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Alternative Kits, Merchandise, and the Commercial Case for Red Star FC

Founded on February 21, 1897, in a Parisian café by Jules Rimet, Red Star Football Club stands as one of the oldest and most culturally significant clubs in French football history. At the time Rimet was a young law student, he was heavily influenced by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum Novarum", a landmark Catholic text covering the dignity of the working class. Rimet founded Red Star not as a conventional sports club but as an act of social inclusion. From its earliest days, the club refused to discriminate against members based on class, an extraordinary commitment for 1890s Paris, where organized sport remained almost exclusively available to the bourgeoisie.¹

That same Jules Rimet would go on to become the third president of FIFA in 1921, a position he held for 33 years, the longest tenure in the organization's history. It was Rimet who is credited with the creation of the first FIFA World Cup, held in Uruguay in 1930, sailing to Montevideo aboard the "SS Conte Verde" carrying the trophy himself. The original prize was named the Jules Rimet Trophy (1930-1970) in his honor, and he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1956, the year of his death. The man who gave football its grandest stage also gave Saint-Ouen its football club, and that connection between a world-changing visionary and a working-class Parisian suburb is the story at the core of this brand proposal.²

¹"Remembering Rimet's Reign, 100 Years On." FIFA Inside, 1 Mar. 2021, <https://inside.fifa.com/organisation/news/remembering-rimet-s-reign-100-years-on>.

²"Jules Rimet and the Birth of the World Cup." Sky HISTORY, <https://www.history.co.uk/article/jules-rimet-and-the-birth-of-the-world-cup>.

The club's name carries its own weight. The naming of the club is commonly credited to Miss Jenny, an English woman who was the governess for the family of Rimet. Jenny suggested naming the new club after the "Red Star Line", the transatlantic shipping company whose ocean liners carried thousands of European emigrants from Antwerp to New York. The image of a vessel crossing an ocean, connecting people, places, and possibilities, is embedded in the club's DNA: a story about movement, aspiration, and community across cultures. That origin story is deliberately woven into the collar of every piece in the product line proposed in this paper.³

Red Star settled in Saint-Ouen in 1909, and the suburb has shaped every dimension of the club's identity since. Saint-Ouen sits in Seine-Saint-Denis, the northernmost suburb of Paris. It is one of the most ethnically diverse communities in the region and one of the poorest areas in France. Saint-Ouen has historically generated an extraordinary concentration of elite football talent, including Kylian Mbappé, Paul Pogba, and N'Golo Kanté, all products of the same environment that Red Star calls home.⁴ The suburb's political character runs deep. Saint-Ouen has been governed by left-wing administrations since 1887. Red Star's supporter culture reflects this geography. Ultra groups including Red Star Fans, Gang Green, and the Perry Boys are explicitly antifascist and politically engaged, campaigning on issues such as refugee rights, and opposition to private equity ownership in football. The alignment between a football club and its neighborhood is rarely this direct or this commercially relevant.⁵⁶

No single figure better captures Red Star's identity than Rino Della Negra. Born in 1923 to Italian immigrant parents in the Paris suburb, Della Negra balanced factory work with a

³Robinson, James. "Red Star Paris: The Other Parisian Club." *These Football Times*, 30 Jun. 2015, <https://thesefootballtimes.co/2015/06/30/red-star-paris-the-other-parisian-club/>.

⁴"Saint-Ouen." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saint-Ouen>.

⁵"The Trip: Saint-Ouen-sur-Seine." *Secret Trips*, <https://secrettrips.com/inspiration/the-trip-saint-ouen-sur-seine/>.

⁶"Who Are the Red Star FC Ultras and the Rino Della Negra Stand." *Legendissime*, Feb. 2026, <https://legendissime.com/en/who-are-the-red-star-fc-ultras-and-the-rino-della-negra-stand/>.

promising career as a Red Star goalkeeper and forward before joining the FTP-MOI, the armed Communist resistance network, in October 1942. Between May and November 1943, he participated in at least fifteen armed operations against the Nazi occupation, including the assassination of a German general. Captured and wounded, he was executed by firing squad on February 21, 1944, exactly 47 years after Red Star's founding. His final letter closed: "Send my regards and farewells to everyone at Red Star." A stand at Stade Bauer now bears his name.

