

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Ralph Lauren turns to TV to spotlight Olympic fashion

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Opening ceremony uniforms created for the U.S. Olympic team by Ralph Lauren

By SARAH JONES

U.S. apparel brand Ralph Lauren is raising awareness for its role in the Olympic Games through an inspirational television commercial.

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Titled "My Time to Be Remembered," the 30-second spot features athletes who will be representing the United States in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil allowing them to share in their own words what the global competition means to them. As the official outfitter of American Olympians, Ralph Lauren is taking the opportunity to showcase its national pride.

"Ralph Lauren's TV buy helps optimize and extend the benefits of its sponsorship as official outfitter of the U.S. Olympic team," said Jim Gentleman, senior vice president of account management and strategy, **SK+G**, Las Vegas.

"NBC anticipates more than 20 million people watching its primetime coverage of the Summer Olympics from Rio and millions more watching online and on TV during other day parts," he said. "The TV ad and broadcast presence helps cement Ralph Lauren's association with Team USA."

Mr. Gentleman is not affiliated with Ralph Lauren, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Ralph Lauren did not respond before press deadline.

Competitive edge

Ralph Lauren's ad features wrestler Jordan Burroughs, marathon swimmer Haley Anderson, BMX biker Connor Fields, swimmer Ryan Lochte and paratriathlete Melissa Stockwell.

The spot opens with a swimmer diving into the water, breaking through the Polo logo.

In voiceover, each of the athletes gives a glimpse at the Olympic experience through their eyes.

Mr. Burroughs says how this is "[his] time to be remembered." Beach volleyball competitor April Ross is seen running on the sand as she explains that her whole life has been in training for this moment.

Mr. Lochte speaks of being able to push his body, while Mr. Fields shares that the hard days are what build champions.

At the end of the video, the Polo Ralph Lauren logo appears along with text telling of the brand's place as the official outfitter of the U.S. team.

My Time to Be Remembered

According to [Ad Age](#), Ralph Lauren's spot will air from Aug. 6-16.

While Ralph Lauren has used television as a channel to push its fragrance collections, this represents the first time the brand has advertised its clothing on TV in eight years.

Consumers watching at home can show their support for the U.S. team by purchasing the official merchandise from Ralph Lauren, including the same attire that will be worn by the athletes during the opening ceremony.

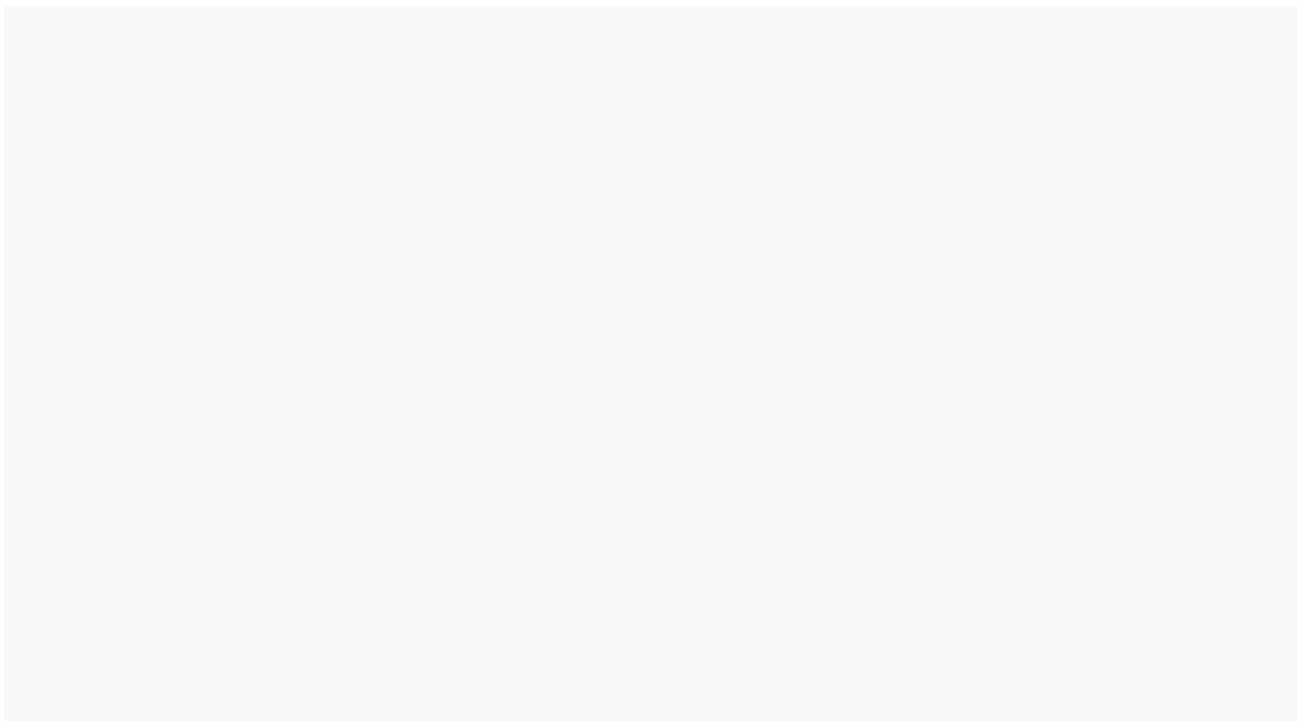
These items can be customized with a name, allowing consumers to put a personal touch on their patriotic apparel.



