

NEWS ALERT



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ON THE WORLD SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY!

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SGMA: Lacrosse, Running, Camping among hottest '09 sports

In response to a survey by the SGMA, the five "hottest" sports for sales growth in 2009 will be fitness walking, lacrosse, running, aerobic training, and camping. In its 2009 State of the Industry Report, the SGMA also said that many sporting goods executives surveyed "see the industry coming out of this recession viable and stronger, due in large part to Americans' sustained interest in sports, fitness and recreation activities." As reported, the report shows that the U.S. sporting goods industry was a \$66.3 billion business in 2008 (at wholesale) - down 3.2% from 2007. SGMA said in a statement that a "perfect storm" of rising energy, labor, raw material and transportation expenses impacted manufacturers' cost structure early last year, and the overall economic downturn negatively impacted consumer demand in the second half of 2008. For the first time since 2003, the sporting goods industry did not outperform the national GDP rate, which increased 1.1% for 2008. But the industry fared far bet-

ter than the other components of the national consumer durable goods category which had a composite GDP decrease of 7% in 2008. "This was a tough year, as evidenced by the first decline in manufacturer shipments since 2003. And given the overwhelming economic uncertainty at present, it's hard to say 2009 will be better," said Tom Cove, president of the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA). "However, despite the weak economy and rising costs of doing business, there is no indication that Americans are less involved in sports, outdoors, and fitness activities than before the recession and history tells us that giving them up is one of the last sacrifices dedicated participants are willing to make." The SGMA's 2009 State of the Industry Report was sponsored by Dow Corning. SGMA sees technology as a critical element of future sales growth. "Given the obesity crisis facing the United States, many lament the sedentary lifestyle created by laptops, iPods, video games and social networking," said Cove. "Yet

at the same time, technology in sports products is a leading driver in creating consumer interest and demand. Our report suggests innovative products featuring new technology will be important in restoring industry growth as the overall economy improves. Further, we believe manufacturers and retailers who best use new media creatively and aggressively to connect with consumers will create a competitive advantage for themselves."

Looking Back at 2008

The sports apparel industry fell by 2.0% (at wholesale) from \$29.5 billion in 2007 down to \$28.9 billion in 2008. While demand was strong, many consumers simply opted for lower-priced apparel. On the plus side, since 2000, sports apparel sales have grown by 24.6%. In recent years, the strength of the category has been based on the fact that consumers enjoy the performance fabrics that provide compression, moisture management, and temperature control. SGMA said, "The appeal of this is undeniable."

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Today's high-tech clothing leaves athletes comfortable and able to perform at a high level." As for athletic footwear, wholesale shipments dropped 4.6% -- from \$13.0 billion in 2007 to \$12.4 billion in 2008. Here, consumers spent more for each pair, but they purchased fewer pairs. The entire category has grown by 37.8% since 2000. The top five categories in '08 for athletic footwear were running, classics/originals, kids, basketball, and skate/surf. The top three growth categories for athletic footwear were out-

door/adventure (up 8% to \$580 million), sport sandals/slides (up 6.7% to \$167 million), and tennis (up 5.0% to \$165 million). In sporting goods equipment, the big statistical gainers were firearms/hunting (up 10% to \$2.54 billion), fishing (up 10% to \$1.93 billion), optical goods (up 7.5% to \$1.21 billion), ice hockey (up 5.9% to \$218 million), and camping (up 3.3% to \$1.74 billion). Camping's surge was partly due to families substituting this outdoor excursion for a more costly vacation. Fitness equipment conti-

nues to be the largest category under the sporting goods equipment banner. In 2008, it registered \$4.2 billion in U.S. wholesale sales, representing a 10.1% drop in sales from the previous year. This decline reflected consumers' unwillingness to spend for big-ticket home equipment and the negative impact of plummeting housing starts on the fitness business. The wide variety of user-friendly and gender-friendly machines is helping to sustain the fitness industry.

