

FN HOME

FOCUS

SNEAKERS

Why Champion Is Setting Its Sights on the Footwear Market

By Erin E. Clack / November 20, 2017 5:48PM



Champion is launching a premium footwear collection for adults and kids under licensee BBC International.

Courtesy of brand

One of the most ubiquitous sportswear brands in the '90s, Champion has pulled off quite a fashion comeback. The nearly 100-year-old brand's iconic embroidered "C" logo is hotter than ever, showing up on countless celebrities and social media influencers including Kylie Jenner and Kim Kardashian.

Now Champion is looking to leverage that momentum to conquer the shoe scene. The label, a division of HanesBrands Inc., has partnered with Boca Raton, Fla.-based BBC International to launch a premium footwear program for the whole family. Men's and women's collections will debut for fall of next year, followed by a kids' line in spring 2019.

“The brand has never been stronger, so we feel the timing is right to establish a footwear division that aligns with what we’re doing with our specialty apparel,” said Don Burton, Hanes’ director of licensing.

Seth Campbell, SVP of business development for BBC, said Champion taps into the wave of retro nostalgia that is sweeping the fashion world. “You’re seeing this resurgence of all these ’90s sneaker brands, and Champion is at the top of that list. It’s having a real moment.”

Set to be unveiled to buyers Nov. 29 to Dec. 1 at the Fashion Footwear Association of New York show, the inaugural footwear collection will feature a mix of fashion-athletic and true athletic styles using materials such as engineered knits, mesh and neoprene. Retail prices will top \$100.

“We’re creating a very high-tech, better-grade collection that will sit alongside Champion’s premium lifestyle apparel,” said Bob Campbell, BBC’s chairman and CEO.

To build buzz ahead of the collection’s retail launch, BBC plans to roll out a series of high-profile collaborations — a strategy that has paid off for the clothing division. In recent seasons, Champion has unleashed a steady stream of attention-grabbing capsule collections with influential labels such as Supreme, A Bathing Ape, Off-White and Undeclared.

“We can’t reveal specific details yet, but you’ll see us teaming up with some of the great collaborators out there today,” said Seth Campbell, noting BBC is excited to bring Champion into the footwear market. “It’s such a well-loved brand with a strong history and heritage, so we think we can build an incredible footwear program around it.”