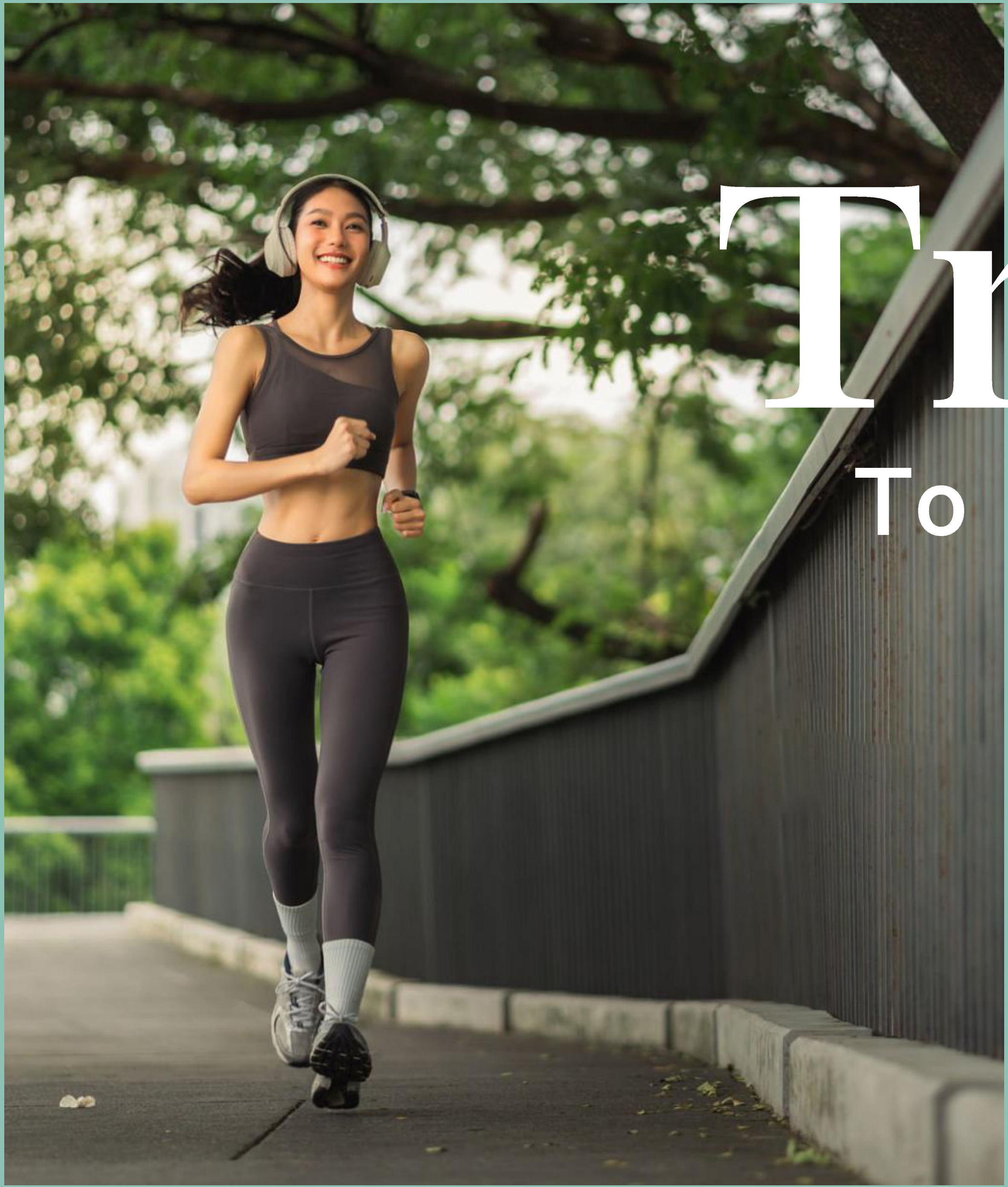

From Track To Trend

CBRE

Shanghai's Role as China's Sports Retail Hub

REPORT

CBRE CHINA RESEARCH
AUGUST 2026

Introduction

With awareness around health and wellness continuing to rise, participation in sport and other forms of exercise is becoming an increasingly important part of everyday life in China. Sporting goods and athleisure retailers are capitalising on this trend by shifting focus from customer acquisition to building long-term customer value. This phenomenon is spurring the evolution of physical retail stores into platforms for brand building and community engagement.

Landlords are responding to this trend by shifting sports retailers from a supporting retail category to a core driver of foot traffic and a key growth engine. Now firmly established as a leading international consumption hub and strategic market for global sports brands, Shanghai can provide important insights, experience and lessons learned for the sector's development.

Based on a survey of more than 650 sports stores across Shanghai, this CBRE report provides valuable insights for retailers, landlords and developers by analyzing the emergence of new sporting goods segments; assessing the effectiveness of community-led retail strategies; identifying retailers' locational preferences in prime retail districts; and profiling innovative and evolving store formats.

