

The L.A. Rams Review of PR Lotion Post Super Bowl Run

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Summary

When exploring new performance and recovery modalities, our Performance Team is looking for products that can have a meaningful impact on our players. My job is to help our team win football games; which means I have to maximize our athletes' ability to prepare for competition, increase their consistency of play and facilitate recovery strategies so they can perform again.

I've been aware of the benefits of sodium bicarbonate for a while, which is a proven aid for athletes, but has had some major limitations for use in the past. NFL support staffs have used it intravenously to help with muscle function and cramping. So a noninvasive delivery of the same substance that is practical and scalable is really interesting.

We found that PR Lotion allows us to take advantage of all the proven benefits of bicarbonate, which was a key piece of the puzzle in our 2018-19 season. We implemented it by having our players use it before practice and games. PR Lotion improves practice performance, leads to quality outcomes in a game and reduced post-game muscle soreness and fatigue. In a nutshell, the implementation was easy, the theory makes a ton of sense and the evidence behind it is really compelling. Proof is in the pudding when you get it on the athletes. They perform better, their bodies feel better after the fact and they keep asking for more. The great thing is there is a ton of bang for the buck.

Our Evaluation Process

Sports performance professionals that are "in the trenches" are continuously searching for ways to maximize performance and enhance recovery. In recent years, new technologies like compression, laser therapy, and cryotherapy have all changed how athletes train and recover. In our evaluation of something new like PR Lotion, there are 3 areas our Performance Team looks at before we get behind it:

1. **Does the product work?** The science behind the theory needs to support efficacy. There are a ton of products out there with flashy packaging and a bunch of money spent on marketing. But does it work?
2. **What is the implementation strategy?** Application needs to be simple. There are a lot of different recovery products out there but the question is, "How do I get this to 53 players?", "How do I get this to 90 athletes?", "Can we implement it organically so that it makes sense in the NFL world?" Our setting is so unique; I've got a lot of players and a very fast paced day. Implementation is the graveyard to great ideas.
3. **What is athlete feedback?** They have to be able to notice a difference. Here's the bottom line on how you know it works...players continue to ask for and use a product. The proof is in the pudding. When athletes are coming back and asking for a product, something is happening.

When it comes to PR Lotion, we're looking at a cutting edge technology on the front lines of sports performance. There is solid evidence based research and Amp Human is committed to really dialing in the technology and application and continuing to do more research. Implementation is

easy and individualized based upon the size of the athlete and doesn't take a ton of resources from me and my team. So PR Lotion checks off the first 2 boxes easily, which is a great start. The final piece is what type of feedback we get from the players.

Introduction to the team

The next step for the team was deciding what players to use PR Lotion with and how to use it. We decided to first work with a core group of athletes that were at high risk of cramping or fatigue. Using a lotion to reduce or slow down lactic acid buildup would be a huge win for our athletes and we thought this would be a great start. If/When the product works with those athletes, it would help get the rest of the team to buy in.

We decided to focus on 3 strategies that made the most sense:

1. **Before training sessions and games:** We knew that research supporting oral bicarbonate supplementation prior to strenuous exercise was robust so we decided to see how PR Lotion would work in this space.
2. **After workouts and games to aid in the recovery:** If the effect pre was effective, we wanted to see if there was an added benefit by using the product after training and games.
3. **As a medium to use with soft tissue work:** PR Lotion's texture is perfect as a massage medium and for Graston tools. It made sense to explore this.

Implementation

The Rams culture is to always teach the "why." So when introducing a new product, the staff walked athletes through "why" they should use it and how it makes sense for who they are as players. Once we had an idea of where to use the product, the next step was to look at how to implement with the team. The on-the-go packets were an easy, user friendly way to get started. We took the lotion packs and gloves and put them in player's lockers with a little quick hit sheet on how/when to apply as a reminder.