Source : SportsOneSource



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Nike Foundation joins cross-sector leaders in first-of-its-kind symposium focused on engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality

Beginning March 30, Brazil played host to the first-ever, high visibility conference aimed at highlighting the importance of engaging men and boys to empower girls. The Nike Foundation has joined more than 450 cross-sector leaders in this unique symposium to explore research and best practices by programs that challenge rigid gender norms and engage men and boys in reducing violence against women and girls, promoting sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and fatherhood and caregiving. The Nike Foundation presented lessons learned from its work to engage men and boys in the girl effect at the four-day "Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality."

Men and boys are central to defining and shaping the life experiences of girls. In impoverished communities, girls' education and future economic opportunities are often blocked by early marriage, child-birth, and high risk of HIV infection and other health threats. The results are irreversible and ensure the persistence of poverty in those communities. Gender expectations and norms are predictors of girls' opportunities to become supported, educated and empowered in a way that benefits everyone. "The girl effect is about breaking the cycle of poverty and building a sustainable global economy. Girls and boys are equally critical to the solution," said Lisa MacCallum, Managing Director of

the Nike Foundation. "The programs we're funding create opportunities for men and boys to see how whole communities benefit when girls are seen as powerful economic actors and family resource managers, rather than a resource drain and financial burden." The Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Gender Equality took place in Rio de Janeiro, from March 30 through April 3, 2009. The Symposium was co-hosted by: Promundo (Brazil), Instituto Papai (Brazil), White Ribbon Campaign Canada, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the MenEngage Alliance, and Save the Children Sweden.

Source : Nike

eBay calls on EU to step up fight against counterfeit sales

eBay, the world's biggest online auctioneer, asked the European Union to do more to fight sales of fakes by reviewing data-privacy rules and creating a continent-wide intellectual-property network. Counterfeit goods hurt eBay by eating into sales, damaging its image and alienating customers, Chief Executive Officer John Donahoe said in a report. The recommendations will be presented to EU Financial Services Commissioner Charlie McCreevy. Counterfeiting is a \$200 billion-a-year industry, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. For eBay, bogus merchandise has led to lawsuits in Europe and the U.S. -- with brand owners such as Tiffany & Co. and LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SA saying the company

should do more to stop sales of fakes. Next month, a Paris court will rule on a lawsuit by L'Oreal SA over sales of fake perfume. eBay says it does all it can, urging brand owners to help fight the problem. "Counterfeit goods harm consumers and merchants," Donahoe said in the statement. "Only the rights owners and law-enforcement agencies have the necessary expertise, incentives, resources and legal tools to attack the issue at its source." While less than 0.2 percent of the 2.7 billion listings on eBay's site last year were identified as "potentially counterfeit," their damage to its business forced it to act, the San Jose, California-based company said. Last year, eBay suspended 30,000 sellers and referred 505 cases to police for investigation. To improve collabora-

tion with rights owners, eBay recommended the EU review data-privacy law to see whether it "hinders their ability to track and sue counterfeiters." The company also advised examining policies that bill brand owners for the destruction of seized fakes. That would help remove "any unnecessary obstacles and disincentives for rights owners" to support the campaign, eBay said. eBay recommended focusing on counterfeit products, rather than the sale of genuine items outside authorized networks. Regulators also should study the mechanics of how counterfeiters operate, looking at where the goods are made, the company said.

Source: Bloomberg

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Counterfeit golf equipment seized in Beijing

The U.S. Golf Manufacturers Anti-Counterfeiting Working Group announced that raids to a factory in Beijing resulted in the seizure of nearly 10,000 pieces of counterfeit golf equipment, including more than 740 assembled golf clubs, 1,500 club heads, 4,700 golf grips, 2,300 shafts, 280 headcovers and assorted golf towels, golf bags and apparel. On March 24, the Beijing Chaoyang Administration for Industry and Commerce (AIC) and the Chaoyang Public Security Bureau (PSB) jointly conducted raids against an assembly and warehouse facility of the Sunshine Golf Store located at Shangxinpu, Huanggang Village, Chaoyang District, Beijing. The owner and seven other persons were arrested by