On the pitch, Red Star's history is equally compelling. The club claimed five Coupe de France titles, including three consecutive wins in 1921, 1922, and 1923 a feat that remains unmatched in the competition's history. Two Red Star players represented France at the inaugural FIFA World Cup in Uruguay in 1930: goalkeeper Alex Thépot and forward Marcel Pinel. The club was a founding member of Ligue 1 when French professional football launched in 1932. After decades of decline, Red Star fell to the sixth tier of French football by 2003, nearly ceasing to exist entirely. In 2008, film director Patrice Haddad acquired the club with a single public promise: return to Ligue 2 by 2015. He delivered on schedule. In 2024, Red Star won the Championnat National and returned to Ligue 2, where they currently compete.⁷⁸

The club's youth academy adds a critical layer of commercial credibility. Moussa Sissoko, who would go on to play for Tottenham Hotspur, Newcastle United, and represent France at multiple international tournaments, trained with Red Star in Saint-Ouen from 1999 to 2001 before joining Toulouse's professional setup. Abou Diaby, the France international who spent nine seasons at Arsenal, also developed through the club. These are not unnecessary biographies: they demonstrate that Red Star consistently identifies and develops elite talent from

⁷Robinson, James. "Red Star Paris: The Other Parisian Club." *These Football Times*, 30 Jun. 2015, <https://thesefootballtimes.co/2015/06/30/red-star-paris-the-other-parisian-club/>.

⁸Boxall, George. "'More Than a Football Club.'" *Red Star Rising*, 14 Oct. 2025, <https://georgeboxall.substack.com/p/more-than-a-football-club-a-review>.

the most diverse football-producing suburb in France, giving the brand a legitimate claim to the same cultural capital that Seine-Saint-Denis commands in global sport.⁹

Directly adjacent to Stade Bauer sits one of the world's most remarkable cultural landmark. The Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen. Founded in 1885, the Puces is the largest antique market on the planet, covering seven-teen acres, housing over 2,000 merchants across fourteen individual markets, and welcoming five million visitors per year, making it France's fourth most-visited tourist site. The market's history runs parallel to Red Star's own: both were built on the margins of Paris, both were initially excluded from the city proper, and both became defining institutions of a working-class northern suburb that refused to remain invisible. Both are places where immigrant culture, community ingenuity, and a refusal of the city's exclusionary geography produced something the world now comes to see.¹⁰¹¹

The Alternative Kit and Merchandise Line: Visuals and Marketability

Red Star's current technical partnership with Kappa, combined with a proven culture of premium creative collaborations, has already positioned the club far beyond its Ligue 2 commercial footprint. The following proposal consists of three on-pitch kits and two lifestyle collections designed to function as a unified alternative brand package.

Fig. 1 Home Kit: | Dark Forest Green Ivory Pinstripe | Kappa x Trust'It Groupe | Saint-Ouen, Paris · Est. 1897

⁹"Moussa Sissoko." Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moussa_Sissoko.

¹⁰"Les Puces de Saint-Ouen." Plaine Commune Tourism, <https://www.pop-plainecommune.com/en/discover-plaine-commune/the-must-haves/saint-ouen-flea-market/>.

¹¹"Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen in Paris." Paris Select, 30 Oct. 2025, <https://www.parisselectbook.com/en/2025/10/30/marche-aux-puces-de-saint-ouen-in-paris-the-worlds-largest-antiques-market-7-hectares-and-150-years-of-history/>.



Marketability: The home kit is the commercial anchor of the entire line. Dark forest green with fine ivory pinstripes, a workwear-inspired heritage collar, and a hand-crafted woven crest. This design speaks to both the Saint-Ouen local and the global football fashion consumer. The “Send my regards to all of Red Star” collar inscription references Rino Della Negra’s documented final letter, giving every wearer a direct connection to the club’s resistance history. The tagline “Built by the people. Inspired by Saint-Ouen. Worn with pride” is not an advertising claim; it is a historical statement. At an estimated retail price of \$120 and a projected annual volume of 8,000+ units. Sold across platforms such as in stadium sales, e-commerce, and international fashion boutique channels, this is the line’s highest-volume, highest-reach product.

Fig. 2 Away Kit: “The Champ de Mars” | Denim-Textured Navy | Kappa x Trust’It Groupe | Rooted in Saint-Ouen



Marketability: The away kit's denim-inspired navy texture, explicitly designed to reference the denim overalls worn by workers of Saint-Ouen's industrial past, creates a strong counter-narrative to the clean-white away shirts that dominate modern football. The "Champ de Mars 1897" collar tab anchors the design in the club's founding geographic origins. For lifestyle consumers and second-kit collectors globally, the denim texture creates an identity distinct enough to drive purchases from consumers who would never attend a Ligue 2 match. Target retail: \$120.

