

PARTNERING WITH BRANDS THAT ALIGN WITH YOUR VALUES

As an athlete, the brands you endorse have a significant impact—not just on your personal brand but also on the influence you have to promote sustainable practices to fans. Being selective with your sponsorships and contract terms can help ensure that your values align with those of the brands you support.

1. Choose Brands with Transparent and Ethical Practices

- **Research and Verification:** Look for brands that openly share their sourcing, manufacturing processes, and labour practices. Reputable certifications like Fair Trade, GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard), B Corp, or Bluesign indicate a brand's commitment to ethical practices.
- **Public Stance on Sustainability:** Many brands now provide annual sustainability reports that showcase their goals, progress, and challenges. Checking these reports can give you insights into a brand's dedication to reducing its environmental footprint, improving labour standards, and investing in sustainable innovation.

2. Request Sustainability Clauses in Sponsorship Contracts

- **Contractual Agreements for Transparency:** When considering sponsorships with large brands, especially those in the fast-fashion sector, ask for sustainability clauses in your contract. This could include requiring brands to commit to transparency in their supply chain, outlining specific ethical practices, or adopting eco-friendly materials for any apparel associated with your image.
- **Encourage Responsible Product Lines:** If a brand you're interested in working with already has a sustainable collection or recycled line, consider focusing your sponsorship on that segment.
- **Minimum Sustainability Standards:** Some athletes request that brands achieve or maintain certain environmental or ethical benchmarks as part of their sponsorship agreement. This could involve minimum recycled content in materials, responsible labour practices, or a commitment to avoiding single-use plastics in packaging.
- **Leverage Contracts for Positive Impact:** If you're approached by a fast-fashion brand, consider adding conditions that push for more sustainable practices within the partnership. This could mean specifying recycled or organic materials in collections bearing your name or image, prioritizing eco-friendly packaging, or including environmental targets in your contract.



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Prepared by Joanna Czutkowna October 2024
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3. Advocate for Change from Within

- **Using Your Influence:** As a high-profile partner, your influence within a brand can lead to real change. If a brand doesn't have an eco-friendly line, consider suggesting a collaboration to create one. Many brands are open to new ideas from their ambassadors, especially when there's public demand for sustainability.
- **Promote Sustainability in Brand Campaigns:** As a sponsored athlete, you can propose promoting the brand's most sustainable initiatives. This may include participating in eco-focused campaigns, advocating for recycling or reuse initiatives, or showcasing sustainable practices like fair trade or organic material use.

4. Partner with Brands that Champion Circular Fashion

- **Collaboration for Reuse and Recycling:** Some brands focus on extending the product lifecycle through reuse or recycling initiatives. By partnering with these brands, you can showcase a shared commitment to reducing waste and promoting circularity. You could even help launch take-back programs, where fans can return used apparel for recycling or upcycling.
- **Highlight Community and Social Responsibility:** Brands that engage in circular practices often work with charitable organizations, recycling programs, or local communities to responsibly manage used products. Collaborating with brands that support community-focused reuse or donate gear to those in need highlights your dedication to both environmental and social causes.

5. Use Your Platform to Talk About Your Sponsorship Choices

- **Lead by Example:** Fans are increasingly looking to athletes for inspiration on sustainable practices. Use your voice to talk about why you choose to work with certain brands and the specific steps they're taking to minimize environmental impact.
- **Educate Your Audience:** Share how you approach sponsorships, highlighting sustainability clauses in your contracts, your choice to partner with eco-conscious brands, and why supporting these initiatives matters. This can inspire others to adopt similar values, furthering the reach of sustainable practices across the industry and fan base.
- **Publicly Endorse Sustainability Initiatives:** You can use your influence to emphasize sustainability by publicly supporting only the brand's eco-conscious lines. Highlighting these choices in interviews, social media, or promotional events sends a strong message about responsible fashion.



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