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# Selling the sole of the boot

Is six better than eight in rugby, soccer or hockey, and is longer preferable to shorter in these team boot environments? Differently stated, would a boot with six studs offer you more advantages than one figuring multiple studs, is a longer stud more useful than shorter stuff, and when must metal or rubber studs be used?

It all depends on the sport, the surface on which your customer will be playing, and his or her position in the team.

## The surface

The type of outsole depends on how much grip and traction the player will need, depending on the field of play.

**Soft ground boots (SG):** When running on soft, muddy ground in the Cape Town winter rain you'd want long studs to provide as much grip as possible to prevent you from slipping. The longer the stud, the better the grip.

- Screw-in studs in formations of six or eight are usually worn on softer pitches. The softer the ground, the longer the stud would be. They would not be suitable for very hard ground.
- Interchangeable screw-in studs tend to be popular because players can adjust their studs depending on the conditions. If the pitch is muddy then it's worth using a longer set of studs, changing to shorter studs on a drier day.

**Firm ground boots (FG):** On a firm, well-tended natural grass surface that has become too hard for a traditional stud or long blade, a boot with moulded studs or short blades can be used. Bladed soles are more often used on surfaces between hard and soft – although some soccer boots now come with interchangeable blades that can be adapted to suit the surface.

**Hard ground boots (HG):** When you play on a rock hard, grassless Northern Cape pitch in the middle of winter, you may prefer to wear a boot with multiple, shorter, moulded rubber studs, or blades, in plastic or rubber.

**Astro turf:** Hockey is commonly played on astro turf at higher levels, and some big schools, which requires a boot with multiple small rubber studs.

- Astro turf boots are designed for use on firm ground and the moulded studs are therefore shorter than the standard studs. There are also more of these moulded studs to provide more points of contact, which offers wider

## Our cut-out-and-keep series to assist retailers with product knowledge

Words: FANIE HEYNS. Compiled with the help of Kevin Jooste of adidas SA, Gavin Benjamin of Puma SA, Brett Burgess of Canterbury SA, and the websites [www.rugbyboots.net](http://www.rugbyboots.net); [www.mastersport.co.uk/Facts/choosingfootballboots.html](http://www.mastersport.co.uk/Facts/choosingfootballboots.html); and [www.footy-boots.com/football-boots-guide-studs](http://www.footy-boots.com/football-boots-guide-studs).



dispersion for the pressure points on the bottom of feet.

- They provide better grip on a solid, hard surface and also cushion the feet against the constant pounding on a hard surface.
- Astro turf boots can also be used in other sports for training on a dry, hard grass pitch.

## Stud configurations

The different placement of studs is very important in a boot depending on the type of surface and the kind of sport. It also depends on what position the player holds or plays on the field.

**Six studs:** The six studs will provide the necessary level of grip/traction, but not so much grip that it would hamper the speed of a player. Six studs may be a better option for a player that twists from side to side.

- A six stud boot, which of course requires a level of support, is all about speed, light-weight and feel or touch.

**Eight studs:** Boots with eight studs will give you more grip, but check where the studs are located because you do not want to twist your ankle as you twist and move from side to side.

- Eight stud boots usually provide better traction as they have more points of contact with the ground, but they will not be favoured by players relying on speed as there are more studs to pull out of the ground with each step.

**Multiple studs:** Some boots nowadays come with multiple stud configurations, which can be metal, screw-in plastic, or moulded.

- Multiple studs work better on dry, hard pitches as they would not give as good a grip in wet, muddy conditions;
- Multiple studs disperse the weight better and will prevent blisters forming.

**Moulded studs:** A boot with moulded studs can have anything from twelve to sixteen studs on its base, and are best for wear on dry, harder pitches as these studs tend to be shorter. The more studs in a sole, the better the dispersion of weight and the more the support over a wider area.

## Blades or studs

- Traditionally soccer and rugby boots all had studs, whether of a screw-in variety or moulded into the sole of the boot. In recent years there has, however, been a move towards boots with blades, rather than studs.
- Blades have become more popular among soccer players in recent years as it has been claimed that they offer the wearer better grip and more stability than a studded boot, for example, when turning or pivoting.
- Blades are moulded into the sole, facing in multiple directions, designed to take full advantage of grip and reduce ankle injury.
- There have, however, been concerns expressed about the number of injuries that players suffered since the introduction of the bladed boots. Coaches at some of the top English clubs have also warned their players against wearing blades as they fear that the extra stability could actually cause injuries to knees or ankle joints when the player turns or pivots – or compound existing injuries.
- The depth of the blade can change from model to model and it is now possible to buy blades that can be changed dependent on the conditions.

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### Studs for specific players

The placement of studs does make a difference for specific sports. The introduction of different types of studs will, for example, affect the balance of the player.

- Some rugby players could choose to wear soccer boots – for example, the fly-half and the wings may use soccer boots because they run a lot and always want to be quick on their feet.

Other rugby players wear soccer boots because they prefer a lower cut around the ankles. Factors like technology, marketing, sponsorship, sheer available choice and cost also play a role in choosing a rugby or soccer boot. Sometimes this happens because the

player doesn't fully appreciate the difference between the features of a rugby and soccer boot.

You do need special placements and lengths for a specific position in the team.

