

American Eagle Taps Travis Kelce for AE x Tru Kolors Collaboration After Sydney Sweeney Controversy

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American Eagle is leaning into star power once again—this time with NFL champion **Travis Kelce**—following the backlash over its dropped Sydney Sweeney campaign earlier this summer.

The jeans giant has officially launched **AE x Tru Kolors**, a collaboration with Kelce's lifestyle brand. The collection includes **graphic t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, trousers, and classic denim**, all branded with the Kansas City Chiefs star's label.

The timing is hard to ignore. The drop follows Kelce's **headline-making engagement to global superstar Taylor Swift**, making him one of the most talked-about athletes off the field. Investors seemed to approve—**American Eagle shares spiked 6.1% in New York trading on Wednesday**, after a rough year that saw the stock tumble 27% through Tuesday's close.

From Sydney Sweeney Backlash to Travis Kelce Spotlight

Earlier this year, American Eagle found itself embroiled in controversy after releasing its "Great Jeans" campaign with actress **Sydney Sweeney**. Critics slammed the ad for perceived references to eugenics. The backlash escalated when former President Donald Trump bizarrely endorsed the campaign, calling it the "HOTTEST ad out there" on his Truth Social platform. The brand quickly shelved the ad, sparking questions about its marketing strategy.

By turning to **collaborations with athletes and cultural icons**, AE hopes to re-energize sales, which have slumped for three straight quarters.

A Year in the Making

According to American Eagle, the **Kelce tie-up has been in development for over a year**, long before his relationship with Swift catapulted him into the pop culture stratosphere. The marketing rollout also features a roster of other athletes including **quarterback Drew Allar, Olympic gymnast Suni Lee, and college basketball star Azzi Fudd**—underscoring the brand's bid to connect with a wide demographic.

The Verdict

Whether AE x Tru Kolors will spark the sales turnaround American Eagle needs remains to be seen. But with Travis Kelce at the helm—and Taylor Swift adjacent headlines keeping him in the spotlight—this collaboration is already proving to be a **cultural and financial win** for the retailer.

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