

# Decathlon to open multi-storey Sports Hub concept in SA

International company Decathlon, the largest sporting goods retailer in the world, is planning to open a "first of its kind" Sports Hub in Bryanston, Johannesburg this coming July. The Hub will encompass two storeys of retail space, a third storey with a wellness, strength and conditioning gym, and 160 undercover parking bays.



Key partnerships have also been established with trusted brands such as Biogen, Garmin and others, who will occupy their own 'store within a store' concept. In addition, a café owned by a South African sporting hero will supply healthy snack options.

Further innovations within the Sports Hub are two large transport containers, with strong symbolism lying in community upliftment, innovation and sustainability. On entry, the fully solar-powered community container utilising local resources, becomes a sports equipment washing and sports merchandise alteration and repair station, run by previously disadvantaged members of the surrounding community.



## Expansion in SA

Founded in 1976, the French family-owned company now has 2,080 stores in 56 countries and is unique in that it also owns 20 in-house brands. With a dedicated product development and design team, the second largest research and development team in France after Renault, Decathlon registers on average 40 patents per year.

The company arrived in South Africa in 2017 and has opened four classic stores in Johannesburg since then. Now with further expansion, the Decathlon Bryanston Sports Hub has been designed to offer a new innovative experience in a competitive retail market, according to the retailer. Twenty-seven South Africans will make up the Sports Hub's staff complement.

The Bryanston Sports Hub is also the new South African headquarters of the Decathlon Academy, which provides 5,000 hours of training per year to upskilling their employees. Validated trainers share their knowledge across both soft skills and technical topics to fellow 'Decathlonians'.



Denzley Mthombeni (Bryanston Sports Hub store manager) with Xavier Paolozzi (CEO Decathlon SA)

## Connecting communities across 60 sports

Decathlon states that it believes that quality sporting goods should be accessible to all, from the beginner to the advanced, at a fair price.

“Each of our brands is dedicated to a specific sport or practice and designed for each skill level. We reinvest our profits into research and development, helping to give accessibility to sport,” says Xavier Paolozzi, CEO of Decathlon South Africa. “Our brands are tested and validated in real-life conditions by our technical partners. During these mission tests we ensure they are reliable, safe and adapted to each specific usage.”

The classic stores in Alberton, Boksburg, Roodepoort and Centurion, are each home to the apparel and equipment of 60 sports, have an adjacent playground for customers to gather and enjoy their sport of choice and test the Decathlon products. Professionals, customers and teammates are able to use this space, often holding coaching clinics, soccer games and workshops. “We innovate to champion the athlete in everyone, our everyday heroes. Whatever the barrier to participation, we innovate to overcome it,” says Paolozzi.

“The Sports Hub will enable sporting communities to connect and share in similar experiences from all levels of competency,” adds Paolozzi.



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Lauren Hartzenberg 26 Apr 2021



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The retailer says it also aims to partner with smaller local businesses and entrepreneurs that share similar values in a healthy lifestyle and a passion for sport, to give them a space to help boost them in their entrepreneurial journey.

Decathlon offers a 365-day return policy and 2-year warranty on its products, and offers a corporate gifting and branding service as well as wholesale opportunities to resellers who align with the company’s ethos. The online store ships nationally.

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