
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

My Reebok Opportunity

Old-school CrossFit star Josh Everett talks about why he believes the CrossFit-Reebok partnership is a great thing for both parties—and fitness.

By Josh Everett

June 2011



All images courtesy of Reebok International Ltd.

Skeptical about the Reebok-CrossFit partnership? You're not alone.

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Josh Everett has inspired many people to do CrossFit, and he plans to inspire many more as a sponsored athlete.

I travel the country working CrossFit's Level 1 and Olympic-lifting courses, and I hear and feel the uneasiness about a big multinational company buying its way into the CrossFit community. I also hear the whispers of "sell-out" in regards to CrossFit's role in the deal.

I answer questions and have conversations about this partnership weekly and thought the community might be interested in why I joined Reebok as an endorsed athlete—and why I'm thrilled with the partnership.

Last fall, I was approached about possibly joining the Reebok team as one of its athletes. At the time, I had already decided that I was not going to pursue competing in the CrossFit Games, but Reebok was still interested in having me as an "athlete," so I decided to take the trip out to the Boston area and Reebok World Headquarters to check them out. To make a long story short, I was impressed with the company's commitment and sincerity, and I signed a contract. In the following paragraphs, I'm going to describe exactly why I signed that contract.

To Grow CrossFit

Reebok has the ability to dramatically accelerate the growth of CrossFit, both nationally and internationally—especially internationally. CrossFit changes and enhances lives; you probably already know or have experienced that. It's why you have a *CrossFit Journal* subscription and are reading this. I want to be a part of spreading the positivity CrossFit has to offer.

**CrossFit is changing lives, and
Reebok will help spread that
message even faster.**



Many people saw Josh in classic CrossFit videos and said, "I want to do that!"

The program's benefits are not just limited to the physical. CrossFit develops character, discipline, commitment, work ethic, relationships and community. Best of all, in many cases, entire families begin to train together and adopt a lifestyle dedicated to health and fitness. CrossFit is changing lives, and Reebok will help spread that message even faster.

To Pave the Way for Future CrossFitters

I've really relished my role as a trailblazer of sorts in CrossFit, particularly on the competition side. I can't begin to describe the joy I feel when people tell me I inspired them to begin CrossFitting or to pursue competing in CrossFit. Some of the biggest names in the sport today tell me that they saw a video of me and said, "I want to do that" (actually they probably said, "I can beat that guy!"). Now I've been given the opportunity to be a trailblazer again as one of the first endorsed athletes.

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The endorsement certainly isn't enough to be a full-time professional athlete, but it's a start. I'm getting paid for my athletic achievements. Growing up, I dreamed of one day being a professional athlete. Fifteen years after giving up on the dream, the dream has been achieved. More importantly, these initial contracts are paving the way (sooner rather than later) for future CrossFit athletes to be legitimate professional athletes who will make a sizable income and be able to train full time and live a lifestyle that allows them to maximize their training and talents.

I am so proud to be part of this process, and we won't create professional CrossFitters unless big business realizes the value and marketability of what we are doing.

To Help Reebok Stay True to CrossFit and the Community

This was much more of a goal of mine when I first signed my contract. Now I clearly see that the folks at Reebok need much less help in this area as they are 100 percent CrossFit.

The box on the Reebok HQ campus is busting at the seams, the cafeteria offerings have made a 180 and are now mostly Paleo options, and CrossFit has caught on like wildfire at Reebok. At the Arnold Classic in Columbus back in March, the Reebok staff was flying out back to Boston on Sunday morning. They got up early, went to the convention center, and got a WOD in at 6 a.m. before they had to catch their flight. Does that type of commitment and passion sound familiar?

While making sure Reebok stays true to the community won't be an issue, one thing I can do is serve as a bridge between "old-school CrossFit" and "new-school CrossFit" from the athlete side of things. I guess I'm old-school CrossFit, which is funny because I've only been doing CrossFit for about eight years. But I do feel it's important to preserve our values and connect back to the days when this was a much smaller endeavor.



Soon, Everett will be lifting in a pair of shoes he helped design.

What's also really cool is we (Reebok's athletes) get to help design the new line of Reebok-CrossFit gear. Reebok is going to make whatever we want it to. I can't wait for all of you to get a hold of Reebok's new O-lift shoe. Yep, I'm proud to say that was all me!

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To Expand My Platform as a Positive Role Model and Mentor

I pursued the strength-and-conditioning field because I wanted to help people. CrossFit has given me a much bigger platform for that than I ever dreamed I'd have, and my Reebok endorsement can expand that even further.

Many reading this will already be aware, but Mike Burgener is my Olympic-lifting coach and mentor. For decades, Coach B. had 12-20 athletes show up every Saturday morning for training in his two-car garage. I would say I was about average in that I drove about an hour to get to his house (some drove as much as three hours one way each Saturday).

Why did we all drive so far to train with Coach B. when most of us had our own garage gyms or facilities near our houses? Was it his stellar technical coaching? Well, yes—to a point. What kept us coming back week after week was

not the technical analysis that Coach gave us on our lifts; it was the life lessons he taught us and the genuine caring he showed us. It was the example of family and leadership he showed. He was there for me through relationship break-ups and my father's passing, and he was there to give me advice on job opportunities, buying a house and much more.

Coach B. modeled a life that I want to emulate, and I want to pay forward the life lessons he taught me to the next generation for whom I might be their "O." God has blessed me with athletic and coaching abilities to glorify Him with. I want to take full advantage of this opportunity to do so.

Great Things to Come

In closing, I hope you see why I jumped on board with the Reebok team. I'm excited about the future of CrossFit and now Reebok—CrossFit is going to make Reebok cool and help the company make great shoes! I'm sold on the people at Reebok for their commitment to CrossFit and the CrossFit community.



About the Author

One of the original CrossFit stars, Josh Everett has competed in three CrossFit Games, reaching the podium in both 2007 and 2008. Everett is a coach at Level 1 Seminars and CrossFit Olympic Lifting Seminars.