Key Takeaways

MARKET DYNAMICS

Policy, industry, and event-driven growth are reinforcing the role of sports retail as a key traffic and leasing driver

CATEGORY EVOLUTION

Specialised sports segments are becoming more prominent and reshaping market competition

SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION

Flagship clustering and high-street expansion are redefining the retail environment, with stores evolving to become experienced-led community hubs

Market Overview

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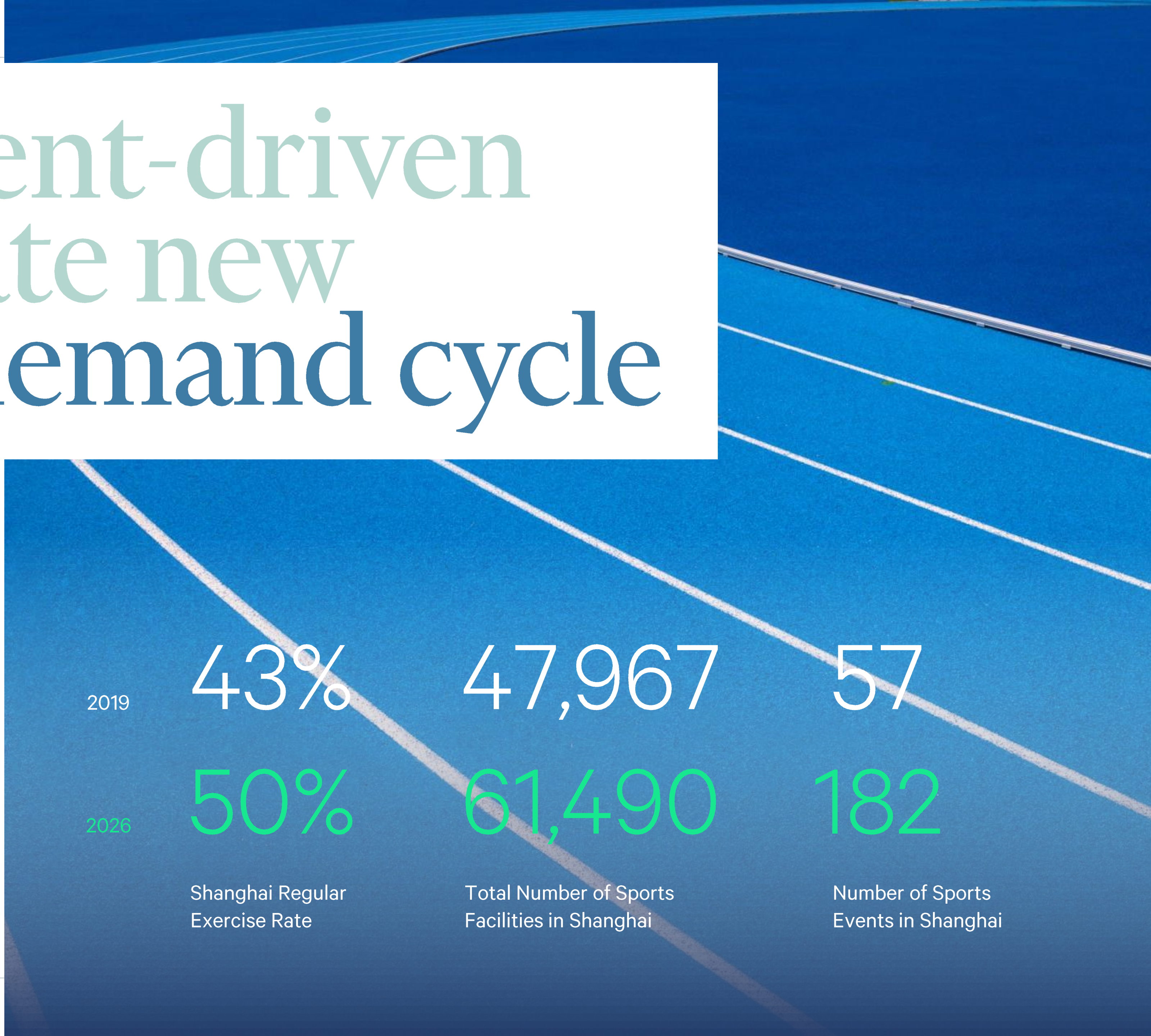
Policy & event-driven growth create new consumer demand cycle

Supported by ongoing policy incentives and a post-pandemic resurgence in major sporting events, Shanghai continues to expand its sports infrastructure and encourage greater levels of participation in physical activity. Government data show the proportion of the city's residents engaging in regular exercise increased from 43% in 2019 to 50% in 2025. As the economic impact of sporting events becomes increasingly evident, the integration of sports and commercial activity is generating incremental footfall and enhancing consumption across the retail market.

The consumption of sporting goods and activities in Shanghai is evolving beyond traditional fitness needs toward broader objectives such as wellness management, performance improvement, and social engagement. Rising demand for more specialised and purpose-driven sporting activity is compelling brands and operators to refine their product and activity offering, creating a virtuous cycle of demand creation, product innovation, experiential retail, and value-added services. This shift is reshaping Shanghai's sports consumption ecosystem and supporting the continued growth of the sports retail sector.



	Shanghai Regular Exercise Rate	Total Number of Sports Facilities in Shanghai	Number of Sports Events in Shanghai
2019	43%	47,967	57
2026	50%	61,490	182

Sports retail emerges as key leasing driver in Shanghai's retail market

Sports-related retailers are becoming an increasingly important source of leasing demand in Shanghai's retail market and a key contributor to space absorption. CBRE's tracking of quarterly leasing activity shows that sportswear brands have displayed strong expansionary momentum in recent years, with their share of new store openings within the apparel sector surpassing 30% in 2025. Beyond contributing to vacancy absorption and net take-up, sports brands are playing an increasingly critical role in shopping mall landlords' efforts to optimise their tenant-mix, helping enhance asset vitality and strengthen retail destinations' market competitiveness.