the PSB after the raid. The U.S. Golf Manufacturers Anti-Counterfeiting Working Group said this extensive enforcement action was conducted after complaints were filed with the respective local AIC and PSB organizations by the U.S. Golf Manufacturers Anti-Counterfeiting Working Group. The seized goods were illegal copies of authentic products made by all six of the Group's members. It is anticipated that Chinese authorities will pursue criminal prosecutions in this case. The Group was formed in 2004 to petition governments to enforce their country's laws against counterfeiters of golf equipment products. As a result of the Group's petitioning efforts, dozens of successful raids of manufac-

turing, warehouse, assembly and retail facilities have been conducted by Chinese law enforcement and civil enforcement authorities over the past five years. Several business operators have been arrested and many have now been prosecuted in the Chinese courts. The U.S. Golf Manufacturers Anti-Counterfeiting Working Group consists of the world's leading golf equipment manufacturers. Its members and brands include Acushnet Company - Titleist, FootJoy and Cobra Golf; Callaway Golf - Odyssey, Top-Flite and Ben Hogan; Cleveland Golf / Srixon; Nike Golf; PING; and TaylorMade-adidas Golf and Ashworth Golf.

Source : *SportsOneSource*

Mammut revenues rise 8.8% in 2008

Mammut Sports Group increased sales by 8.8% to CHF192.6 (\$171.3 million) last year. Without currency translation effects, growth would have reached double figures. Conzeta Group, its Switzerland-based parent, said, "Overall, Mammut Sports Group can look back on a pleasing year. The early onset of winter resulted in a powerful end-sprint as 2008 drew to a close. Sales of Mammut brand products grew by 16% year-on-year, thanks primarily

to buoyant demand for clothing and technical products. The revamped Raichle footwear collection will be relaunched under the Mammut brand and made available through specialist retailers from spring 2009." The company also noted that Mammut Sports Group strengthened its distribution channels in 2008. The takeover of a distributor in Great Britain opened the way for the establishment of a Group-owned sales company. In collaboration with specialist retailers, a se-

cond franchise store was created in Germany, as well as a number of shops-in-shop. The first Mammut flagship store in Japan opened its doors at a prime location in Tokyo. Conzeta concluded, "From today's perspective, on the evidence of advance orders for summer 2009, the Sporting Goods business unit can look forward to 2009 with confidence."

Source : *SportsOneSource*

Adidas AG, Adidas Canada file trademark infringement suit against payless

adidas AG and adidas Canada Limited have filed a law suit in the Federal Court of Canada against Payless ShoeSource. The law suit claims, in part, that certain footwear sold by Payless infringes upon adidas' rights in its Three-Stripes Mark. Internationally, adidas has vigorously sought to protect its rights in the famous Three-Stripes Mark and this Canadian law suit marks another step in adidas' continued international efforts to protect its brand symbol.

Internationally, similar legal disputes between adidas and Payless have been ongoing for some time now. After almost 7-years of litigation between adidas and Payless in the U.S., the case proceeded to trial last April. In that case, the jury reached a unanimous verdict last May finding that, for 267 styles of shoes, Payless had willfully infringed upon the rights of adidas with respect to the Three-Stripes Mark and/or the Superstar trade dress. The District

Court further confirmed the jury's findings of infringement. While the U.S. litigation is now on appeal, adidas is confident that the Judgment entered in the U.S. District Court will be upheld. While adidas would have preferred to resolve the dispute in Canada without the need for litigation, it has been unable to do so, and adidas has now filed this law suit to protect its rights in Canada.

Source : *SportsOneSource*

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Under Armour CEO misses '08 Bonus

Under Armour, Inc. CEO Kevin Plank voluntarily cut his \$500,000 salary to \$26,000 last year, according to a filing with the Securities & Exchange Commission. When the company recently fell short of its targeted 2008 revenue of \$775 million by nearly \$50 million, Plank also became ineligible to receive his estimated \$1.47 million bonus, but the company founder took the biggest hit in the value of his Under Armour stock. The company wrote in the filing that Mr. Plank "believes he should be compensated for his services based primarily on our company's performance through our annual incentive plan." For 2008, the eligible bonus amount for Mr. Plank

