

Stockholm, February 7, 2017

Research study shows that rivalry can both drive performance and compassion.

Have you ever had that gnawing feeling that your most fierce rival makes you perform better? Well, you are quite right. Sports fashion brand Björn Borg decided to investigate how much rivalry can improve athletic performance and teamed up with Professor Gavin Kilduff from NYU Stern. It is now official: your worst rival drives you to new athletic heights.

Many people believe that rivalry can make you run faster, play better and push the limits further when it comes to sports. But Swedish sports fashion brand Björn Borg wanted to know the truth and reveal the actual effects of rivalry. Professor Gavin Kilduff, who has spent the last 10 years studying the psychological aspects of rivalry, has found that there are positive aspects of rivalry both for legendary rivals like John McEnroe and Björn Borg as well as for regular athletes. His studies are the foundation of the new campaign from Björn Borg – Dear Rival. This initiative focuses on the positive effects of having a rival, and the fact that your biggest rival is also your best friend since they push you further than you ever would have been able to do yourself.

Professor Gavin Kilduff, New York University Stern, said:

"In my studies, I analyzed more than 1,000 runners and actual race results during 6 years. What I found was that when a runner's rival was also running in the race, this elevated their performance to the tune of roughly 5 seconds faster per kilometer. So on the course of a 5k race, this would come out to a 25 second improvement in race performance. That's a pretty notable improvement."

As to why rivalry helps elevating athletes' performances, Kilduff has a psychological answer:

"Rivalry is not necessarily a situation in which two competitors hate one another. It's more a situation in which two competitors are inextricably linked to one another. A rivalry will motivate athletes to train harder, to practice longer and typically to perform at their absolute best when they are competing with a rival."

Jonas Lindberg Nyvang, Marketing Director Björn Borg said:

"Last year was a year when we saw a lot of hatred. Rivaling politicians, countries and mindsets... Rivals were trash talking and fighting each other more than ever. At Björn Borg we also know a thing or two about rivalry, since we have one of the greatest sports rivalries ever in our DNA – the one between Björn Borg and John McEnroe. They pushed each other to improve and become better throughout their careers, which inspired us to tell the world that you don't have to fight just because you are rivals. Somewhere in rivalry there is a respect and homage that we think is really beautiful."

Read more: <https://www.bjornborg.com/dearrival>

See the film: <https://youtu.be/804HBSRQtNM>

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ABOUT BJÖRN BORG: The Group owns the Björn Borg trademark and its core business is underwear and sportswear. It also offers footwear, bags and eyewear through licensees. Björn Borg products are sold in around twenty markets, of which Sweden and the Netherlands are the largest. The Björn Borg Group has operations at every level from branding to consumer sales in its own Björn Borg stores. Total sales of Björn Borg products in 2015 amounted to about SEK 1.4 billion, excluding VAT, at the consumer level. Group net sales amounted to SEK approximately 574 million in 2015, with an average of 132 employees. The Björn Borg share has been listed on NASDAQ Stockholm since 2007.