Figure 1: Sportswear's Share of New Apparel Store Openings in Shanghai 2023–2025

18%	25%	31%
2023	2024	2025

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Key Trends

Trend 1:

First store openings reinforce Shanghai's gateway role

As a key gateway for both international sports brands and emerging domestic players entering China, Shanghai continues to strengthen its position as a leading consumer market and strategic launch platform. Sports brands are increasingly prioritising Shanghai's prime retail districts as locations for flagship stores, experiential concepts, and China debuts, using the city to test the market response to their offering and reinforce brand positioning. This trend is reflected in the continued concentration of high-profile store openings.

From established global brands to specialist players such as Salomon, HOKA, and On, many international sports brands have chosen Shanghai as the location for their China headquarters, flagship stores, and concept stores. Having moved well beyond merely serving as an entry point to China, Shanghai is now firmly established as a key platform for product launches and brand building, helping international brands accelerate market penetration and consumer awareness.

Figure 2: New-to-Market Sports Brand Store Openings 2023-2025

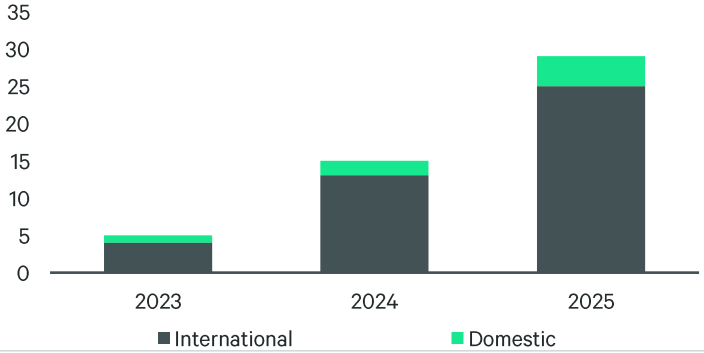


Figure 3: Breakdown of Sports Brand Openings in Shanghai 2023-2025

China first store	Shanghai first store	Asia Pacific/Global first store
58%	34%	8%

Source: CBRE Research, August 2026

Trend 2:

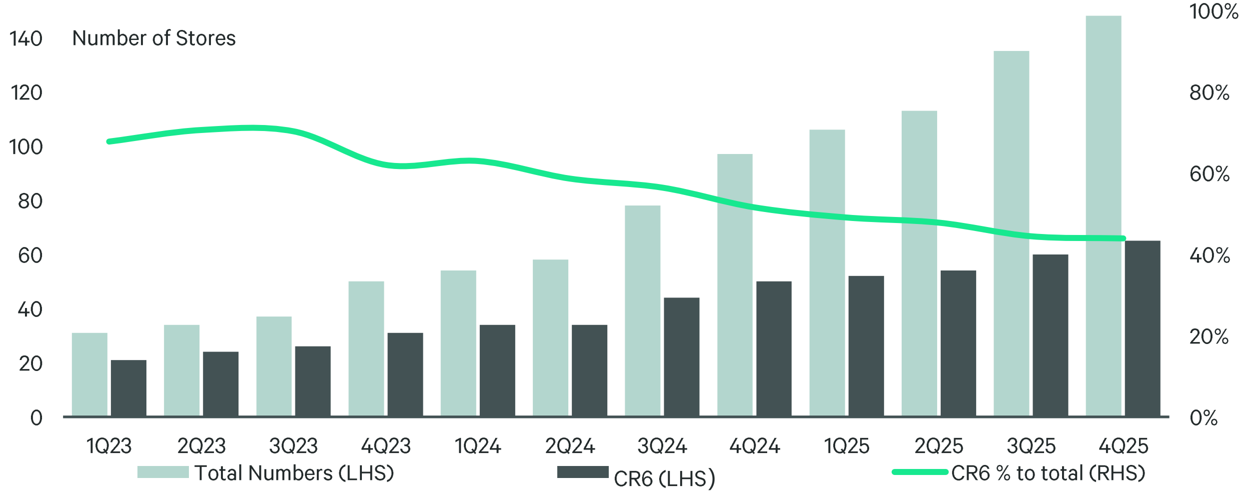
Specialist brands reshape outdoor clothing segment

As the Shanghai populace's participation in outdoor activities continues to expand across a wider range of pursuits and become increasingly specialised, the outdoor clothing segment is evolving from a landscape dominated by a handful of leading brands to a more diversified marketplace.

While the number of outdoor clothing stores in Shanghai grew rapidly between 2023-2025, the combined share of stores belonging to the six leading outdoor brands declined from nearly 70% to around 40%. This shift reflects not a contraction among established players, but the accelerating entry of emerging specialist brands.

Brands such as Haglöfs, Norrøna, Klättermusen, Salomon, and Snow Peak, which are focused on niche segments such as alpine sports, climbing, trail running, technical apparel, and premium camping, continue to expand their presence in the city. The increasing influx of specialist brands is reshaping Shanghai's outdoor clothing landscape, driving the market from scale-led growth toward greater segmentation and category diversification.

