

To Cap It All....

Tony Whitmore from Your Embroidery Services Ltd talks to us about Cap Embroidery



All manner of embroidery is possible on caps

Cap embroidery has been around for years, probably about as long as the caps have. When we say caps, of course we mean baseball caps. It has become a utility item that now adorns the heads of all ages, both male and female, and is used in many and varied areas of work and play. Most of them carry some sort of embroidery, with the more elaborate ones being decorated prior to manufacture. Most however, are embroidered after they have been manufactured and therefore pose greater difficulties, although over the years, these difficulties have been overcome, making the embroidering of caps much easier than ever before. Two particular developments by Korean machine manufacturer SWF, have made significant differences to the way we look at achieving our goal.

Two frames for two caps

If you go far enough back, you may remember that the most popular cap looked a rather odd affair with a high flattish front and a mesh back and sides. It became known as a 'truckers' cap as the majority of American truckers seemed to eat, sleep and drink in one. Over time this lost favour and the 'low crown' 5 or 6 panel cap gained in popularity, eventually overshadowing its predecessor. At this time the style of the cap frame changed as machines were able to embroider most of the way around the cap. Now the major difference in embroidering the two different styles is the height. The 'truckers' cap was much higher, and therefore the available height of the embroidery was much greater than the available area of

the 'low crown' version. In recent years however fashion has turned its usual full circle and the high fronted 'truckers' cap has once again gained in popularity, resulting in both caps being in common use. As the machine manufacturers had changed their whole approach to framing caps, (to allow all round embroidery), the extra height of the older cap could no longer be utilised and it is here that SWF gained their first advantage. Right from the start they took the decision to include two types of cap frame with their machines. One style allows the user to embroider most of the way around the 'low crown' cap, whilst the other allows extra height for the embroidery supported by the 'truckers' version. This in itself was a major step forward in flexibility, making SWF the first and only machine to supply four cap frames per embroidery head.

The speed of change



The arms clearly seen on the sides of the frame simply click into the standard frame holding arms

One area that was always a little disconcerting for machine users was the time taken to change over from flat or tubular embroidery to caps. Basically, when embroidering panels or garments, the item is placed in a frame which is attached, using a quick release method, to two arms on the embroidery machine. When the user wanted to change the caps, the whole quick change system had to be removed and a special driver attached in its place. The cap frame complete with cap was then attached to this. Depending on the machine, this changeover could take anything from 10 to 30 minutes for a single head machine. The latest development from SWF however now means that the change can be made in seconds as

opposed to minutes. Enter the 'quick change' cap frame. SWF have changed the way their cap frames attach to machines using the same arms as those used for the standard tubular frames. This effectively means that there is no change at all where the machine is concerned. You simply remove the polo shirt you have just embroidered and replace it with a cap. The beauty of this is not only that the speed of change has been reduced to the level of a standard frame, but also that you can still use both styles of cap frame mentioned above.

Over the years, cap embroidery has become more and more important. Its use in promotional wear, sports-wear, work-wear and children's wear equals the frequency of its appearance in the fashion industry. Just try and think of the last time that you saw someone wearing a baseball cap, of either variety, that was not embroidered. I suspect that your memory will be seriously tested.

One of the major sectors for baseball caps is sport. Whether it be the player or the fan,



This picture shows the standard all round cap frame attached to a standard driver

most wearers have more than one and will belong to a club or organisation that also has a need for trophies, engraving or both and therefore may already form part of your customer base. For those considering entering into embroidery, caps may prove to be the perfect introduction.

For more information about cap embroidery and/or SWF embroidery machines contact Your Embroidery Services Ltd direct.