Ralph Lauren Olympic attire

Online, Ralph Lauren delves into the made in America origins of the collection with a video. Interviewed are Rochester, NY-based menswear tailor Hickey Freeman and shoe manufacturer Rancourt & Company, which calls Lewiston, ME home.

For the first time ever, the jacket that will be sported by the U.S. flag bearer will be illuminated. In an effort to spread the word, Ralph Lauren is prompting consumers to share the news with the hashtag #LikeToLight, with each tweet, Facebook post or Instagram post donating \$1 to the U.S. Olympic Committee's outreach program Team for Tomorrow.



Introducing the Official 2016 #TeamUSA Opening Ceremony uniforms, including the first-ever illuminating Flag

Bearer Jacket, which makes its debut on the @Todayshow this morning. #RoadtoRio From 7/29/16 to 8/6/16, like or share a post with the hashtag #LikeToLight on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook & The PRL Fdn. will donate \$1 (up to \$100K total) to Team for Tomorrow, the USOC's community outreach program. Click bio link for program rules.

A video posted by Ralph Lauren (@ralphlauren) on Jul 29, 2016 at 6:39am PDT

"Part of Ralph Lauren's allure is its timelessness and sense of Americana," Mr. Gentleman said. "The company's partnership with Team USA not only promotes the brand's fashion sensibilities but also its strong ties to the U.S.

"The Olympics bring world-class achievements, a connected world and joyous celebrations all attributes befitting an aspirational lifestyle brand such as Ralph Lauren," he said.

Primetime promotion

While luxury apparel is not typically a category that advertises on television, some brands have broken into the medium for special events.

U.S. footwear and accessories label Stuart Weitzman highlighted its connection to pop music with its first television that aired Aug. 30 during MTV's Video Music Awards.

The 30-second spot featured frequent brand face Gisele Bündchen performing the Electric Slide accompanied by a specially created track and a troop of male dancers. With a history of dressing the feet of famous singers for the stage, this advertisement may have inspired viewers at home to invest in the same brand their favorite artists count on ([see story](#)).

Apparel and accessories marketers in the luxury sector reserve television advertising for accessible products such as fragrance, but Louis Vuitton's first commercial signaled powerful branding opportunities on the channel.

Louis Vuitton dropped its first TV spot in 2012 that was part of its L'Invitation au Voyage branding campaign while Ralph Lauren experimented with the medium through its first network sponsorship two months earlier. TV is certainly an expensive mass marketing channel, but fashion houses with a larger budget should not discount the branding power of TV ([see story](#)).

"Historically, Ralph Lauren has seen its sales surge during its past Olympics partnerships," Mr. Gentleman said. "With this TV ad buy and a focused social media program, I'd anticipate both increased sales as well as a boost in top-of-mind cachet for the brand during and immediately following the Rio 2016 Olympics."

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