ranged from \$368,500 to \$1,474,000, based on a sliding scale tied to the level of income from operations as a percentage of net revenues, up from a range of \$250,000 to \$1,000,000 (or 50%-200% of base salary paid during the year) for 2007. Based on Plank's voluntary reduction in base salary, the Compensation Committee determined that his 2008 maximum bonus level should be increased by \$474,000, equal to the amount by which he reduced his salary, based on their belief that his "continued leadership and superior performance was a critical part of Under Armour's ongoing strong performance and that the maximum compensa-

tion for which he was eligible should not be decreased from 2007 to 2008." The impact of UA share prices is certainly more painful than the loss of the bonus and reduced base salary for Mr. Plank. Based on his ownership or direct control of 12.5 million shares, the value of his holdings has fallen nearly 63% since the end of 2007, or a value of approximately \$204 million at market close on March 24, 2009, compared to \$546 million at market close on December 31, 2007. For the new year, Plank has apparently proposed a salary freeze on Under Armour's top executives.

Source : SportsOneSource

ASICS to sponsor USA Field Hockey

ASICS America Corp. reached a multi-year partnership that designates ASICS as the Official Partner and Exclusive Sponsor of footwear, apparel and accessories of USA Field Hockey. Starting with the upcoming 2009 season, the men's and women's National Teams will be outfitted in ASICS performance apparel and footwear. The contract, which runs through 2012, is the largest corporate partnership in USA Field Hockey's history. The announcement comes after the success of the U.S. Olympic Team for Women's Field Hockey at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. "This new rela-

tionship follows a tradition of ASICS supporting the Olympic movement across the globe. We are extremely proud to become a partner of USA Field Hockey and be involved in their quest to become contenders for 2012," says Gary Slayton, ASICS Vice President of Marketing Communications. The Women's National Team debuted their new ASICS uniforms in February at the 2009 Pan Am Cup in Hamilton, Bermuda, as they begin their journey to the 2012 Olympic Games in London. In addition to outfitting the National Teams, ASICS will support the entire USA Field Hockey organization.

"While the Men's and Women's Senior National Teams will garner the majority of the support, ASICS sponsorship is committed to the entire USA Field Hockey Organization, including both Under 21 teams," says Laura Greatbanks, ASICS Team Marketing Manager. USA Field Hockey is the national governing body for field hockey in the United States and is a member of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), the Federation Internationale de Hockey (FIH), and the Pan American Hockey Federation (PAFH).

Source : SportsOneSource

Nike sues two Chinese companies

Nike is suing two Chinese companies for copying one of its logos - a silhouette of former basketball star Michael Jordan slam-dunking, according to China Daily. Nike contends that Shanghai Century Lianhua Chengshan Supermarket Co Ltd was illegally displaying and selling fake sports pants bearing the logo for nearly a year. The first defendant

purchased the pants from the second defendant, Shanghai Kangchen Garment Co Ltd, said Nike's attorney Kong Qin at a hearing in Shanghai No 2 Intermediate People's Court yesterday at a hearing, according to the newspaper. "We didn't know the Nike logo is similar to that on our products," said Tang Yun, the attorney of the two defendants.

"It is true our logo bears some resemblance to Nike's, but ours also includes the word 'sports' in block letters, therefore one could not be mistaken for the other," he said, adding that the compensation asked for "is way too high". No verdict has been reached yet.

Source : SportsOneSource

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Skechers enters eyewear license

SKECHERS USA, Inc. has signed a worldwide licensing agreement with Viva International Group to create SKECHERS-branded sunglasses and prescription eyewear. The SKECHERS eyewear collection line is set to debut in Spring 2010. Viva already has eyewear licensing agreements with Bongo, Candies, Guess?, Rampage and Tommy Hilfiger. "In the last few years, we broadened the reach and offering of our brand with accessories and apparel" began Michael Greenberg, president of SKECHERS. "By adding eyewear to our product offering, SKECHERS will

be meeting the needs of our consumers from head-to-toe. In growing our SKECHERS licensing operations, we have selected partners who can carry the strength of our footwear brand into new products and markets," added Mitchell Lewis, senior vice president of licensing for SKECHERS. "With a stellar reputation and strong global network, Viva is an ideal company to design and distribute our eyewear around the world." "SKECHERS is an essential complement to our portfolio of brands," noted Frank Rescigna, president of Viva. "We understand

what an incredible opportunity it is to showcase the first SKECHERS eyewear collection. The unique trend appeal of the SKECHERS brand allows Viva to instill design detailing into every facet of the frame, delivering a diversified collection for the entire family." Viva will design, manufacture and distribute at over 700 Viva Eyewear opticians as well as department and specialty retailers worldwide.

