



Brotherly Love?

Adidas® and Puma® have been two of the biggest names in sports shoe manufacturing for over half a century.

Since 1928 they have supplied shoes for Olympic athletes, World Cup-winning football heroes, Muhammad Ali, hip hop stars and rock musicians famous all over the world. But the story of these two companies begins in one house in the town of Herzogenaurach, Germany.

Adolph and Rudolph Dassler were the sons of a shoemaker. They loved sport but complained that they could never find comfortable shoes to play in. Rudolph always said, 'You cannot play sports wearing shoes that you'd walk around town with.' So they started making their own. In 1920 Adolph made the first pair of athletics shoes with spikes, produced on the Dasslers' kitchen table.

On 1st July 1924 they formed a shoe company, Dassler Brothers Ltd and they worked together for many years. The company became successful and it provided the shoes for Germany's athletes at the 1928 and 1932 Olympic Games.

But in 1948 the brothers argued. No one knows exactly what happened, but family members have suggested that the argument was about money or women. The result was that Adolph left the company. His nickname was Adi, and using this and the first three letters of the family name, Dassler, he founded Adidas.

Rudolph relocated across the River Aurach and founded his own company too. At first he wanted to call it Ruda, but eventually he called it Puma, after the wild cat. The famous Puma logo of the jumping cat has hardly changed since.

After the big split of 1948 Adolph and Rudolph never spoke to each other again and their companies have now been in competition for over sixty years. Both companies were for many years the market leaders, though Adidas has always been more successful than Puma. A hip hop group, Run DMC, has even written a song called *My Adidas* and in 2005 Adidas bought Reebok®, another big sports shoe company.

The terrible family argument should really be forgotten, but ever since it happened, over sixty years ago, the town has been split into two. Even now, some Adidas employees and Puma employees don't talk to each other.

