

Adidas, the world's second-largest sportswear company, traces its origins to the Dassler Brothers Shoe Factory, founded in 1924 by Adolf and Rudolf Dassler in Herzogenaurach, Germany. Initially operating in humble conditions, using a stationary bike for power, their breakthrough came at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, where Jesse Owens' gold medal wins in their Geda shoes propelled them to success. Both brothers were Nazi party members, and their factory shifted to producing anti-tank weapons during World War II, employing forced laborers. Post-war, a bitter feud between Adi and Rudi led to the factory's closure in 1948 and the creation of Adidas and Puma, respectively. This rivalry deeply divided Herzogenaurach, with residents aligning themselves with either company. Adidas, under Adi's leadership, achieved significant milestones: the innovative football boots used in the 1954 World Cup, the popularization of the tracksuit in the 1960s, and a long-standing partnership with the FIFA World Cup. The brand's entry into American pop culture through its association with Run DMC in the 1980s further cemented its success. After facing near-bankruptcy in the early 1990s, Adidas, under new management, focused on improved marketing and went public in 1995, successfully navigating the athleisure market through collaborations like the one with Stella McCartney. In 2020, Adidas reported \$22.4 billion in worldwide sales, maintaining its position as the leading athletic brand in Europe and the second largest globally, with Puma, its long-time rival, trailing closely behind. Neither company is currently controlled by Dassler family descendants.