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## Fairfield company makes Olympic sleds

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By Eric Robinette

Staff Writer

**FAIRFIELD** — A Fairfield manufacturing facility played a very important part in the American sledding team bringing home a bronze medal in the winter Olympics.

Machintek, on Port Union Union Road, manufactured some of the sleds the team raced in Sochi, Russia, including the one manned by Matt Antoine, who won the bronze in skeleton sledding in February.

The company has been involved with the Olympic team since 2008, said Roger Hasler, the president of the company, which makes various machine parts often found in factories. Its customers include Procter & Gamble and dairy industry companies. It got the Olympics job in 2008 through University of Cincinnati professor Grant Schaffner, who designed the sled and approached Machintek about custom-building it.

From there, the company formed a relationship with the U.S. Bobsled and Skeleton Federation, the governing body of the U.S. teams, Hasler said. After going through various designs, Machintek's sleds made their Olympic debut at the 2010 winter games in Vancouver, Canada.

"We did not medal then, but it was promising," Hasler said. "From there, until this year, we have gone through design iteration five" of the sleds, he explained. "We built three new sleds this past summer. We've probably built between 10 to 15 in the last five years."

The sleds are outfitted with custom-built saddles, and the Olympic athletes visit the facility in Fairfield to get fitted for the sled, Hasler said.

Hasler didn't get to see the Olympic medal win in person, but he did watch his company's sleds race in a World Cup event in Lake Placid, N.Y. in December. World Cup events around the globe determines the ranking of the athletes.

"It's pretty exciting. Our talent is to build things ... it gives us an opportunity to get involved a little bit in the sport. There's quite a few people here that take just a huge interest in that," Hasler said. "It's not quite as good as being there and getting the medal, but it's close."

Machintek employs between 50 and 60 people and has been in Fairfield since 1995, having moved there after starting in Cincinnati 10 years prior. Its facility measures more than 40,000 square feet.

Fairfield City Councilman Mike Snyder said, Machintek put "hundreds of hours into making these sleds, and we're really proud of them."

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