

Nobbits hopes to “tie up” the market for specialized shoelaces

Posted on Thursday, May 20, 2021

Fitchburg-based Nobbits USA LLC makes shoelaces that lessen the chances of knots coming untied.

Nobbits makes shoelaces from polyester with raised dots — “nobbs” — formed from an adhesive on both sides of the shoelace. These nobbs create consistent tension throughout the lace stopping knots from coming undone and creating a more comfortable fit.

The nobbs are strategically placed throughout the shoelace to reduce the amount of slippage between the eyelets, which is the most common reason why shoes come untied. A study done at UC-Berkeley revealed that when running, feet hit the ground seven times greater than the force of gravity, which in turn drives the inertial force of the shoelaces forward, causing them to come untied quicker.

On Nobbits’ shoelaces, the nobbs lock the shoelace and knot in place, making it almost impossible to naturally come untied.

Veteran sports entrepreneur and Nobbits founder Ron Brent said the company plans to focus sales on active people, such as athletes. And he anticipates a wide audience as more than 2 billion pairs of shoes are sold each year, with about 60 million active people.

Brent added that about 40 percent of athletic injuries are related to ankle or foot

sprains. Nobbits strives to create a safer, more comfortable fit for athletes.

Nobbits has already received interest from basketball leagues and programs, physical therapists, and other retailers once full production starts. With COVID-19, production was delayed due to the manufacturing of the primary production machine. Once the company enters the market this spring, it plans to sell its shoelaces primarily through wholesale and other venues in various sizes — 36, 45 and 54 inches.

Brent is also the founder of RB Publishing and part of well-known magazines such as Bally Total Fitness, Personal Fitness Professionals and Inside Wisconsin Sports. He also founded Interscholastic License Company, which is an e-commerce company that provides spirit apparel to schools across the country, along with Sponsorship America, an organization that sells sponsorships for local sports associations like the WIAA and WIAC.

Other Nobbits team members are Amos Anderson, Justin Hajny and Jerlando Jackson, who bring a combination of business, marketing and entrepreneurial expertise to the mix.

Nobbits was among the 55 semi-finalists for the 2021 Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest, which will culminate at the Entrepreneurs' Conference in June.

-By Jenna Langrehr

Langrehr is a graduating student in the UW-Madison Department of Life Sciences Communication.