US sports industry leaders see potential in China

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DENVER — American sports industry heavyweights met last week at the historic Brown Palace Hotel downtown to discuss retail opportunities for the future.  
One of the hot topics was boosting trade with the biggest sports market and most populous country worldwide. China’s emerging middle-class, hungry for high-quality products, is the most desired market in the world, American sports brand marketers told Xinhua.  
“There’s a lot of momentum already building between the USA and China in sports,” Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) President and CEO Tom Cove said.  
Founded in 1906, SFIA is considered America’s voice to more than 1,000 sporting goods and fitness brands, manufacturers, retailers and marketers in the over $150 billion sporting sector.  
“The one thing I can say with a high degree of confidence is that China has the right kind of talent to be as influential in sports and the sporting industry as it has been in software and artificial intelligence,” said convention speaker David Schrage, a research fellow with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).  
“There are opportunities for the fusion of Chinese technology and American technology (in sports-related fields),” Schrage added.  
Schrage said China’s “infrastructure” of sports marketing vehicles, including platforms such as WeChat, Alibaba, Tencent and even videos and “selfies”, all contribute to a market ripe for sports marketing.  
“I think this is going to be most interesting,” the MIT expert told Xinhua, saying China’s vast internet involvement “really gives ... China an edge in terms of creating communities of sporting interest”.  
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