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Leafs get fashion makeover

Toronto Maple Leafs Fashion Design Challenge puts style first

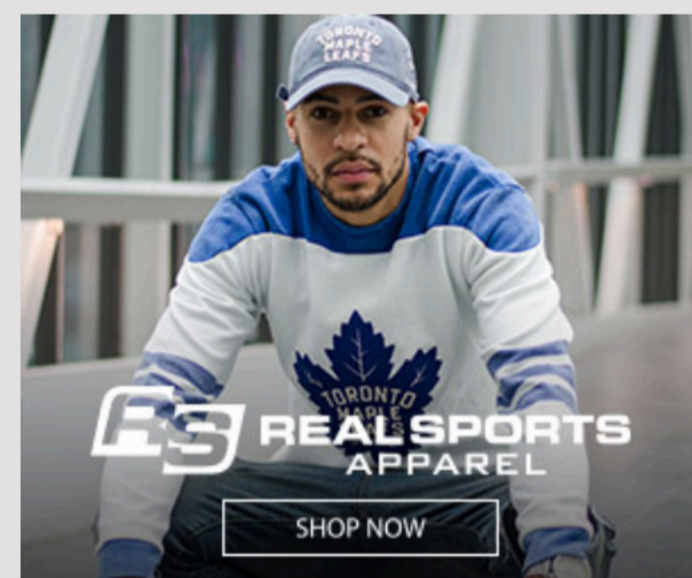


Designers Richard Campos (pictured) and Michael Duhamel won the Toronto Maple Leafs Fashion Design Challenge. Their collections will be available to the public in September. (CONTRIBUTED)

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The Leafs — and the rest of the city — have kicked off the team’s Centennial year. That’s 100 years of slapshots, breakaways, blood, sweat and plenty of tears. So what better way to celebrate than ... a fashion contest?



With official sportswear now more of a style statement than just the mark of a super-fan, it only makes sense that the Leafs’ branded shirts and tees follow suit. So in celebration of the 100th season, the team partnered with the Canadian Arts & Fashion Awards (CAFA) and sports-apparel manufacturer Mitchell & Ness to launch the [Toronto Maple Leafs Fashion Design Challenge](#).

The aim was to engage local design talent to push the boundaries of the team’s current merchandise, creating fresh, fashion-forward and high-end designs that will be exclusive to [Real Sports Apparel](#) and cater to the team’s growing fan base. The three partners invited local designers to create a collection of staple items for men and women inspired by the Leafs new primary sweater, which made its debut at the 2016 NHL draft.

Out of all entries, the partners chose their top 10 designers, then the judging moved to an elite panel of fashion experts: Much/MTV personality Liz Trinnear; Adam Herstig, head of marketing for Mitchell & Ness; CAFA Stylist of the Year, George Antonopoulos; *Flare* magazine editor-in-chief Cameron Williamson; and Laura deCarufel, editor-in-chief of *The Kit*.

The panel narrowed the list down to five designers: Richard Campos and Shawn Hewson for the men’s collection, Michael Duhamel and Ellie Mae Waters for the women’s collection and Brian Ho Sang, who designed both men’s and women’s styles. The collections ranged from Campos’s patterned, striped and camo-influenced looks to Waters’s “Retro-Tech” pieces, which featured sport mesh inserts, a crop hoodie and bomber jacket and even a sports bra.

In the end, the final vote was left to Leafs Nation. Fans voted online for a final say in what they’ll be wearing to support their team next season. The winners — Michael Duhamel (women’s) and Richard Campos (men’s) — are both Toronto-based designers with a longstanding love for the Toronto Maple Leafs and an eagerness to dress Toronto Maple Leafs fans.

“It is an honour to have been selected as a winner by the fans and judges,” says Campos. “Being able to design apparel for the team that I grew up supporting and loving is something that I will remember forever.”

“I can’t wait to see this collection brought to life,” Duhamel says.

The new men’s and women’s collections will be produced by Mitchell & Ness and sold exclusively at [The Toronto Maple Leafs Store](#) powered by Real Sports Apparel beginning this September. That means the winning designers get to outfit Leafs Nation for the 2017-18 season. And as if that weren’t honour enough, the prizes include a collection showcase at the 2017 Canadian Arts & Fashion Awards and \$25,000 in cash.

Get a sneak peek at the upcoming collections by visiting leafsfashionchallenge.com.