

SPORTS INSIGHT

TRENDS, PERSPECTIVE AND ANALYSIS

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End Insight

HEADSUP



Top right: New Era Teamasco. Clockwise from top left: New Era Hempie; New Era Da Bull; New Era Big Mes; Twins Duncan; Twins Mowat; Twins Ratchet; Twins Havok; New Era Triband

CHECKING IN ON TRENDS UP TOP

BOLD LOGOS IN THE URBAN MARKET, DISTRESSED fabrics for the college crowd, and a funky mix of fabrics are driving licensed headwear styles for 2009.

Steven David, director of marketing and communications for Twins, whose brand is positioned as a lifestyle label, notes that the trend towards distressed fabrics is continuing into 2009. "The signature of our business is the relaxed, garment washed cotton caps, and we are starting to look more into distressed fabrics and tearing."

The tearing process the brand uses is very random, with hats getting unique rips, not done in a formulaic way. "If you buy a dozen of our hats and have them hanging on a peg, eight or 10 of those would look completely different," says David. "The idea is to recreate the look of a 'favorite hat' that is four or five years old."

The distressed process can involve airwashing and sandblasting, along with tearing. "It's similar to the way the jean designers have come out with people paying \$150 for jeans that went through a snow blower."

A key introduction at Twins for Spring 2009 will be its green initiative. The brand will be the first company to have licensed recycled-hats on the market, with two hats made partially from recycled polyester (RPET), which is generated from recycled plastic.

Eco-friendly and performance fabrics are on the radar at New Era, according to Gina Goss, lead designer for the fan business unit, and Brian Radko, lead designer for the lifestyle business unit at New Era.

"We're seeing a trend towards technical fabrics that perform," says Goss. "The traditional fabrics just aren't as exciting to the consumers anymore. They want to know if a cap wicks away sweat, lets their head breathe, dries fast, is eco-friendly, etc. Anything with added value is good. Also, we're seeing a trend where consumers are starting to look for bright (or POP) colors in their headwear which may have different shades of a single color so it can hook up with a lot of different clothes."

New Era reports that its business is split fairly evenly between fashion and fan driven, if not a bit heavier on the Fan side. "The fashion consumer is wearing our Authentic Collection, the cap you see MLB players wearing on the field, now, but wearing it as fashion," says Radko. "However, that's not to say the fan doesn't want a cap that is fashionable. Fashion to the fan may be that techy fabric – instead of plain cotton or wool – or even that new super-distressed look. What's also current right now is some consumers sticking with basic caps like a white-on-white or black-on-black simply because it can stay in their wardrobe longer." ■