

Boots 'Talk' by Chris de Bruyn (Hi-Tec).

Good day Parents,

What a crazy time we are living in. I would normally be standing in front of you all, giving my talk on footwear and equipment for your boys to be considering for Epic. However, due to the crazy circumstances we are living under, I will give you some pointers in this mail.

Firstly, I want to say that you are under no obligation to purchase our brand. We have for the past 9 years offered a 20% discount to your son, as well as anyone else in your family who purchases anything from our **Hi-Tec shop at Access Park in Kenilworth**. The staff there have been dealing with the learners from Bishops for years now and are well trained to guide you on your purchase.

The reason Bishops initially invited me to do these "gear" talks, was because the lads were doing the Epic in their trainers and several of the boys were damaging their ankles. The need for an educational talk on wearing boots became apparent and that is how the relationship began.

I would, at this stage, be showing you a few different styles that would be suitable for Epic. I would show you the cheapest option for those that might never use them again, right up to the most expensive. There are some great options ranging from about R1200 to R1800. The choice is yours and again, the shop assistants will guide you. We will also throw in a pair of socks for each learner, but they do will need more than 1 pair.

So, here are some guidelines in purchasing the correct footwear for your son.

1. He will need a boot for ankle support. A low cut shoe will give no ankle support.
2. Make sure it is within your budget and determines his needs. i.e. Will he be using them again or will this be a once off?
3. Try both shoes on while in the store. Take the socks and innersoles that he will be wearing during Epic. Walk around the shop with both shoes on to make sure they are both comfortable.
4. Buy 1 size bigger than normal. His feet will swell and you don't want his toes rubbing up against the front of the shoe. Ask the shop assistant to advise on the correct fitting.
5. Make sure the shoe has decent lugs on the outer-sole. This will assist with grip on most surfaces.
6. Make sure the mid-sole gives him the necessary comfort and that the eyelets are made from an alloy such as Brass. They will not rust.
7. In terms of the upper shoe, a full grain leather will give him great protection against rocks scraping on the upper but will allow limited breathability. He might want to go for an option that

has mesh inlays which will improve breathability. (moisture evaporating from his feet).

8. Decide if you want waterproof boots. (Recommended). The boots are made waterproof by a membrane which is stitched inside the boot. This can be done on a Full Grain leather as well as a boot that has Mesh inserts. (Remember, waterproofing compromises breathability)

9. If the boot is even vaguely uncomfortable, try another style or another brand. Comfort is key to a successful and enjoyable hike.

10. Once you get home, walk only in the household for the first couple of days. No retailer will take them back if they have been worn outside as they cannot then sell them again. Once he is satisfied with the fit and comfort, start to do some small hikes in them.

11. Ask the shop assistant to advise on tying method. The Hi-Tec staff will show them how to tie a boot that improves ankle support as well as preventing movement inside the boot which will help eliminate blisters.

12. Keep your receipt and ask for the warranty period before you purchase his boots. Most brands offer a 6-month warranty on workmanship and material failure.

Please understand, the boots will scuff, and young hikers, when their legs become tired, tend to scuff the insteps of the boots as their tired legs brush against each other, causing the scuffing on the medial (inside) side of the boots. This is normal and cannot be construed as a material failure. I hope this helps in choosing your son's footwear. Should you have any other queries, please feel free to mail me at chris@hi-tec.co.za.

In terms of clothing and equipment again, the shop assistant will guide you and the school will be giving you an equipment list. I do recommend a long sleeve shirt with a collar. There are shirts available that are UV protective. I also recommend a wide brimmed hat for sun protection. Your boys will be given a 3-in-1 jacket which has a fleece inner and is waterproof. Good socks are important and a buff can make a huge difference. There are many uses for a buff and the store staff will explain and demonstrate its uses.

I wish your boys a safe and fantastic Epic

Warm regards and stay safe.

Chris