



Let the 'Mighty' Rise Track and Field Performance Top

Nigel AR Joseph, Washington State University

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Men's Small: Bust (36"), Waist (30"), Hip (37")

Contextual Review and Concept: Athletes have historically taken advantage of their platforms to shed light on different issues that have gone overlooked. More recently, several athletes have taken their agency to peacefully protest social issues, such as the treatment of young Black males or equal payment for female athletes. However, some of their polarizing actions have bewildered spectators and have affected sports organizations and sponsors bottom lines. Thus, the purpose of the design is to virtual engineer digital textile which challenges the views on social equity without being misinterpreted. Accordingly, the design of the performance top is from a progressive Black masculinity perspective that values the "centralize the experiences" of people whose "social conditions have been least written about, studied, or changed by political movements" (Hooks, 1984, p. 25 as cited in Sanders, 2011) based on critical race theory, Black feminist thought and the theory of intersectionality (Mutua, 2006).

Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact: The source of design inspiration of this design was the legend of Canadian 'Mighty' Harry Jerome. From seven world records to advocating for people of colour in media and advertising, that Order of Canada Officer was an individual who overcame physical and societal barriers to usher social change and produce exceptional performance. The digital design of the performance top is an ode to society's fixation on the perception of underrepresented people and not on their merits. The graphic features of the digital textile embody the social climate of the 1960's in United States and Canada. The clouds represent the collective aspirations for equality, equity, understanding, and change, whereas, the ridged converging lines symbolized the constricting ideologies of society. The patterned design allows for aesthetic and functional flow, showcasing the artwork. The grey, black, and muted purple colourway signifies agency, power, and beauty despite being undervalued. The artwork fades into black as to reflect the ending of completion. The negative space maple leaf emblem with a blackout of "Mighty" Harry Jerome's iconic finishing lean reminds the wearer to close all aspirations with desire and self-pride regardless of the barriers presented and the outcome. The reduced seams pattern with posteriorly placed seams (centre back and shoulder seams) theoretically reduces aerodynamic drag, while increasing net propulsion during power/speed movements (Terra, Sciacchitano & Scarano, 2018).

Process, Technique, and Execution: The design and construction process for the performance top includes: 1) deconstruction of a fashionable performance top into one flat two dimensional piece, 2) digitization of the two dimensional piece using Lectra Digitizing Board, 3) virtual correction and modification of digitized pattern using ModarisV8R1, 4) alteration of the digitized pattern in Adobe Illustrator for the ideal garment pattern, 5) creation of the garment print design in Adobe Photoshop for the digitized pattern design, 6) merging the pattern with the print design in Adobe Illustrator, 7) printing the prototype fabric on Mutoh VJ 1638WX printer in the 100% cotton single knit, 8) cutting out, constructing, and altering the prototype, 9) updating the digitized pattern, 10) outsourcing Contrado USA to print patterned design on 82-18% polyester-lycra matte fabric, and 11) cutting and constructing the final garment incorporating 86-14% nylon-spandex power mesh shoulder panels.

Cohesion/ Design Contribution and Innovation: The performance top contributes to a new way of integrating social awareness for athletes, sports organizations, and companies by demonstrating critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and creative expression to provoke social ideologies of race, class, gender, ability, sexuality and intersectionality. The performance top gives all athletes a method to effectively communicate for social change without being polarized and misinterpreted by spectators. The performance to gives companies and sponsours an opportunistic advantage of monetizing the athlete's social activism with the marketing and sale of the digital print. Conjointly, this performance top will be worn by a 'mighty' para-athlete to increase awareness for people with chronic illness, allowing the athlete to rise through the clouds despite the constrictions of muscular dystrophy.

References

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