

Sh*t That I Knit tried out for the Olympics — and made it

The Boston-based business is producing a collection of official Team USA beanies and mittens.

By **Angela Yang** Globe Correspondent, Updated November 15, 2021, 8:54 a.m.



Christina Pardy founded Boston-based knitwear brand S*** That I Knit, which is now an official licensee of Team USA for the 2022 Winter Olympics. SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

When athletes and fans sport Team USA beanies and mittens at the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing next year, they'll be wearing the designs of a small knitwear brand born and based in Boston.

Christina Pardy sold her first collection of knit hats at SoWa Open Market in 2014 before quitting her job to turn it into a full-time business. Seven years later, S*** That I Knit is an official licensee of Team USA.

“I’m still kind of pinching myself,” Pardy said. “We knocked on wood so much the last couple of months waiting for this to happen.”

The effort to secure the deal was years in the making, Pardy said. In 2018, she had a chance encounter with a high-ranking member of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Properties team who had walked into STIK’s pop-up store in New York City. That was when she began to shoot her shot.

After collecting a business card from the visitor, Pardy created samples, sent them off to him, and followed up every few months with new images or ideas. Gradually, she said, STIK seemed to grow on USOPP despite — or perhaps because of — her persistence.

ADVERTISING



“It was a very new company that definitely didn’t have any business pitching this opportunity, but I figured I’d stay on it since it was four years away,” she said. “They liked the brand a lot, liked how much we wanted it, and they gave us a chance. It’s been huge for us as a small brand.”

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Peter Zeytoonjian, USOPP’s senior vice president of consumer products, said several of Team USA’s winter athletes were already fans of STIK when the licensing agreement was still in the works. When USOPP members saw the products in person, he said, they were impressed by the quality.



The collection includes red, white, and blue beanies displaying the letters “USA,” along with matching “TEAM” mittens — all with the official Team USA mark sewn in. SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

“We worked with the brand to create an authentic collection for fans that’s already Team USA athlete-approved. We’re extraordinarily proud to work with everyone at the STIK team,” Zeytoonjian wrote in an e-mail, “including Christina, a female founder with a compelling American success story who carved out her own niche in the winter apparel market.”

The [collection](#) includes red, white, and blue beanies displaying the letters “USA,” along

with matching “TEAM” mittens — all with the official Team USA logo sewn in. Fans preferring a more subtle look can opt for a classic white beanie and a set of white mittens, which also bear the logo. The hats can be topped with interchangeable faux fur or yarn poms.

Pardy said she went for a bold retro look on the collection, aiming to create classic pieces that won't fall out of style. The USOPP had taken a liking to a striped red, white, and blue beanie STIK was already selling, so all it took was adding the custom stitching to top it off.

Olympic snowboard champion Hannah Teeter, who calls herself a long-time fan of STIK, said the brand has been a “game-changer” since she discovered its beanies years ago.

“I always wear my STIK snowboarding,” Teeter wrote in an e-mail. “Everyone knows it's me on the mountain because they recognize the pom pom beanie.”

STIK, which began outsourcing the creation of its products to a group of women in Peru after the business took off during its first year, has had a string of successes since its inception. The company's apparel is sold in stores across the country and on the websites of national retailers. As the business has grown, STIK also has worked to seed its products with celebrities and athletes.

“But getting a nod from the USOPP and having the chance to be an official licensee is just something bigger than I ever could have imagined,” Pardy said. “I'm kind of speechless. I wish I had a better word for how exciting it is for us.”

Angela Yang can be reached at angela.yang@globe.com.

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