeal said it may end this financial year with a revenue of Rs 900 crore from the sports and fitness category. And this excludes sports apparel and shoes.

"When we launched the sports, health and fitness category in 2012, it was a nascent category. Last year, this segment grew to a monthly run rate of Rs 20 crore. Since then it has seen a sharp increase with sales touching a monthly run rate of Rs 75 crore as many health conscious Indians value sports as an important part of wellbeing," said Amit Maheshwari, VP, fashions, Snapdeal.

While cricket contributes significantly to this, sport like hockey and badminton are seeing rising interest. Snapdeal, which does over \$1 billion in annual sales, has an assortment of over 50,000 goods in the sports category. Apart from sports equipment related to cricket, football, squash, table tennis, hockey and badminton, there is fitness equipment like treadmills, stationary bikes, rowing machines, elliptical trainers, weight training tools and nutrition products related to heart, respiratory care and sexual wellness.

Ernst & Young estimates the sportswear retail market in India at Rs 36,500 crore and estimates this is growing at about 33%. E&Y includes sports apparel, footwear and accessories, with footwear being the largest segment, accounting for around 60% of the total market. Maheshwari said lower retail penetration and challenges associated with distributing sports equipment has added to the complexity of sports-related retailing in the country .

India's successes in badminton has helped grow that market. India won three badminton medals in the 2014 Commonwealth Games. With Saina Nehwal and Ashwini Ponnappa making a marking in the international circuit, there's growing interest among enthusiasts, said Maheshwari.

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>

SGEPC Newsline is the electronic newsletter of the Sports Goods Export Promotion Council

For any suggestions/ queries, please contact us at:-

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