Figure 4 : Shanghai Outdoor Sports Brand Growth (Top Six and Market Share)



**Top 6 refers to: The North Face ,Columbia, Descente, , Kolon, Montbell, Kailas.

Source: CBRE Research, August 2026

Traditional brands pivot to outdoor sub-categories

Figure 5:
Nike ACG China First Flagship Store – Beijing Sanlitun

Figure 6:
UA Outdoor China First Flagship Store – Shanghai Xintiandi

Brand Strategy

The continued growth in outdoor activity participation and expansion of specialist brands is prompting leading sportswear companies to refine their brand portfolios, shifting from a single-brand focus toward a multi-brand strategy. Many such groups are strengthening their presence in the outdoor segment through establishing dedicated product lines and sub-brands, including Nike ACG, adidas Terrex, Under Armor Outdoor, ANTA CHAMPION, and Li-Ning COUNTERFLOW These initiatives not only broaden target consumer reach but also enable clearer positioning within increasingly competitive niche segments.

Channel and Store Evolution

Portfolio diversification is driving changes at the store level, with brands expanding through both standalone concept stores and upgrades to existing flagship locations. New formats are being introduced to strengthen specialist brand identity and positioning, while larger flagship stores are incorporating additional experiential elements to enhance customer engagement. As a result, traditional sports retail stores are evolving beyond product-focused retail formats toward integrated spaces that combine retail, experience, and community engagement. This transition is strengthening brand differentiation while providing shopping centres with a more engaging tenant offering, thereby generating stronger footfall.

The post-pandemic resumption of major sporting events and growing profile of professional athletes are accelerating the expansion of specialist sports brands. Large-scale sporting events such as the 2024 Summer Olympics and the 2026 FIFA World Cup are serving as key catalysts for store growth and brand expansion.

This trend is reflected not only in the rising number of stores, but also in evolving location strategies and store formats. Yoga brands such as Lululemon, Alo Yoga, and Vuori, alongside emerging cycling and tennis brands, are expanding their presence in prime retail districts while introducing experiential and community-oriented store concepts to deepen consumer engagement.

As Shanghai's sporting retail market evolves, retailers are increasingly shifting from traditional retail outlets to multi-functional spaces that integrate retail, sports experiences, and community building. By converting event-driven traffic into long-term customer relationships, these formats are enhancing brand differentiation while providing shopping centres with a more compelling tenant offering to capture demand generated by major sporting events.

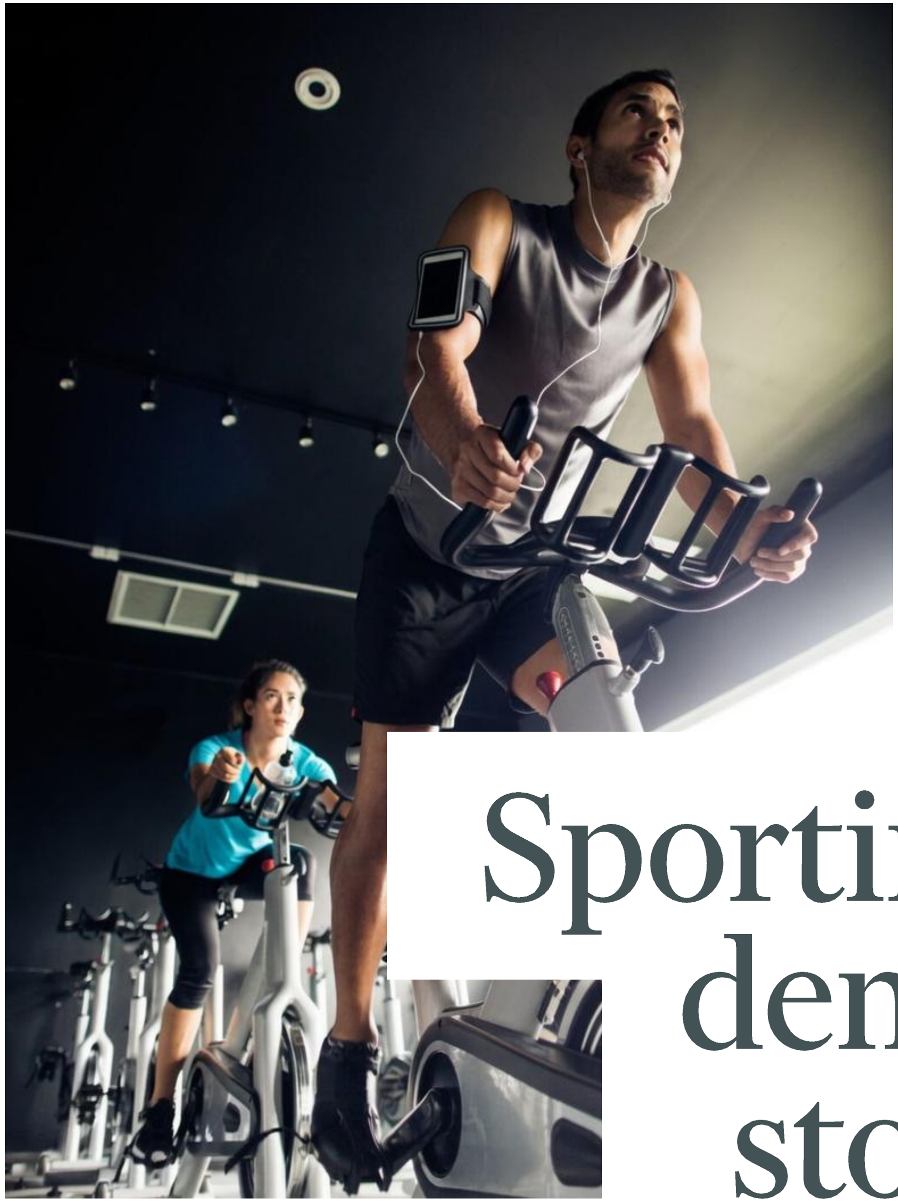
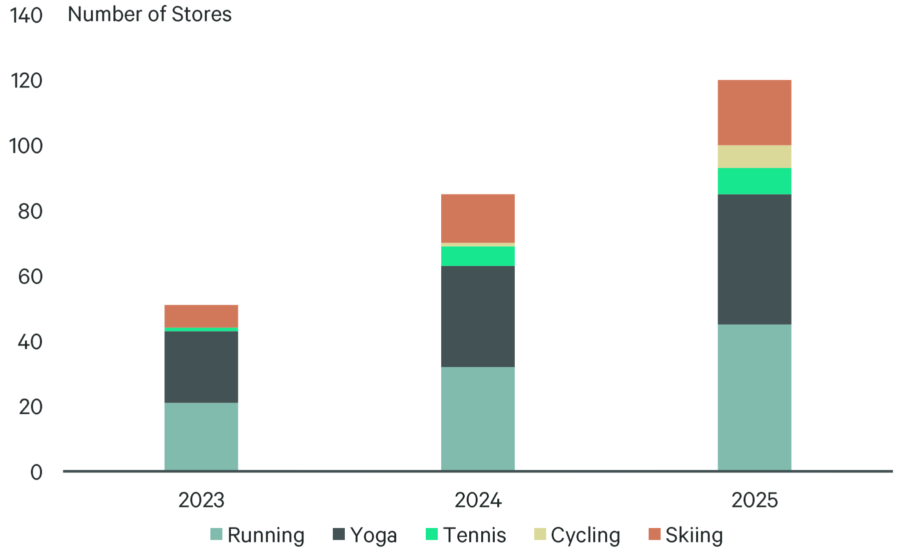


