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VARIETY

Back to cool

Pin it up, patch it together and look back to the '90s for this school year's wardrobe.

By DANIELLE FOX • danielle.fox@startribune.com
Photos by ISAAC HALE • isaac.hale@startribune.com

You'll have to see it here to believe it: Denim miniskirts are back again.

The clothes your 20-something daughter wore in middle school are now retro-chic, as '90s-inspired looks take over from last fall's bohemian '70s vibe. So when you're back-to-school shopping for three-ring binders and No. 2 pencils, stock up on chokers, Doc Martens and velvet.

That's not the only hot look for fall, said Sara Rogers, Mall of America's in-house trend specialist. There's also an increase in "gender-bender" looks for teens — clothes such as hoodies, bomber jackets and flannel shirts, as well as girls wearing boys' sneakers.

Of course, denim remains the bread-and-butter of a fall wardrobe,

but students can update the look with patches and enamel pins, as well as embroidery, frayed edges and, new this year, staggered hemlines.

When it comes to jeans, "the skinny doesn't show any signs of slowing down," said Rogers, who noted, however, that wide-leg and flared jeans are coming to the fore.

Ripped jeans are still popular — in the schools that allow them. Beyond denim, easy-wear fabrics like cotton work for pants, especially in mustard yellows, wine shades, olive tones and spicy oranges.

"Camo is showing no sign of slowing down," Rogers said. And flannels? "Plaid's just not going anywhere."

Athleisure clothes (aka yoga pants) continue to jump off the racks. They're comfortable, casual and easy to wash — a teen triple threat — but the trend is maturing this season. Think joggers with a leather-detailed button-up instead of a T-shirt.

Here, and on page 8, are our denim-fueled looks for fall. □



Love the patch trend but want to wear denim you already have? You can buy pin patches and DIY your look.

RYLAN: Camouflage hoodie from Cotton On (\$29.95), gray T-shirt and camouflage belt from True Religion (\$89 and \$79), olive jeans from Macy's (\$74.50) and red sneakers from Aldo (\$125).

JAZZMYN: Striped mock turtleneck top and red hoodie from Forever 21 (\$14.90 and \$12.90), denim skirt and emoji backpack from A'Gaci (\$19.90 and \$35.90), black-heeled boots from Shi (\$29.99).

Last season's high-collar craze continues with mock turtlenecks, shown here in stripes. And, yes, hoodies are still a back-to-school staple. Note the zippers and mix of fabrics trending in boys' shoes.

See more looks on page E8

COLORS TO SWATCH



In the right fabric, teal is becoming a fall favorite.



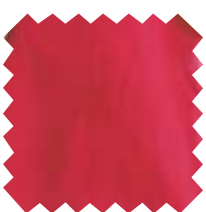
Wine-tones stay strong in accessories and clothing.



Loud colors like cobalt blue spruce up backpacks.



Mustard, often a staple of fall, is coming on strong.



Bright reds add a surprising pop of color to the palette.



Army green and camo continue to make a comeback.

The gold standard for talking politics

GAIL ROSENBLUM

Summer's the season of family and high school reunions, neighborhood block parties and reconnecting at the cabin.



This summer? It's the season of RSVP avoidance.

To Resist Severing Valuable Partnerships, several friends and co-workers have confessed that they're bowing out of gatherings with neighbors, former classmates, even their own parents, to avoid heartburn-inducing political discussions.

I say, reconsider and please pass the butter!

Politics notwithstanding, we can — and should — take advantage of the many beautiful summer days still ahead with the people we still sort of like. All we have to do is channel the 2016 Summer Olympics.

Here are some gold-medal qualities to bring to your political discussions, compiled with an assist from top etiquette coaches and veteran politicians.

Preparedness. Awarded to those who crush it with extensive research and actual facts.

Curiosity. Maryland-based etiquette coach Kelly Frager gives the gold to those who dazzle with respectful questions, such as, "What are the issues most important to you this election?" giving way to, "How does your candidate represent those issues?"

Open-mindedness. Vaulted status to those who accept that there *could* be an iota of truth in what you are hearing. Sharon Schweitzer, the Texas-based founder of Protocol & Etiquette Worldwide, predicts

See **ROSENBLUM** on E3 ▶

Mini Olympic profiles take emotions to the max

NBC spends months crafting athletes' short bios so they'll tug at viewers' heartstrings.

By ELAHE IZADI • Washington Post

The Olympics, perhaps more than any other sporting spectacle, are all about emotion. How else do you get viewers to remain glued to a screen and root wholeheartedly for a shot-putter from New Zealand? (Be real, you are not a die-hard shot-put fan.)

And nothing gets a viewer invested in an obscure Olympic sport quite like having their heartstrings tugged. Enter NBC's athlete profiles. These videos, produced by NBC Sports and aired during competitions, give an athlete's back story. Maybe it's the years of ungodly wake-up calls to train. Or the financial hardship that had to be overcome to reach the world's greatest stage. Or an athlete's incredibly moving relationship with his brother. (Warning, tears ahead.)

These mini-bios, which last from 90 seconds to three minutes, have become an integral part of NBC's Olympic television programming. The aim is to introduce, or reintroduce, viewers to athletes and "give them a reason to care before competition," said Mark Levy, NBC Sports Group senior vice president of original productions.

The profiles put a boxer's softer side on display. Or provide context for the intense competitive spirit of a badminton player. And Levy insists the goal isn't to make us cry: "Any time we can associate a part of someone's story or journey that resonates with

See **PROFILES** on E3 ▶