



ISPO Munich, the world's leading trade fair for the sports industry and the world's largest sports business event, is about to begin and will soon present the prestigious ISPO Awards to the most innovative products and newcomers of tomorrow. The ISPO Awards are regarded as a global driving force for the sports industry. Showcasing the latest trends and innovations in product design, materials and digital solutions, these awards set new standards for the future of the sports industry.

The best products of 2024 will be honoured at ISPO Munich in December and can be seen at the ISPO Award area in Hall B1 from 3 to 5 December 2024. At the same time, newcomers to the sports and outdoor industry will be given a stage at ISPO Brandnew, the largest start-up competition in the sports business, where they will present their innovative products in exciting live pitches during ISPO Munich. The grand finale will take place on the second day of the event on the Main Stage.



innovation, thus providing a curated overview of the most important trends in the industry. For the brands, innovations are enormously important and indispensable, whether in the textile sector, where much has changed in terms of materials, or in the integration of AI into all sub-sectors of the sporting goods industry. An expert jury of business professionals and regularly changing, sports-loving retail consumers from the ISPO Collaborators Club will review the submitted product innovations in advance and award prizes to the ones that meet the relevant criteria.

The submitted products make it possible to identify and observe trends. In 2024, the spectrum of trends continues to include sustainability in relation to textile innovations, the circular economy and recycling, as well as retail consumers' desire for multipurpose use of diverse products. The integration of technology and the ever-growing role of AI numbers among the most exciting observations.



### SUSTAINABILITY AS THE STANDARD

New EU legislation has led to an acceleration in the development of sustainable, functional materials. At this year's ISPO Award jury meetings, numerous exciting material innovations were observed, especially in the textile sector. Progress in chemical treatments, such as PFC-free DWRs and textiles, is also remarkable. "Sustainability is increasingly becoming the norm, which means that consumers are coming to expect it as standard", says juror and textile expert Dr Regina Henkel. "Progress is visible, for example, in the use of mono-materials or bio-based fabrics such as wool-Tencel blends", which are used, for example, in this year's ISPO Award winner Icebreaker with the Merino Blend 800 Real-Fleece Classic Pile LS Zip.

The ISPO Award entries also make it obvious that the performance of sustainable products made from recycled fibres has improved markedly so that the functionality of these products is now fully on a par with non-recycled items. Nevertheless, recycling will not be the solution to all future challenges, which is why manufacturers are increasingly incorporating into their collections natural fibres and biodegradable sports textiles, either in pure form or as a blend.

### MULTI-USE REMAINS A TOP TREND



The trend towards multifunctional products reflects consumers' desire for practical solutions. Particularly in Asia, multifunctional hardware products are perceived positively, while in Europe the focus is on textiles for multifunctional use. "High-quality, high-performance materials and designs are being adapted as everyday fashion, thus appealing to a broader target group", explains trade journalist Dr Martina Wengenmeir, who is also one of the ISPO Award's jurors. The "urban outdoor" trend is continuing and multipurpose products are also coming into focus in the area of commitment. One example of this is the Outdoor Backpack 45L from Peak Design, which combines fashionable and multifunctional design with full performance.

ISPO Award juror Dr Wengenmeir has identified another trend: "There is a growing focus on technical sports products designed specifically for women. These include football shoes with a design that is genuinely their own. This development goes beyond simple adjustments and includes well-thought-out designs in terms of fit and functionality." These also include the BettHer - Bra Antishock+: the bra relies on a patented thermoplastic gel technology that provides excellent shock absorption

and protection during intense activities.

### INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

A trend from Asia that is also arriving in Europe is the integration of technology into clothing, for example



through sensors and warmth apps. The personalisation of garments using technologies such as AI and sensor technology for temperature regulation is regarded as a potential growth area, despite concerns about sustainability.

Technology is also playing an increasingly important role for brick-and-mortar retailers, for example, when it comes to analysing the right product for the customer. Treadmills for running analysis are well known, but this year's ISPO Award winner, the Skimulator, is a patented world first for a perfect fit of ski boots. This state-of-the-art simulator precisely simulates slope gradients, thus enabling the perfect fit of the ski boot.

#### ISPO BRANDNEW AWARD

ISPO Munich also provides a stage for the most innovative and creative newcomers in the sports and outdoor industry. Previous ISPO Brandnew winners include pioneering brands from all over the world that have redefined the boundaries of their respective fields with innovative materials, cutting-edge technology and sustainable action. Four start-ups each from the categories "Outdoor & Adventure & Snowsports", "Performance, Body & Mind (physical product)", "Sustainability" and "Sports Technology & Platforms" will pitch their ideas live on the main stage. A sneak peek at the innovations on show includes: BreezeLabs, which monitors breathing patterns during exercise; no normal coffee, coffee in a tube; and the AeroGraph Puffer Jacket, a weather-insulating jacket. The winner will be announced in the grand finale on the second day of the fair (4 December 2024).

*Source: ISPO, Messe München*