Figure 7: Total Number of Pro-Sports Brands in Shanghai, 2023-2025



Source: CBRE Research, August 2026

Trend 3:

Sporting events drive demand, elevating store experiences

Integrated Store Formats

Blending retail, experience, community and content

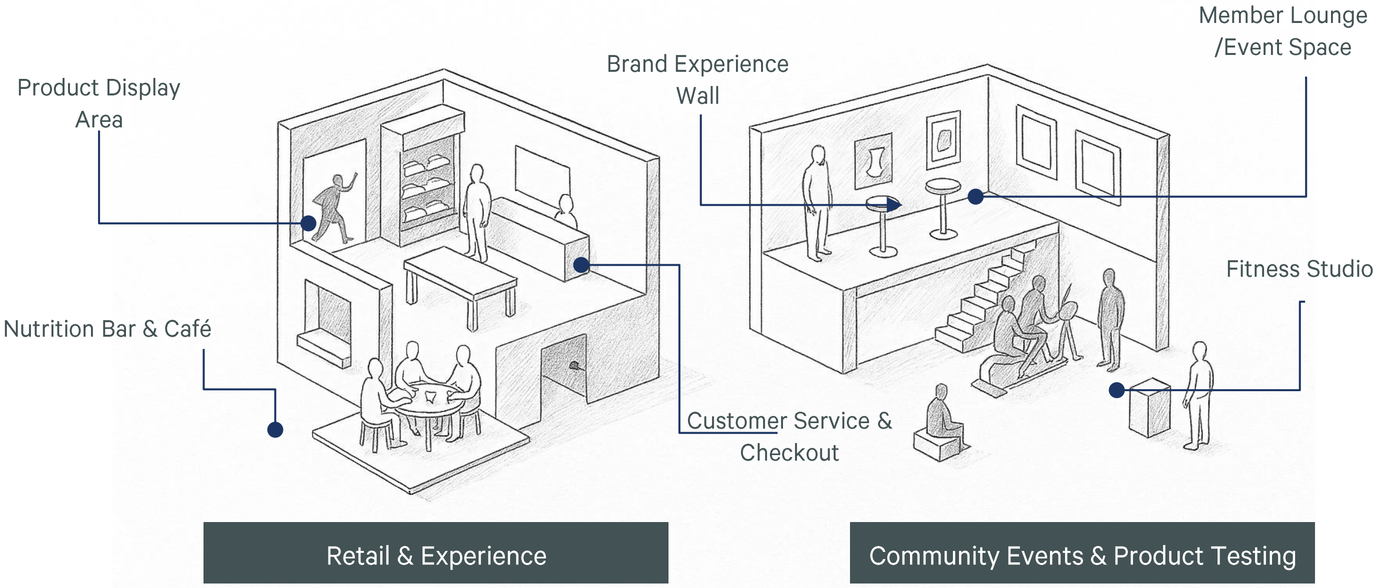
From Display & Sales to Scenarios, Content & Community