Source : SportsOneSource

Rossignol to cut 30% of workforce

Rossignol plans to reduce 30% of its global workforce, or about 450 jobs in total. According to www.france24.com, Rossignol chairman Bruno Cercley said in a statement that the layoffs were "unavoidable," adding that the group was "determined to get back into balance in the next two years."

The group had an operating loss of €58 million (\$77.1 million) last year on sales of €270 million (\$358.8 million), according to the news website. Besides Rossignol, the company owns the Dynastar, Look and Lange brands. In November 2008, Quiksilver Inc. completed the sale of Rossignol to Chartreuse & Mont Blanc for

€40 million (\$50.8 million). Australia's Macquarie Group Ltd. is the majority owner of Chartreuse & Mont Blanc, headed by former Rossignol CEO Bruno Cercley. Jarden Corp. is a minority investor in Chartreuse & Mont Blanc.

Source : SportsOneSource

Timberland to reduce global tire waste

The Timberland Co. will launch two new footwear collections featuring outsoles made using recycled rubber from discarded tires. The company notes that currently, more than seven billion tires sit in landfills worldwide, leading to one of the largest and relatively unknown environmental issues. Through the use of Green Rubber proprietary and patented technologies, Timberland will help transform waste tires into a valuable raw material. "We are facing an unpublicized epidemic with 1.2 billion tires being disposed in landfills every year leading to water pollution and breeding grounds for disease-carrying insects," said Datuk Vinod Sekhar, CEO and Founder, Green Rubber Inc. "With Green Rubber's environmentally friendly technology, we can start to make a real

dent in the mountains of tires creating an environmental blight on the planet." Timberland said it will be the first footwear manufacturer to commercialize Green Rubber technology, incorporating it into the outsoles of more than 200,000 pairs of shoes scheduled for release in fall 2009. Using a blend of Green Rubber compound and virgin rubber compound (for an outsole that is made up of 42% recycled tire crumb), Timberland is able to maintain the durability and performance characteristics of their footwear. "We are thrilled to have found a way to support making rubber a more sustainable resource. Green Rubber is positioned to have a major impact on the global rubber industry; managing tire waste can now become both a commercially

viable and eco-conscious process," said Jeffrey Swartz, CEO, The Timberland Company. "As a company we are committed to connecting successful commerce to environmental responsibility, and this is a great opportunity for us to share our commitment to sustainability with our customers." By 2012, Green Rubber intends to recycle the equivalent of more than 200 million discarded tires every year. The company is about to launch an aggressive expansion program as it looks to open new manufacturing plants for its revolutionary rubber compound in the Americas, the Middle-East, Asia and Europe.

Source : SportsOneSource

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Trade groups protest New Child Safety Requirements

Scores of manufacturing trade associations, including the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association and Bicycle Products Suppliers Association, descended on Washington on April 1 to help fight to amend the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act. The Act focuses on lead and phthalate content in toys and consumer goods. The group's efforts are chronicled at www.amendTheCPSIA.com. According to a statement from one of the groups attending, The International Association of Skateboard Companies (IASC), implementation of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) "is following a worst-case scenario for manufacturers, retailers and charities. Because of flaws in this law, millions of per-

fectly safe products are in the process of being destroyed, costing U.S. businesses billions of dollars in the midst of one of the worst economic crises in history. Charitable organizations and thrift stores are being forced to pull inventory from their shelves at a time when American families need them more than ever. The supply of science supplies to schools is being curtailed. Youth model ATV and dirt bikes are no longer available creating a safety issue for children. Even libraries are at risk of legal liability for lending children's books. All of these violations of common sense are being done in the name of safety. It added, "From unrealistic compliance deadlines that made it impossible for industry or the CPSC to adequa-