- In soccer the defender and central midfielders usually use six metal or plastic studs because they provide better grip and comfort. They usually are not the fast players, but are strong and hard.
- A kicker would use a six stud boot, or a moulded or bladed outsole depending upon pitch conditions, rather than eight studs.
- Strikers and wingers might favour blades that are made of carbon fibre, plastic or rubber; because they are usually the fast ones on the pitch and they demand speed and light weight to increase their scoring performance.
- In rugby it will be the fullbacks that will wear the six stud boot – and perhaps some loose forwards.
- Eight stud boots are therefore primarily worn

by rugby forwards, by the big players in the scrum who need plenty of grip for scrumming, stability and support. An eight stud boot will be built on a wider lasted boot to accommodate the sheer physical size of these players.

### PVC versus metal

- Plastic or rubber studs are easy to clean, compared to metal studs.
- Plastic studs do not rust and can be used over and over again. There are no issues when it comes to the laws of the game.
- Metal studs are designed to provide better grip and are designed to handle heavy body-weight pressure, especially in rugby boots.
- Metal screw-in studs are banned in certain soccer leagues due to the possibility that injuries can occur as a result of contact with the metal studs. This increase lead to referees checking all boots of players before kick-off, to check for damage to studs, to prevent injury.

# New season boot ranges



Canterbury Phoenix

### Canterbury

The Canterbury Ethos rugby boot is perfect for any pitch. The outsole features reinforced zones in the rear and mid-foot area as well as providing flexibility in the forefoot.

The synthetic upper is lightweight, soft and durable for a good fit with a cushy EVA pre-moulded sock liner. The Ethos boot is great for dodging, twisting and running past opponents.

The Canterbury Phoenix is a rugby boot with a Texon waterproof lasting board which provides good support and flexibility in the forefoot. This shoe is ideal for backs and forwards. The mesh lined heel and EVA pre-moulded sock liner provides great comfort and cushioning.

The Canterbury Stampede boot is a wide fitting boot designed specifically for forwards. It is manufactured from PU synthetic leather and offers excellent softness and comfort.

### Gilbert

Gilbert has focused on the 8 stud boot for the last few seasons and has developed a solid, value for money product designed for the all levels of play for the forward player. Our SSP(Support Stability Plate) ensures that the players foot is well supported on a solid sole unit, while the XSP 8 stud Outsole has strategically positioned studs for superior weight distribution and ultimate traction. We have seen sales on blades and 6 studs slowly decrease over the past 5 season

### Patrick

Patrick, locally distributed by Genuine Connection, offers a range of rugby boots to suit most playing conditions and surfaces.

The black and orange Alligator boot comes



Patrick Alligator

in 6- and 8-stud configurations on a very lightweight and wear-resistant PU footbed. The rugby-specific PVC upper features off-centre lacing. They are available in men's sized 6-12.

The black, red and white Patrick Stud boot has 8 metal studs on a durable lightweight PU footbed, a Rugby PVC upper and TPU outsole.

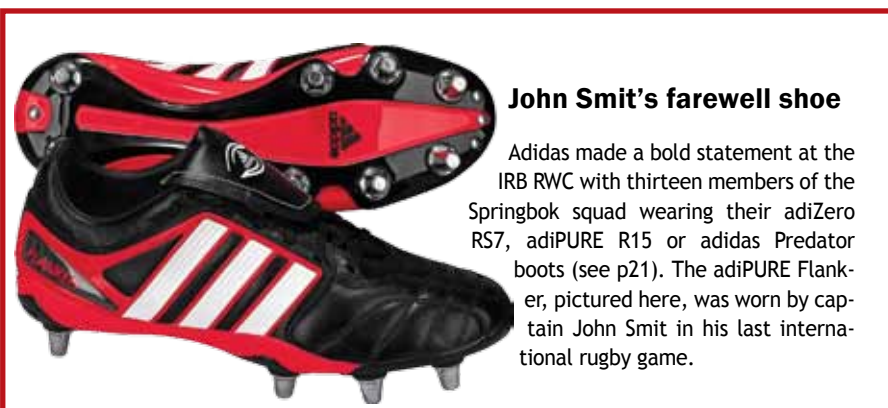
Patrick also offers a blade rugby boot for senior men, and a moulded multi-stud boot, both with Rugby PVC uppers in black and white. A synthetic surface training shoe with a Sports PVC upper in black and white completes the range.

### Power

The next Power soccer boot range will feature materials and other elements on the upper that ensure better ball control, said Omar Velazques, Regional Brand Manager for Power, Bata Emerging Markets, during a recent visit to SA (more about him in the 2012 February/March Sports Trader). A silicon application on the upper will ensure better ball grip, and hence control.

This will be in line with his objective to develop new Power footwear ranges with the best possible designs that are trendy, and offer the best possible value. Retailers would have noticed the difference since the first Power range designed by this former footwear developer for Diesel and Nike arrived in SA in autumn 2010.

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### John Smit's farewell shoe

Adidas made a bold statement at the IRB RWC with thirteen members of the Springbok squad wearing their adiZero RS7, adiPURE R15 or adidas Predator boots (see p21). The adiPURE Flanker, pictured here, was worn by captain John Smit in his last international rugby game.