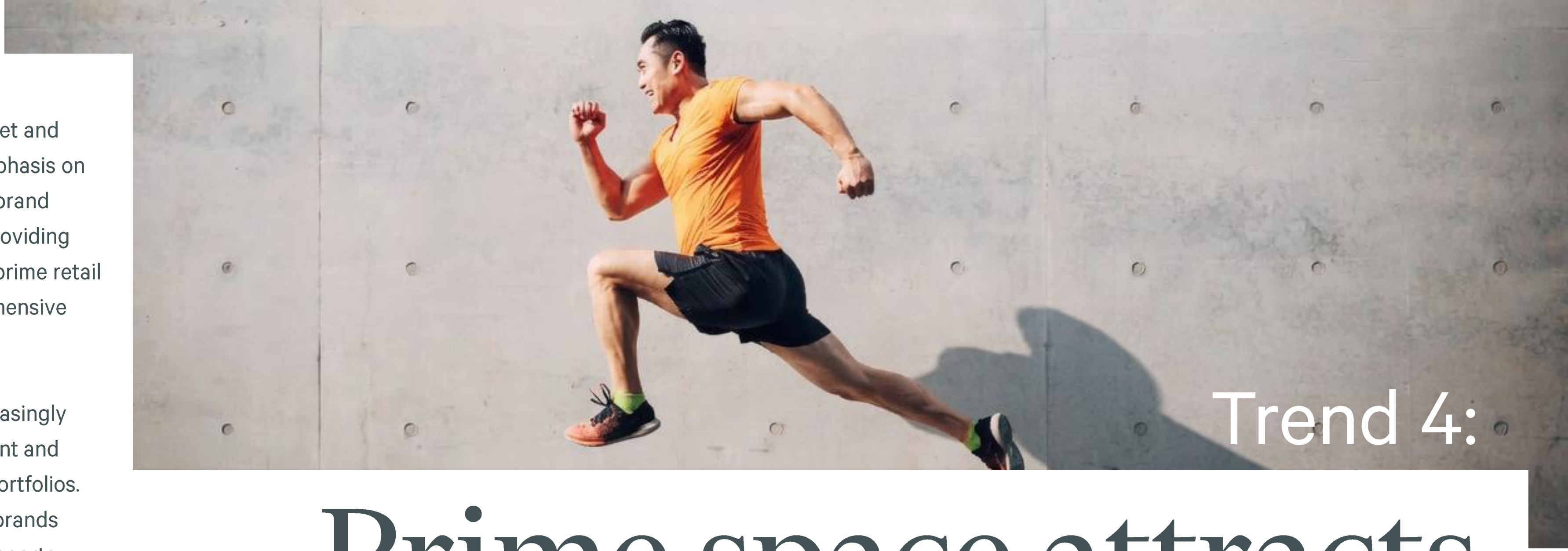
Product
Space
Community
Service

Retail Format Innovation

This dual-level format is increasingly popular among sports brands and combines retail, experience and community engagement. The ground floor drives conversion through product displays and social interaction, while the upper floor focuses on immersive experiences and member activation. The model extends beyond transactions to customer relationship building, supporting both sales conversion and long-term brand loyalty.

1F / 180 sq. m.　　2F / 120 sq. m.





As sports consumption in Shanghai continues to move upmarket and become more lifestyle-oriented, brands are placing greater emphasis on securing locations within prime retail destinations to enhance brand visibility and strengthen consumer awareness. In addition to providing access to affluent consumers and trend-conscious audiences, prime retail districts offer an ideal platform for flagship stores and comprehensive product showcases.

Amid slower growth in traditional fashion retail, landlords increasingly regard sports brands—with their strong community engagement and consistent customer traffic— as valuable additions to tenant portfolios. Leading retail projects are assembling a diverse mix of sports brands spanning urban lifestyle, outdoor recreation, and performance sports, supporting tenant diversification and enhancing overall consumer appeal.

Driven by both brand expansion strategies and landlord demand, premium sports brands are becoming increasingly concentrated within Shanghai's prime retail districts.

Trend 4:

