

## Lacoste keen to involve Novak Djokovic in other projects besides sport apparel

By [Olivier Guyot](#) - June 9, 2017

After appointing Andre Agassi as head coach, and inking a kit sponsorship deal with Lacoste, Serb tennis star Novak Djokovic, 30, was looking forward to the 2017 French Open. But the former world tennis number one lost in the quarter finals to young Austrian Dominic Thiem, who stopped Djokovic, and his new sponsor, on his way to a second French Open title. The fact remains that, by striking a deal with Djokovic, Lacoste has made its ambitions on the tennis market quite clear. Speaking to the press at the sponsorship agreement's announcement, Lacoste General Manager Thierry Guibert gave more details about this significant deal.



*Lacoste and Novak Djokovic expect to move beyond competition apparel in the future -  
Lacoste*

"The last time Lacoste was involved with a world top-10 tennis player was more than five years ago with Andy Roddick, said Thierry Guibert. We wanted to work with one of the very best professionals and, since I joined Lacoste nearly three years ago, from my very first conversations with Axel Carree (the brand's Event Director), I was hoping to be able to count on Novak Djokovic. Three tennis professionals have a worldwide reputation: Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. They also have the biggest sponsorship contracts. Negotiations took a long time, with ups and downs, and lengthy discussions

among lawyers, because this type of contract is highly complex. But eventually, it was interpersonal relationships that made the difference, and we finalised the deal in London last November."

And while Andy Roddick gave Lacoste visibility on the US market, the Serb superstar has a truly global reputation. Lacoste's management said the production run it has just started for the first sport collection by Novak Djokovic will be similar to that made for Andy Roddick's, but the 360,000 units are expected to sell out very quickly worldwide. In addition, the brand's marketing budget has received a sizeable boost, something that was clearly visible, as a large-scale poster campaign was deployed during the French Open championship.

"I made it clear that our intention was for the sport marketing budget to absorb between 25% and 30% of our total marketing outlay, said Guibert. This is far from extraordinary for a brand like Lacoste. Globally, the marketing budget accounts for 6% of our expenditure."

And Lacoste is keen to go further with Djokovic, as a lifestyle collection is also on the cards. "There are many fine things for us to do together, said Thierry Guibert. Creating tennis competition footwear is also something we are talking about. From 1st January 2018, we will regain control of the footwear licence (since 1995 Lacoste was working with UK group Pentland). We will add to our internal know-how, and we will start developing tennis shoes."

The deal between Djokovic and Lacoste does cover several product categories, except for watches and sport bags.

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