

SoccerAmerica's Youth Soccer Insider

Thursday, September 6, 2007



Buying the Right Cleat for Your Foot

By Dev K. Mishra, M.D.

In the [last article](#), we learned the basic principles that govern proper cleat selection. In this section I will outline some specific brands that I find work well, and will attempt to do so by matching them to specific foot type, and field condition.

These recommendations are my opinion only, gathered through observation of what works and what doesn't through my years of medical practice, and experience as a player and coach. I have no relationships with any cleat manufacturer, and I will note that the major brands have a fantastic selection that will allow you to find the right fit within your favorite brand.

Rule No. 1: Start with the best fit

The temptation as a parent purchasing cleats for a growing child with a growing foot is to buy cleats that are a bit too large, thinking that your child will "grow into them" and thereby save you some money in not having to buy another pair too soon.

The problem with that from a medical standpoint is that the foot will move too much in the shoe, which can lead to problems such as blisters, heel pain, and arch pain -- all of which lead to lost playing time.

Veteran adult players will sometimes buy cleats a size or two too small to enhance "feel" on the touch. This can cause problems in the toes, and a nerve problem called a "neuroma."

The foot will function best if the shoe is purchased at the correct size now, with a sturdy and properly supportive heel counter, and a supportive arch.

Try the shoes on in the store with the thickness of sock you'll wear during training and games. Shoes with synthetic uppers will stay about the same size throughout their usage, but leather uppers will mold and adapt to foot contours over time (several weeks of use).

Rule No. 2: What Type of Foot Do You Have?

In the United States, Adidas and Nike dominate the cleat market. Other manufacturers with excellent products

but perhaps harder to find at your local soccer store include Puma, Diadora, and Kelme.

There are probably a dozen other manufacturers available from online merchants, again with excellent products. How do you begin to sort through all the brands to find the right choice?

I would start by learning whether you have a wide flat foot, a narrow high-arched foot, or a "neutral" foot. A good salesman should be able to help you with this with a gauge to measure your feet, or if you really have problems consult a sports podiatrist or orthopedic surgeon before you shop. Let me begin with a broad statement, based on personal experience:

Wide feet: try Adidas or Kelme, and consider a leather upper.

Narrow feet: try Nike.

Neutral feet: You're in luck, you can wear almost any brand.

Rule No. 3: Know Your Field Conditions

In the [previous article](#), we learned that the type and design of the cleat is affected by field conditions, and in turn, the right shoe for your field condition will affect your foot's health and your performance.

If you are doing speed or agility training with no ball work: wear a running shoe.

Firm, reasonably well maintained grass field: Firm Ground Cleats (what most players will need in the fall)

Synthetic/Artificial Turf: Turf Shoe

Very Hard/Dirt Surface: Hard Ground Cleats

Soft or Wet Surface: Consider Soft Ground Cleats, although I think I see a higher number of knee injuries in players wearing soft ground cleats.

Rule No. 4: Pick Your Shoe

Now, we can deal with some specifics. The lists below are my opinion only, compiled from an examination of the cleats themselves, and from seeing what doesn't work from problems in my office. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the podiatry staff at the Saint Francis Center for Sports Medicine in San Francisco.

Some Commonly Available Popular Models, prices from \$40 to \$300.

Adidas:

Predator Absolute

Predator Absolion

+Absolado

F10.7 (synthetic)

F30.7 (synthetic)

7406 (leather)

F50.7 TUNIT - customizable shoe, including possible orthotic insole and wide width upper.

Nike:

Mercurial Vapor series

Total 90 Laser

Diadora:

Maximus RTX 14

Maximus LU RTX 14

Maximus SU RTX 14

Classic Cleats

Can be used with Custom Orthotics, Widely available at local shops. Have withstood the test of time by recreational and world-class players. No glitz here -- serious blue-collar models that have won World Cups:

Turf: Adidas Copa Mundial, Puma King, Nike Air Legend.

Hard Ground (HG): Adidas Copa Mundial; Puma King Classic, Nike Air Legend.

Firm Ground (FG): Adidas Copa Mundial, Puma King Classic, Nike Air Legend, Nike Air Zoom Total 90 Series.

Soft Ground (SG): Adidas World Cup, Puma King, Nike Total 90 Series.

Cleats for Wide Feet

Adidas +Predator Absolute TRX FG WL - Wide

Adidas +F50.7 TUNIT Wide Upper

Kelme Master Infinito

Kelme Champion.

Summary Points

- * Buy shoes at the correct size -- not too small or too large.
- * Figure out whether you have a wide or narrow foot, and steer toward a brand that tends to accommodate your foot type.
- * Determine the surface you are likely to be playing on, look towards cleats made for those ground conditions.
- * Select from the models above, or use the principles above in any other model.

Dr. Mishra is an orthopedic surgeon in private practice in Burlingame, California. He is a team physician with the U.S. Soccer Federation, U.C. Berkeley, and the California Victory Soccer Team. Dr. Mishra's Web site is <http://www.thesoccerdoc.com/>.

FEEDBACK: Send comments to letters@socceramerica.com. Please include your first and last name and hometown.

Thursday, September 6, 2007:



You are receiving this newsletter at willett_2@msn.com as part of your membership with Soccer America. If this issue was forwarded to you and you would like to begin receiving a copy of your own, please visit our site - members.socceramerica.com - to join. If you'd rather not receive this newsletter in the future, [let us know](#).

Please do not reply to this email.

Editorial Contact: mike@socceramerica.com

Membership Contact: SoccerAmerica@pcspublink.com

We welcome and appreciate forwarding of our newsletters in their entirety or in part with proper attribution.

(c) 2007 Soccer America, 1144 65th Street, Suite F Oakland CA 94608 USA