Prime space attracts leading sports brands

Figure 8: Distribution of Sports Apparel Brand Stores in Shanghai by Retail Hub

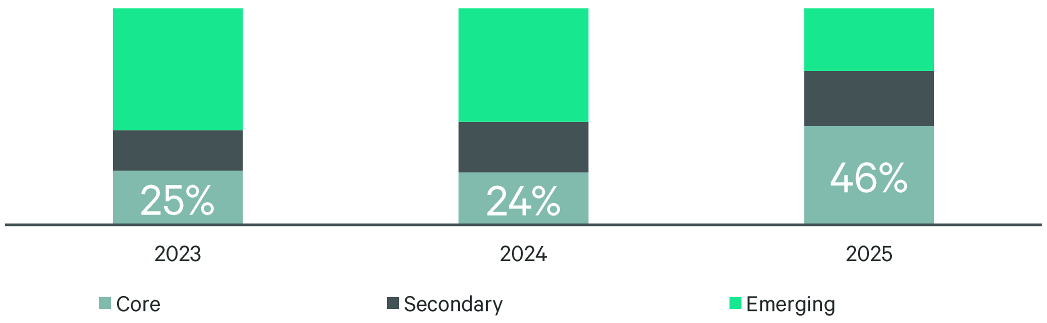
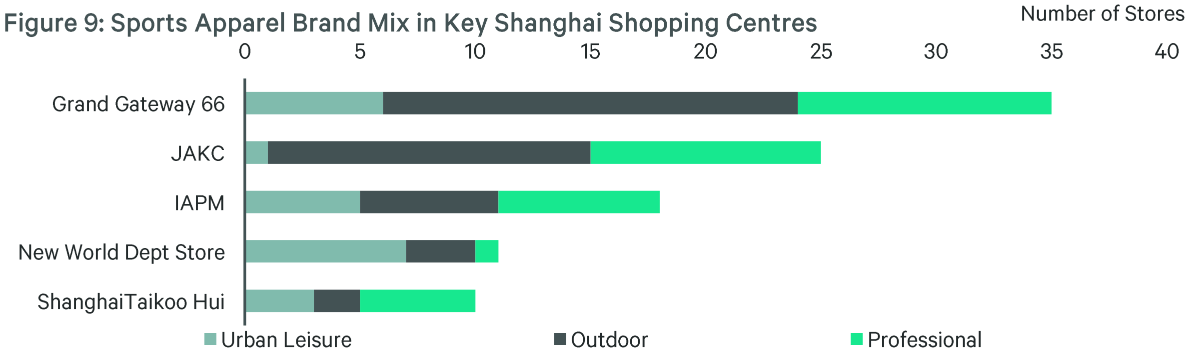


Figure 9: Sports Apparel Brand Mix in Key Shanghai Shopping Centres



Source: CBRE Research, August 2026

Sports brands are emerging as key growth drivers of retail leasing activity in Shanghai, and are playing a major role in extending retail vitality beyond prime districts and into community and alternative retail destinations.

Zino Helmlinger

Head of Retail Leasing
CBRE China

Trend 5:

Community and alternative retail formats bring sports consumption closer to consumers

Sports brand expansion in Shanghai is increasingly extending beyond prime retail destinations to non-standard and community retail projects. These formats offer differentiated experiences and greater operational flexibility but also require stronger site selection and execution competence to navigate higher operational complexity.

Figure 10: Location Decision Framework: Prime Retail vs. Alternative Formats

	Prime Location Landmark Shopping Centers	Non-Standard / Specialty Street Districts
Core Positioning & Strategic Value	Dedicated to creating landmark commercial destinations with city-wide or national reach, providing brands with the highest level of institutional endorsement.	Deeply rooted in specific neighbourhoods or subculture communities, emphasising resonance with local culture and emotional value。
Spatial Format & Physical Attributes	Standardised, large-scale, inward-facing	Flexible, non-standard, outward-facing
Target Customer Profile	Broad catchment, business professionals, destination shoppers	Vertical enthusiasts, high-net-worth local residents, community-loyal customers
Sports / Outdoor Brand Location Requirements	"Build Image": Omni-channel showcases and benchmark product lineup	"Cultivate Communities": Concept testing and deep user interaction
Tenant Mix Ecosystem	High-profile positioning, major brand synergy	Independent niche brands, complementary aesthetics
Asset Management & Leasing Logic	High rent premium with strong sales-per-sqm benchmarks	Flexible leases and co-created traffic
Typical Shanghai Benchmark Examples	Grand Gateway 66、JAKC、IAPM, Xintiandi Style, etc.	Gate M, Anfu Road, Yongyuan Rd, XianSuo, Columbia Club, Rock Bund and etc.

Source: CBRE Research, August 2026

Figure 11: Salomon Store on Anfu Road

Figure 12: ON Running Store at West Bund

Market Outlook

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Market Outlook:

Continued growth in sports participation and consumption set to underpin further expansion of sports retail segment

Event & Participant Evolution

- An expanding calendar of major sporting events, from Formula 1 to esports, will continue to boost footfall, consumer engagement, and sports-related spending;
- Growing demand from Gen Z and active lifestyle consumers will drive further segmentation, community engagement, and targeted brand expansion.

Multi-Scenario Expansion

- Sports retail formats will continue to evolve into integrated spaces that combine retail, experiences, and community engagement, enhancing customer interaction and conversion;
- Brands will expand into alternative retail formats, embedding sports experiences into urban commuting and leisure environments through outdoor experiential destinations.

Brand Diversification

- Shanghai's sports retail market will become more diversified, with the expansion of domestic, international, and emerging brands contributing to a more dynamic competitive landscape;
- Domestic brands will continue to strengthen their competitive position through localised product innovation, targeted strategies, and extensive channel resources.

Sports lifestyle hubs: the next evolution in retail destinations

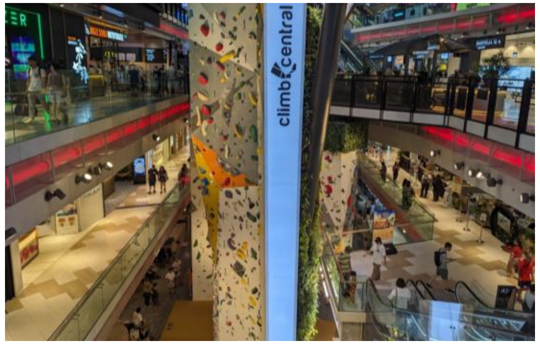
Shopping malls are evolving beyond traditional brand-led models towards assets featuring greater space efficiency and mixed-use integration. By creating more diverse, all-day consumer and social experiences, projects such as Singapore's Funan and Bangkok's EmSphere offer valuable insights into the future of asset activation and destination enhancement in Shanghai.

