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Shelley Sperry/Daily Nebraskan

Colorful briefs more popular

By KEMA SODERBERG

The underwear industry's "brief" history has become colorful in the past 10 years.

Until then, white shorts blinded eyes that chanced a peak into a man's shorts drawer. Now peepers see a rainbow of colors.

Red, copper, yellow, green, light blue, navy, black and gray are just a few of the popular color choices available in brief, jockey or bikini cuts.

Stanley Howard, director of the Playboy underwear division at Ruby International in New York City, said about 80 percent of all underwear sold four years ago was white. Now colored fashions have captured about 50 percent of all sales.

Howard said men's fashion underwear have been successful because of women. He said women make 85 percent of Ruby International's initial purchases.

In order to give colored underwear a masculine appeal, Jockey International hired nine athletes in 1977 to model the company's wares. Allen Barry, spokesman for the company, said the ad campaign was launched to bring chic shorts into the lockeroom. The company didn't want women to

buy men shorts so they would be hid under pairs of white skivies, he said.

Colors are a recent development in underwear fashions, but Barry said Jockey underwear "has not changed the design or style for 50 years."

Barry said Jockey's "classic brief" was among the first made of cotton knit fabric and signaled a move away from woven cotton boxer shorts.

The key to a good pair of underwear Barry said, is using 100 percent cotton. He said Jockey combines this feature with real rubber waist and leg bands.

A good pair of underwear must have four features," Barry said. "They must be designed to fit well. They must be comfortable. They must last. And men have to feel good about wearing them."

Ruby's fabric and design are more diversified than Jockey's. Howard said Ruby makes underwear out of "everything from 100 percent cotton to 100 percent tricot." Fabrics used ranged from mesh to terrycloth weaves. Howard said the company's most popular brief is made from a cotton-lycra blend.

Ruby International makes Spaulding, Jordache, Javalin and plain label underwear in addition to its Playbody line.

