



GORILLA LABZ ATHLETICS APPAREL & TEAM GORILLA GIRLZ

by Rachel Payne

JAMES & JAZMIN LORD

Owners: Gorilla Labz Athletics Apparel & Team Gorilla Girlz

Website: gorillalabzathleticsapparel.com

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The Gorilla Labz Athletics Apparel company has been largely supportive of several bodybuilding events and I had the opportunity to speak with them about their business and vision for the future.

THE START

While I have been a lifelong gym rat, I was never a spectacular athlete myself. I was always around the contestants, athletes, competitors, bodybuilders and even CrossFitters and we all

just wanted to go into the gym and lift. Over the decades, I met a lot of people and went to a lot of competitions. I partnered with another person and we started a t-shirt company called Gorilla Labz. I wanted to explore taking the business in a different direction and eventually we decided to part ways. In 2020, my wife and I created Gorilla Labz Athletics Apparel. Our vision was to use the money from selling athletics apparel to sponsor athletes and events as a way of giving back. We want to help put on a better show and bring opportunities to people whose circumstances prevent them from affording the expenses of competing. When we first started, we had promoted our athletics apparel in Zazzle, but realized we would continue to stay small. I started setting up vendor booths at events and sponsoring the entry fees of a couple of girls. Combined with my wife's design talent, we began to grow in a big way.

“Gorilla Labz Athletics Apparel is American made.”



DESIGNS

Gorilla Labz Athletics Apparel is American made. From purchasing the shirts to designs and sales, we are 100% USA. I'm constantly working on designs, Jazmin says. I talk to the athletes or listen to my husband, and create designs with his sayings, and sometimes I just come up with my own. We currently have t-shirts, tanks, hoodies, and accessory merchandise like tumbler cups. A new line of shorts, warm ups and leggings will be available soon, and a new t-shirt line with our recently developed AI generated logo will be launched in August. In addition, we are excited to be moving into Direct to Film (DTF) printing which enables us to print multi-colored designs at a lower cost.

We sell both online and in person at the bodybuilding shows and other events. Selling in person allows us to meet our customers face-to-face and they get to meet some of our athletes that work the booth with me. We've been fortunate that sales have been so successful at the events and our growth has been totally organic with no paid advertising to this point. That may change this year as increasing our social media presence is priority. We've made it a group effort. The team understands the benefits for everyone and they're happy to post while repping the brand.





TEAM GORILLA GIRLZ

The team has become our primary focus and the apparel is the financial means that affords us the opportunity to help these ladies compete in the sport they love, James explains. The criteria we look for is a passion and hunger that makes our athletes love the sport along with a willingness and self-driven dedication to being their best. We've met the girls at the shows and through introductions, but knowing they wouldn't be able to compete as frequently without our help made the selection process easy.

Our roster of 13 includes three that are in a growing phase this year, so they probably won't compete this year. The other ten are comprised of single moms, masters athletes, pros, masters pros, wellness, figure, women's physique and even some athletes that compete in both bodybuilding and power lifting. We provide paid entry fees, hotels, and if there is no entry fee like with the pros, for example, then we find out what they need help with such as food, travel, tanning, hair & make up, etc... Right now, I'm the only male on the roster and the NPC Total Body Championships will be my first show. I'm entering as a 58-year-old Novice!

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SPONSORSHIPS

At this time, all our profits from the apparel are going to pay for these sponsorships. We really started seeing the growth in our business when we began increasing our sponsorships at the shows. For example, last year we sponsored the Pro Divisions at the Daytona Pro in return for the title sponsorship. This year we are doing the same at the Tupelo Pro. It's a lot of money, even more than the apparel alone can cover, but it's been both good exposure and a good investment for us.

PURPOSE

Our overall purpose is to bring more attention to the Masters divisions. Many of the Masters Pros have dedicated not just a year or two, but many, many years to competing in hopes of getting an Olympia invite along with more recognition.

Our objective is to build a big enough following to where our return on investment enables us to break even so we can invest in the next show. At the same time, we plan to continue to sponsor our athletes. We are in the process of creating a YouTube Channel in order to continue to build a fan base for the Team Gorilla Girlz. I believe we can monetize that so YouTube becomes another revenue stream, increasing our ability to help pay for the cost of shows and athlete sponsorships. Who knows, maybe we can even partner with a show promoter in the future!