As the higher risk players began using it more and more in practice, it was time to use in a game. Again, starting with the athletes with a high risk of cramping, or in a hot game, or on players that have a tendency to get really fatigued during a game as spot treatment. They started to believe and say things like, "Wow, I feel really good, there might be something to that or I feel pretty good today, I didn't cramp at all."

Once a few players tried it in games, PR Lotion use really took off through peer to peer feedback. Players using it started telling other teammates, "You need to try this." And when your big time players are using something with success, everyone wants to check it out. Now we have close to 30 team members coming in every day asking for the lotion.

I really believe in being very methodical in how you pilot new products. We didn't need to push it on players. We told them what it is, explained why it's important and what it looks like and walked them through how to use it. My goal is to empower my players and explain why we think it's a good idea. Try it if you want to. And if not, don't worry. I want players to be the ones that make the decisions about what's best for their bodies. Our job is to give them the information.

In the end, the ease of implementation really helped the team adopt the use of PR Lotion.

Player Feedback

After 2-3 uses in practice sessions, most athletes felt comfortable using the lotion in a game. If I had to pick one spot where the players felt they benefited the most from PR Lotion, it would be using before workouts and games. They felt like it helped them get through games, led to quality outcomes in a game and reduced post-game muscle soreness and fatigue. To me, that's a super win.

Another piece of initial feedback was about the consistency of the lotion. It's a different feel. Our staff explained that it's greasy due to the technology. There's no way around it, but the results kept driving our athletes to use it. It does take a little while to get used to, so to make that easier, we had the players use gloves for application which helped a ton.

The Results

We have a hydration protocol, fueling strategies, and things we do pre/post to help out with performance and recovery. The simple fact that the team really, truly came back and asked about PR Lotion and wanted to give feedback related to it says a lot about the product. Specifically looking back at an overall reduction of post game soreness, in game fatigue, in game muscle cramping, do I feel like it was reduced and went down? Yeah I think we did really well and I think that PR Lotion really helped us with that.

We also really liked using it for post-game recovery on Mondays. Our players come in and we get some soft tissue work done and have mixed PR Lotion in as the massage medium. That way you get a mechanical flush as well as the sodium bicarbonate delivery to the tissues that can help. A very easy and clean way to use the product.

In a nutshell, the implementation was great, the theory made a lot of sense and the evidence behind it seems like it's really coming together. The feedback we got from the players says it all. We found through our own practice that using PR Lotion pre participation, pre-practice was a home run and that's where we got the most benefit from it.

What's cool about PR Lotion is that things that work, don't need to be pushed. We let the product speak for itself and PR Lotion does that. Our athletes just keep coming back.

Keys to adoption

I really believe that simplifying language is key here. I explained what the lotion does in terms the players were familiar with. Athletes understand what lactic acid is. This product helps to reduce the buildup of lactic acid in the muscles. Right or wrong in the details, it's about delivering information that's simple and makes sense. They all know the word lactic acid.

You lose athletes when you get too far into the science of cramping and physiology and end up talking over their heads. Keep things basic and simple and that really resonates with them. Then they get it. I know bicarbonate in terms of cramping. I've used IV bags of sodium bicarbonate to help reduce cramping in athletes that were high risk. So I used that anecdote with players to explain why PR Lotion is important.

Final Thoughts

We're trying a lot of different things. My job is to go win football games. The reduction of cramping and muscle fatigue in the 3rd and 4th quarter is critical. If a player cramps in a game, you have to give him fluids and there is a lot of lost time there. Quite frankly, we've lost games when we've lost a player to cramps and that should not be the reason we're losing games.

Implementation of PR Lotion was easy. Our staff educated the athletes up front on the "why" and "how" to use. Once that was done, it was easily scalable amongst the players. My staff didn't have to invest more time into it. The feedback from players on how their muscles felt really good in the 3rd and 4th quarter is huge. On top of that, the reduction in cramping is a big win. To top it off, Monday post-game workouts feel a little better and it helps them attack their recovery. The sustainability due to less breakdown over time is important. PR Lotion is part of my program and helps our team win games.