tely prepare before the law went into effect, to the unprecedented decision to retroactively apply the new lead standards and phthalates ban to inventory already sitting in stores and warehouses, CPSIA is causing massive disruptions to industries across the board, particularly small and medium-sized businesses." The IASC noted that to date, Congress "has refused to fix the flaws in this legislation or even to hold public hearings on the problem. That's why business and charitable groups are organizing a fly in, rally and Congressional briefing on Capitol Hill to meet with Members of Congress, provide information and bring attention to the CPSIA crisis."

Source : *SportsOneSource*

Nike to trim shipments from China and Vietnam

Nike said it plans to stop orders from three footwear factories in China and one in Vietnam as the global downturn forces the company to trim output, according to published reports. Additionally, Nike will cancel shipments from several apparel contract plants. At the same time, the company has decided to close its lone Niketown location in Waikiki, HI, ending an 11-year run, according to a report by Honolulu's *Star Bulletin*. The Waikiki location is

one of four locations Nike has shuttered this year, including the Nike Factory Store in Darien, GA, Nike Store in Skokie, Ill., and Nike Store in Santa Clara, CA. According to the report, a total of about 120 employees have been laid off but Nike has declined to break down numbers specific to each site. "As a normal course of business, we have and will continue to review our retail fleet to ensure we are creating value for consumers and driving profitabi-

lity," said Nike spokeswoman Mary Remuzzi. "We decided to close Niketown Honolulu as a result of this review of retail." As part of the decrease in overseas orders, Nike is allowing the factories in question six months to a year to find new customers and fill their capacity. Nike also said that it could cut up to 1,400 jobs, around 4% of its global staff.

Source : *SportsOneSource*

IOC scraps Olympics torch relay

The International Olympic Committee has got rid of the international Olympic torch relay after last year's was dogged by protests. The BBC reports that IOC executive director Gilbert Felli said the decision to scrap the international relay had been taken after the first relay for

the Athens Olympics in 2004. "We came to the conclusion it was easier for the torch to stay inside the (host) country," he said. "There were difficulties with the NOCs (National Olympic Committees), and we also saw the risk with a torch relay going around the world.

"Beijing had planned an international torch relay and we accepted it. We saw in the debrief that the risk was there and the IOC decided not to do it (again). "I think when the torch relay is inside the host country there is more control."

Source : *sportbusiness*

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Crocs to buy employee stock options

Crocs Inc is launching a cash tender offer for employee stock options worth up to \$315,000. Crocs said it decided to make the tender offer following a decline in its stock price since November 2007, which "has significantly eroded the value of a substantial number of outstanding options held by our employees," according to a regulatory filing. The exercise price of the outstanding options far exceeds the present

market price of Crocs' common stock, the company said in the filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The company expects to incur a one-time stock-based compensation charge of up to about \$32 million if all unvested eligible options are tendered and accepted. The charge represents the compensation expense related to the acceleration of vesting on the unvested options tendered in the offer, which would otherwise be

expensed over their remaining vesting period in the future if not tendered, Crocs said. As of March 27, there were about 5.1 million options eligible, meaning that they had an exercise price at or above \$10.50 per share. If all the eligible options are tendered and accepted in the offer, the total purchase price would be about \$315,000, Crocs said.

Source : SportsOneSource

Obama welcomes IOC to Chicago

US president Barack Obama put his weight behind Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympic Games as the IOC visited his hometown. Obama recorded a video address for an IOC Evaluation Commission tour of the windy city, which took place this weekend. "Chicago is that most American of American cities," he said. "It's a city where the world's

races, and religions, and nationalities all live and work and play and reach for the American Dream that brought them here; where our civic parades wave the colors of every culture; where our classrooms are filled with the sounds of the world's languages; and where jazz and rancheras and bhangra can be heard down the street from one another."

The AFP website reports that Chicago organisers are hoping to use Obama's star power to boost the city's chances of hosting the Games, after it slipped to fourth favourite behind bids from Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro and Madrid.

Source : sportbusiness

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