

OPDD Teams Up with Real Salt Lake

Industry collaborations made possible through the [Manufacturing and Outdoor Products Support Hub](#), a partnership between Utah Manufacturing Extension Service and Outdoor Product Design & Development.

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Makell Garrett (Junior) and Konrad Plewa (Real Monarchs SLC)

Products that aren't made with the needs of users in mind typically aren't successful, especially if those products are used in a high-performance setting by professional soccer players. Junior student, Makell Garrett, spent a day at the Zions Bank Real Academy training facility in Herriman talking with Real Monarchs SLC players about their equipment, particularly their cleats. For one of Makell's projects, she and another student designed a soccer cleat. It was important to them to take that design and gather insights from professional users of the product what they like and don't like about the design.

Of her experience, Makell said, "It was so valuable to talk with the Monarchs because they are extreme users that know the ins and outs of soccer cleats. I was able to really dig deep and find those issues that I could improve on in my design. It really opened my eyes to the fact that even though something has already been done doesn't mean you can't improve on it."

Over the course of a few hours, Makell was able to spend time with multiple players as well as equipment managers teasing out valuable insights on what might make a better soccer cleat design in terms of comfort and performance.

Opportunities to connect designers with experienced users of performance products provides valuable insights into how individuals interact with products and how they perform over time. It's only through working directly with users that designers can hope to make more impactful products that help users go further, faster, and harder.