

Thursday, February 28, 2008

[The 50 Best Running Shop Stores In America](#)

The Running Network, LLC and Footwear Intelligence announced the 2007 list of the 50 Best Running Stores in America. The full list was revealed for the first time at the Running Event last month in Austin.

The announcement of the list capped off a near year-long search that took into account more than 2,000 nominations from consumers, the mystery shopping of more than 120 stores, and input from leading running vendors.

"The list features only 50 stores, but it was created to recognize and honor the entire channel," said Larry Eder, president of The Running Network, LLC. "There are more great running stores out there now than at any other time and the entire program was created to reflect that."

The criteria to select the stores was changed from last year based on feedback from stores and vendors. However, a Mystery Shopper Rating conducted by The Franklin Resource Group, the sport industry's leading merchandising services company, still counted for a strong percentage (50%) of the overall grade. "The Mystery Shopper Ratings were way up this year over 2006," said Mark Sullivan, editor of Footwear Intelligence, which administered the program. "Last year, if a store scored in the high 60s out of a possible 100, it had a good chance of making the list. This year, we had stores that scored in the mid 70s out of a possible 100 and yet they did not make the 50 Best list."

Midwest

Athletic Annex / Big River Running / Elite Feet, Kansas City / Fleet Feet Chicago / Fleet Feet Cincinnati / Fleet Feet St. Louis / Garry Gribble's Sports / Gazelle Sports / Hanson's Running Shop / Movin' Shoes, Madison / Naperville Running Co. / Playmakers / Runners High'N Tri / The Running Spot / The Running Company, Indianapolis

The West

A Snail's Pace / Bandanna Running / Boulder Running Company / Fleet Feet Davis / Fleet Feet Tucson / Heart & Sole Sports / Napa Running Company / Runner's High, Menlo Park / Ryan's Sports Shop / Salt Lake City Running Co. / See Jane Run / Skinny Raven Sports / Super Jock'n Jill /

The South

1st Place Sports / 9th Street Active Feet / TAF Raleigh / Big Peach Running Co. / Fleet Feet Huntsville / Fleet Feet Tulsa / Luke's Locker / Metro Run & Walk / Pacers Running Store / Potomac River Running / Roger Soler Sports / Running Zone, Melbourne / Run On / Runner's Depot / Track Shack / Virginia Runner

The Northeast

Bryn Mawr / Elite Runners & Walkers / Fleet Feet Adams-Morgan / Fleet Feet Syracuse /

Flying Feet Sports / Georgetown Running Co. / Marathon Sports / Medved Sports / Jack Rabbit Sports / Whirlaway Sports

Finalists for Store of the Year

9th Street Active / Bryn Mawr Running Co. / Fleet Feet Huntsville / Luke's Locker

How The 50 Best Was Selected

There were new criteria for selecting the 50 Best Stores in 2007. Last year the results were based largely on a mystery shopping rating of each stores that was conducted by The Franklin Resource Group, the leading store merchandising company serving the sporting goods industry. This year, the mystery shopping accounted for 50% of the total evaluation. A community involvement rating accounted for 25% and credit scores and evaluation from vendors accounted for the remaining 25%.

Rating Criteria for The Mystery Shopping

* How promptly were you greeted? * How knowledgeable and helpful was the staff
OVERALL? * How many choices of items in your size and price range did they bring you to try on? * Were they polite and respectful? * Did they offer additional information beyond your question(s)? * Were you thanked and given incentive to visit the store again in the future? * How would rate the overall experience? * If you were shopping with your own money and interested in running, would you return to this store? * Did the sales person measure your foot? * Did the sales person measure your gait for specific needs? (ie - overpronation, underpronation or neutral) * Were try-on socks available? If so, were they clean? * Did the sales person help you beyond the shoe selection? (ie - discussed apparel or accessory items, etc) * Did the store carry a wide range of sizes, colors and brands of running shoes? (refer to brand list above in report instructions) * Was your size available in the shoe(s) the associate suggested initially? * Were all of the prices clearly marked? * What kind of range of accessory products does this store carry? (socks, insoles, water bottles, hats, watches, etc) * Was the store well-lit, clean and easy to maneuver? (rate overall) * Was the merchandise presented in a way that was easy to understand and shop? (rate overall) * Was the fitting room for apparel comfortable, well lit and clean? * Was the checkout procedure quick and simple? * Rate the sales associates on their attire. Were they readily identifiable? * Please add anything (positive or negative) that you experienced during your visit:

Total evaluation was worth 100 points

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