Fig. 3 Special Edition Third Kit: "Marché aux Puces" | Cream | Kappa x Saint-Ouen | Depuis 1897



Marketability: This kit has the potential to be the biggest commercial hit of the line. The cream base, 90s-inspired dark green piping, and full pen-and-ink engraving of the Marché aux Puces across the lower shirt make it visually unlike anything currently in football. “Saint-Ouen / Marché aux Puces / Depuis 1897” functions as both sponsor placement and brand storytelling, making the world’s largest flea market the visual partner of this jersey. Released as a numbered limited drop of 500–800 units at \$150 retail, this kit will sell out immediately upon announcement and generate secondary market resale values of 3–4 times retail, producing earned media and social proof worth multiples of the design’s production cost.¹²

¹²Binns, Simon. Red Star Paris: Punks, Politics and Power Struggles in the Fight for the Coolest Club on Earth. Pitch Publishing, 2025.

Marketability: The summer collection extends Red Star from a football brand into a

fully operational lifestyle label. Accessible entry price points (\$30–\$80 for tees and accessories) reach consumers who may never purchase a \$120 match jersey but will regularly wear a well-designed Red Star garment in Paris, London, Tokyo, or New York. The men’s and women’s split, combined with premium fabric specifications (100% organic cotton, breathable linen blend, ribbed cotton jersey), signals a brand that takes quality as seriously as storytelling. The Red Star Line ship illustration on the 1897 Tee back print directly links the lifestyle piece to the club’s founding.



Fig.5 Winter Collection | Heavyweight Hoodie, Quarter-Zip Fleece, Coach Jacket, Retro Track Pieces, Thermal Tee, Overshirt, Sweatpants, Quilted Vest, Scarf, Beanie, Gloves | Built to Last

Marketability: The winter range is built to function as matchday wear at Stade Bauer and everyday streetwear away from the stands. The heavyweight hoodie, lined coach jacket, and Kappa-tape retro track jacket speak directly to the current cultural moment in sportswear, where 90s athletic heritage commands premium lifestyle positioning. Investing in the details like, woven labels, embroidered stars, inside-collar prints, heritage stitching create brand value that rewards close inspection and justifies price points of \$70–\$150. The winter range also extends the commercial calendar beyond the football season, generating revenue in months when match-specific merchandise sales would otherwise be absent.



Marketability: The Kappa tracksuit is likely to generate viral fashion attention that builds brand awareness entirely beyond the football context. Kappa’s iconic tape has been experiencing a sustained global cultural resurgence through streetwear–sport crossover, featured in premium editorials and worn by athletes across major European leagues. Positioned as a limited-run collaboration priced at \$180. It would be sold through Red Star’s own channels, the Kappa website and select stores. The tracksuit functions as a gateway product for consumers who discover Red Star through fashion culture and convert into long-term brand loyalists. The dual gender presentation confirms the brand’s inclusive commercial scope.

Commercial Strategy: Key Reaches, KPIs, and the Revenue Case

Team Meaning and Value Proposition: Red Star's value proposition rests on three pillars no other Ligue 2 club can claim: 127 years of documented history rooted in working-class

inclusion, a community identity with genuine global recognition, and ties to pioneers of modern football. All 3 kits help illustrate this story.

Local, Regional, and National Reach: Five million people visit the Puces each year, and Stade Bauer is ninety seconds from Saint-Ouen Metro on Line 13. The matchday commercial opportunity extends to every tourist and Parisian day-tripper who comes for the market. A permanent Red Star retail stall at the Puces is a distribution channel no other football club in the world has access to. Previous Kappa collaborations have already built documented followings in France, the UK, Germany, Japan and the United States.

Social Presence and Storytelling: Red Star's past collaboration drops have sold out within hours and generated international press coverage worth multiples of any paid media budget available at this level. The Marché aux Puces kit follows the same formula.

KPIs and Revenue Projection: The line would operate across three tiers. Volume: which includes standard replica kits (\$120 retail, about 8,000 units/year) and lifestyle basics (\$30–\$80, about 5,000 units) drive consistent base revenue. Premium: which is the Marché aux Puces limited drop (\$150, 500–800 units) and Kappa tracksuit (\$180, 600 units), both generate scarcity-driven revenue at strong margins. Long-term: the summer and winter lifestyle ranges drive repeat purchases year-round. Potential combined projected annual merchandise revenue: \$1.5–1.7M, compared to a sub-\$650K baseline for a club at Red Star's current tier. Beyond merchandise, this brand investment directly supports ticket revenue, sponsor acquisition, and organic social reach that costs nothing.

Conclusion: Red Star FC already possesses the history, identity, and cultural legitimacy that modern football brands spend millions attempting to manufacture. This proposal simply translates those existing strengths into a modern commercial ecosystem. In a football industry increasingly driven by storytelling, authenticity, and lifestyle positioning, Red Star is uniquely positioned to grow beyond Ligue 2 and become one of the most culturally recognizable clubs in world football.

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