

Fanatics Acquires E-Commerce Partner to AC Milan, Juventus



Fanatics has purchased EPI, an Italian e-commerce company whose sports partners include AC Milan, Inter Milan, Juventus and Lazio. Illustration by Lorenzo Gordon, Photo Courtesy of Fanatics

Fanatics has acquired Italian e-commerce outfit **EPI**, partner to many of the country's biggest soccer clubs, in a deal that will expand the company's international reach.

As part of the acquisition from a consortium that is majority owned by Milan-based private equity fund **Quadrivio Group**, Fanatics is also buying soccer equipment retailer **Pitch Football Store**. EPI, which does more than \$50 million in annual sales, will be rebranded as Fanatics **Italy**.

"We share an entrepreneurial mindset, a passion for delighting sports fans and a love for innovating for sports teams and leagues, which makes for an exciting future together," Fanatics Commerce CEO Doug Mack said in a statement announcing the deal.

It's the latest acquisition for **Michael Rubin**'s company, which **raised** \$2.2 billion last year and is expanding rapidly into new areas like trading cards and sports betting. Some of that money has also been used for strategic additions to the core Fanatics business as the world's largest seller of officially licensed sports merchandise.

Financial specifics of the EPI deal were not released.

Based in Milan, EPI operates the online stores and retail shops for some of Italy's biggest soccer clubs and its national soccer teams, and handles some local operations from global enterprises like Nike and the NBA. The group's **Serie A** team partners include **AC Milan**, Juventus, Inter Milan, Lazio and Atalanta.

Fanatics gained a major international foothold in 2016 when it acquired U.K.-based e-commerce company Kitbag. Now, its global operations include more than 60 offices, manufacturing facilities and distribution centers, including footprints in Spain, France and Germany. The company's

European soccer partners include Manchester United, Chelsea, Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Munich.

Fanatics says the EPI acquisition will benefit both groups' existing portfolios. EPI partners will gain access to the wider Fanatics network and the company's technological capabilities, while Fanatics partners will gain higher visibility within Italy, Europe's sixth most populous country.

All of EPI's roughly 150 employees will remain with Fanatics Italy, and continue to report to EPI CEO Lorenzo Forte, who will assume the same role in the new group.

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