

K2, Volkl, Line secure a new path forward

By Matt Hansen, Powder

When news surfaced recently that K2 and several of skiing's most popular brands would be sold from a publicly traded corporation to a private equity firm this month, it ended months of speculation and uncertainty about the future of some of the sports' most storied companies.

But it also created a shift in the wintersports market. According to fresh numbers from Snowsport Industries America (SIA), 10 percent of all wintersports sales now go to private equity firms, versus 60 percent held by private companies and 30 percent by publicly traded corporations.

At the end of May, Kohlberg and Company, a private equity firm specializing in "middle market investing," entered an agreement to pay Newell Brands \$240 million for K2, Volkl, Marker, Dalbello, Madshus, Line, Ride, Full Tilt, BCA, Atlas, and Tubbs. As such, it becomes the largest private equity holder in the snowsports market, according to SIA. Not part of the deal was Marmot, which earned \$100 million in retail last season and continues to be part of Newell Brands.

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