



Alibaba.com's Ball Barometer Forecast: Soccer with a Chance of Badminton

Popularity of Balls Searched on Alibaba.com Suggests 2008 Olympics Drove Interest in Sports around the World

HONG KONG, February 23, 2009 – The global trade in sports balls may have taken a dramatic bounce for the better because of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, according to data collected by Alibaba.com (HKSE: 1688; 1688.HK), the world's largest business-to-business e-commerce company.

Despite the downturn in the worldwide economy, interest in sports showed a significant upturn according to the figures revealed by search requests made on the online international marketplace. Soccer balls and basketballs were the top two types of sports balls sought after for mass purchase in 2008, followed closely by badminton shuttlecocks.

All three product types gained in popularity during the year, with soccer balls posting a 77 percent year-on-year increase and basketballs rising 6 percent as of January 2009. Badminton shuttlecock search requests rose 133 percent. Volleyballs, which were the seventh most searched balls last year, rose 17 percent. In total, searches for sports balls, which also included shuttlecocks and hockey pucks, measured in January 2009 rose nearly 31 percent year-on-year.

"The common thread between soccer, basketball, badminton and volleyball is that all four sports were featured prominently during the 2008 Beijing Olympics; all had strong competitors from a number of nations around the world in contention for medals; and searches for all four surged after the Olympics from September through to December. The implication is that many companies around the world may have ordered more of these items for the holiday season to meet the growing appetite," said Sabrina Peng, Alibaba.com vice president of website operations.

"It was probably to be expected that soccer and basketball would place well on this type of list given the well-developed spread of amateur and professional leagues around the world," said Peng. "However, seeing badminton place at number three is interesting because the medals at the Beijing Olympics were shared between just four Asian countries. A logical conclusion to draw is that the Beijing Games caused a growth in awareness among businesses around the world of the possibility of sourcing certain kinds of goods such as badminton in Asia because local suppliers may have a comparative advantage, as reflected in interest registered on the Alibaba.com platform. In other words, the Beijing Games may have inspired a growth in international trade."

It was not just the Olympics that caused spectacular spikes in interest around the world; Hollywood may have played a part too. The most spectacular rise, in terms of percentage increase in searches as of last month, was for dodge balls. Searches on Alibaba.com rose by 1,850 percent year over year, albeit off a much lower base than searches for soccer balls and basketballs. The dodge ball phenomena is almost certainly linked to the continuously growing cult status enjoyed by the 2004 movie – "Dodgeball, a True Underdog Story" which stars Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn.

The comparison of global English searches on Alibaba.com's international marketplace was made between January 2008 and January 2009. Alibaba.com is the world's largest business-to-business marketplace, which had as of the third quarter of last year nearly 36 million registered users, including nearly 7 million registered users in more than 240 countries and regions on the English-language international marketplace.

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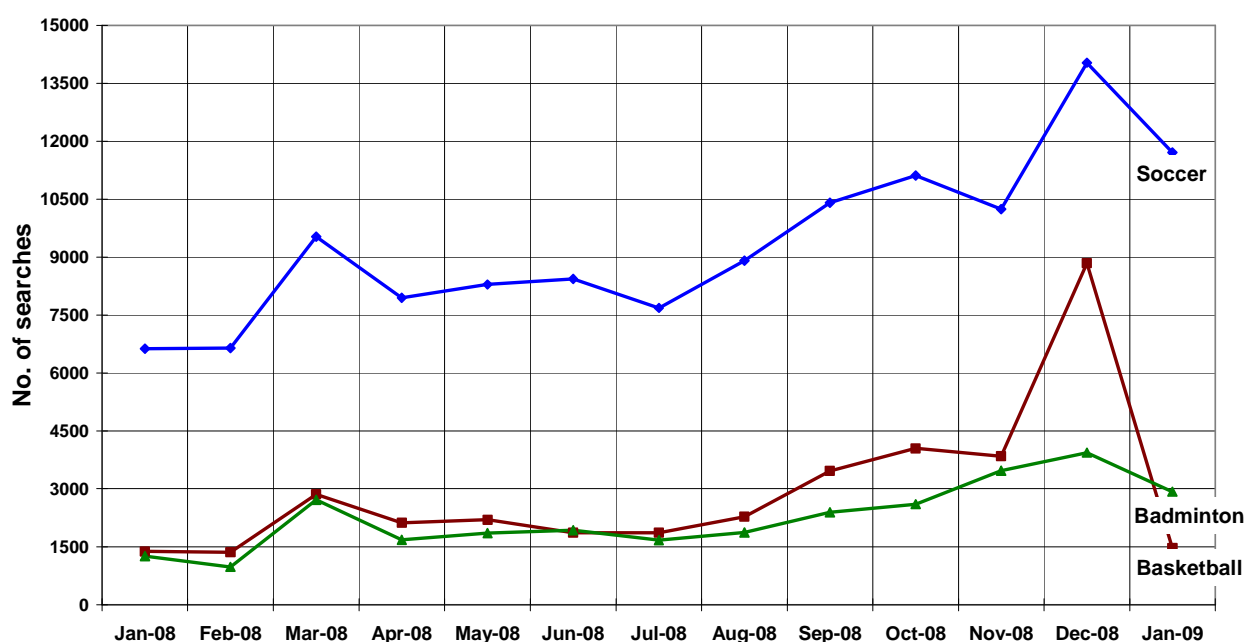
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Appendix

Year-on-year change in number of search enquiries made on Alibaba.com as of January 2009

	Year-on-year change
Soccer balls	76.7%
Basketballs	6.4%
Badminton shuttlecocks	132.8%
Volleyballs	17.2%
Hockey pucks	38.3%
Dodgeballs	1850.0%
Overall	30.5%

Distribution of search enquiries of top sports balls made on Alibaba.com



About Alibaba.com Limited

Alibaba.com Limited (HKSE:1688)(HK.1688) is the world's leading B2B e-commerce company. It connects millions of buyers and suppliers from around the world every day through three marketplaces: an English-language marketplace (alibaba.com) for global importers and exporters, a Chinese-language marketplace (alibaba.com.cn) for domestic trade in China, and, through a joint venture, a Japanese-language marketplace (alibaba.co.jp) facilitating trade to and from Japan. Together, its marketplaces form a community of 36 million registered users from over 240 countries and regions. Headquartered in Hangzhou, Alibaba.com has offices in more than 30 cities across mainland China as well as in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Europe and the United States.

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