Funan — Singapore

Underutilised common areas in Funan were transformed into destination spaces through the integration of a multi-level indoor cycling track and an atrium climbing wall, enhancing both space efficiency and project identity. This sports-led design strategy has supported higher visitation frequency, longer dwell times and stronger synergies with adjacent retail uses, contributing to improved performance across the mall.

EmSphere — Bangkok

EmSphere integrates a sports, retail and entertainment offering to create a diversified lifestyle destination. Extended operating hours and socially driven brand concepts further enhance customer engagement and visitation frequency. The model expands sports consumption beyond functional demand into social and entertainment experiences, attracting younger consumers while strengthening operational resilience and asset performance.



Shanghai's retail projects are well positioned to enhance differentiation through the systematic reconfiguration of space and the integration of diverse uses. By fostering high-frequency visitation and immersive experiences, projects can optimise footfall quality, improve conversion efficiency and strengthen customer engagement. These strategies will support resilient operating performance and reinforce long-term asset value amid an increasingly complex market landscape.

Contacts

China Research

Sam Xie

Head of Research
China
sam.xie@cbre.com

Ivy Lu

Senior Director
China
ivy.lu@cbre.com

Yuhan Zhou

Analyst
Eastern China
yuhan.zhou@cbre.com

Business Line

Zino Helmlinger

Head of Retail Leasing
China
zino.helmlinger@cbre.com

Appendix

Appendix 1: Sports Brand Classification (Shanghai Stores)

Primary Category	Sub-Category	Major Brands
General Sports		Adidas, Adidas Originals, Air Jordan, An Ko Rau, Anta, Converse, Erke, Fila, Flaneur, Lining, New Balance, Nike, Puma, Skechers, Sporty & Rich, Under Armour
Outdoor Sports		Acmeitem, Aigle, Arc'teryx, Columbia, Crispi, Descente, Discovery Expedition, Eider, Fjallraven, Goldwin, Gregory, Haglofs, Helly Hansen, Houdini, Icebreaker, Jack Wolfskin, Kailas, Kailas Fuga, Keen, Klattermusen, Kolon, Kswiss, Lafuma, Mammut, Mobi Garden, Montane, Montbell, National Geographic, Norrona, Nothomme Blue, Osprey, Ozark, Patagonia, Peak Performance, Pelliot, Phenix, Poster, Snow Peak, The North Face, Under Armour Outdoor, Uppervoid, Vaude, Vector, Wildthings, X-bionic, Xterra
Specialist Sports	Yoga	Lululemon, Maia Active, O Cloch Code, Popbasic, Vuori, Xexymix
	Running	Asics, Brooks, Craft, Ektos, Hoka, Saucony, On
	Tennis	Head, Wilson
	Cycling	Brompton, Factor, Gorewear, Maap, Pas Normal Studios, Rapha
	Golf	Honma, Titleist
	Skiing	Burton, Salomon, Spaders
	Skateboarding	Supra, Supreme
	Badminton	Yonex
	Swimming	Arena, Speedo
	Multi-Sport	Decathlon

Appendix 2 : Recent Store Openings

Brand	Category	International/ Domestic	Project / Location	Submarket	Store Type
Hoka	Outdoor	International	Xintiandi	Huaihai Road	**Global First Brand Experience Center**
Adidas Originals	General	International	Anfu Road	Anfu Road	**Global First Flagship Store**
Gregory	Outdoor	International	Grand Gateway 66	Xujiahui	**China First Store**
Mobi Garden Mobi Garden	Outdoor	Domestic	Grand Gateway 66	Xujiahui	**China First Flagship Store**
Under Armour outdoor	Outdoor	International	Grand Gateway 66	Xujiahui	**China First Store**
Decathlon	Specialist	International	Xintiandi Plaza	Huaihai Road	**Shanghai First Store**
Salomon	Outdoor	International	Anfu Road	Anfu Road	**New Concept Store**
Columbia	Outdoor	International	Shang Xian Fang	Huaihai Road	**New Brand Image Store**
X-BIONIC	Outdoor	International	West Nanjing Road	West Nanjing Road	**Shanghai Flagship Store**
Craft	Outdoor	International	Zhangyuan	West Nanjing Road	**Brand Experience Store**
Brooks Running	Specialist	International	Kerry Parkside	Huamu	**China First Store**
Osprey	Outdoor	International	Kerry Parkside	Huamu	**Shanghai First Store**
KAILAS	Outdoor	Domestic	Kerry Parkside	Huamu	**Shanghai First New Flagship Store**
HOUDINI	Outdoor	International	Kerry Parkside	Huamu	**China First Store**
HEAD	Specialist	International	Park Avenue Central	Jing'an Temple	**World's First Flagship Store**
Vuori	Specialist	International	Jing An Kerry Centre	Jing'an Temple	**China First Store**
NB Grey R	General	International	Huaihai Road	Huaihai Road	**Global First Store**
Factor	Specialist	International	HKRI Taikoo Hui	West Nanjing Road	**China First Store**
Rapha	Specialist	International	Dongping Road	Huaihai Road	**China First Store**