

In Defence of the Takedown Model

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Almost every single season, it seems like brands release a new and shiny flagship sneaker packed with the latest in cutting-edge technology or fancy styling. While these products represent the peak of footwear design and engineering, they are usually reflected by a high retail price. In an age of stagnating incomes and the rising cost of living, not everyone can afford to sink a chunk of their pay cheque into a pair of sneakers every month – if not every week.

This is where the takedown model comes in. Generally marketed at the entry-level sneaker market, or kid's-sized versions, these styles are an affordable option that still possess all the hallmarks of a good sneaker. Often, they'll also feature the trickle down design and aesthetic features that their flagship counterparts contain.

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The takedown model phenomenon is widely seen in the basketball sneaker realm. [Lebron James](#) has the [Ambassador](#) line that's priced more in line with the average wage. The last model, in its 11th iteration, retailed at \$140. Compare that to The King's incumbent signature, the Zoom Lebron 16, priced at an eye-watering \$185 retail (expect to pay much more on the resale market for particular colourways). And while [Kevin Durant's](#) signature line comfortably sits in three-digit territory, his very first sneaker, the KD 1, was priced at \$80 to be affordable for parents and aspiring basketballers.

It's not just in this millennium that takedown sneakers have been prevalent. In the late 90s, the Team Jordan line was created for new silhouettes to sit alongside the better-known Air Jordan styles. One such model was the 1998 [Jumpman Team 2](#), with clear similarities to the [Air Jordan 13](#). It may not have had MJ's name on it, but this was still a very high performance sneaker in its time.

That said: there must be no greater satisfaction on the court than crossing someone in flagship shoes while you're wearing a takedown sneaker. After all, it's down to skill and confidence in how someone wears sneakers, not the sneaker itself.

Back to the streets. [NMDs](#) don't need to be on foot to be at the cutting edge of the sneaker scene. Viable options from [adidas](#) like the [Swift Run](#) and [X_PLR](#) reference the sock-fit aesthetic and sleek shape without the markup from [BOOST](#) tech. The same can be said about [Yeezy](#). Yes, [Kanye West](#) did promise Yeezys for everybody, but can the average person realistically afford them? And even for those that can cough up the \$220 for the [Yeezy BOOST 350v2](#), many wear them terribly. Why not first try the look out with the \$85 Swift Run to see if the aesthetic suits?

There is still a stigma surrounding takedown models. For some irrational reason, takedown models are not perceived to be as 'good' as the flagship. In the case of kid's sneakers, it makes sense for them to not be packed with all the R&D. For one, kids outgrow their shoes too quickly to make it worth developing a shrunken version of flagship sneakers. Secondly, developing the tooling to create smaller midsoles and shoe parts is just not financially viable.

Living in a society where worth is measured by material goods is extremely flawed, but it persists. Anecdotally, kids in schoolyards are no longer being teased for not having brand name shoes – they're already expected to own them. Worse yet, they're now getting teased for not having the latest releases. To be at a point where adequacy is measured by possessions instead of character is a sad indictment of the world we live in.

At the end of the day, it should be remembered that sneakers are part of self-expression and individuality. Wearing the most expensive or latest sneaker won't make you a style icon, nor improve your jumpshot. A well-rocked pair of shoes is a well-rocked pair of shoes.