

St Louis Blues: How we integrated PR Lotion on the way to Stanley Cup Victory

Eric Renaghan, Head of Strength and Conditioning for the St. Louis Blues

SUMMARY

For athletes to compete in the training system that our coaches want, they have to play fast, they have to play heavy and they have to play physical. That takes a toll on the individual's body and there is an impact on the team. In order for our athletes to play in that system, they have to be physically ready to go and be able to maintain that output during the game. It's important to me and the rest of the staff to do everything we can to help them compete in that system.

When I first heard about Amp Human's PR Lotion, I was really interested in how we could integrate it; the idea of trying to mitigate "lactic acid" build up is already a core performance focus for NHL players. Bicarb is renowned for its "lactic acid" buffering effect but has been notoriously difficult to use due to GI distress; I've seen Alka-Seltzer mixed with Gatorade, Stim-O-Stam, and some other things that in my opinion, don't work or have negative impacts. As an organization, we're trying to be a more holistic model focused on athlete health and performance. The goal is to focus on natural solutions and limit ingesting so many synthetics.

Our use of PR Lotion last year was primarily in the playoff run, where we used it extensively. It was a key component to what we were doing to keep our athletes fresh and keep them playing at the optimal level for success. We played 26 out of 28 playoff games in addition to the 82 regular season games. For us to be able to maintain our system, after that many games, is a testament to the athletes buy in and their ability to be seriously focused on preparation. PR Lotion is a part of our regiment because it works and I know we'll continue to see the benefits as time goes on.

EVALUATION OF NEW PRODUCTS

When you work in pro sports, companies are constantly sending information and samples for you to try. The challenge is weeding out the products that work from the ones that don't, so when I get a new product on my desk, I evaluate it using a three pronged approach before deciding if we will adopt it:

1. **Real Information:** I want information from the company that has some facts to it, not just marketing. Is the information scientific and can I use it to learn more about the product and how it works? In the end, how is it going to help my athletes?
2. **Peer reviews and feedback:** I'm lucky to have a great network of people to pull resources from and I value their opinion. So when I get a new product I reach out to them so see if they've used it. If they have, what has their experience been and what are their thoughts?
3. **Trialing within my own training:** I try everything on myself first. I may not be a pro athlete but I know how to train and what hard workouts feel like. If I feel a benefit, I can walk players through how to use the product and what to expect more effectively.

After I feel comfortable with what the information I have heard and received and I've personally had a great experience with a product, I take it to sports medicine. The whole staff is really flexible in terms of new ideas and adopting new products to support our players. They know that anything I do has already been reviewed and tested for banned substances. With PR Lotion, our sports

medicine staff was specifically interested in the products purpose, if it needed a prescription, and if it would cause some sort of medicinal effect. The staff was already aware of the benefits of bi-carb in terms of performance, so the recovery factor was a new area of interest. For them, getting bicarb into the body topically and getting around the GI issues classically associated with bi-carb, was a game-changer. After reviewing the research, they were excited to give it a try.

INTRODUCTION TO PR LOTION

After a shift in our coaching staff, there was a return to the drawing board to look at any and all ideas that could help our players be most successful and help our team win. The big questions for our staff were: “How can we train more effectively for improvement?”, “How can we better prepare for competition?” and given our schedule, “How do we help our players recover more effectively?”

I wanted to trial it with a few of our players who I’d identified as being “all-in” on their performance and recovery, the athletes that really do everything we ask of them on a daily basis. Players have a lot of demands in a day; workouts in the weight room, recovery/rehabilitation sessions with sports medicine, nutritional considerations -so when you’re bringing in something new, you need to make sure that firstly, the player has the capacity to add another step to their routine and secondly, that it’s something that can be easily integrated. If not, the product is unlikely to be well received and tested, which can hurt the rest of the team buying in. So after asking a few players if they were interested, we moved to implementation into their programs.

IMPLEMENTATION

When we started using PR Lotion, it was really important to set expectations with the players to ensure their understood the product’s benefits, what to expect Top athletes are always looking for any advantage they can get, they are always seeking constant improvement. We’re fortunate to have this type of athlete on our roster; they’re easy to talk to, they “get it.”

We started by walking through what products the players were already using and what those products did. We then explained how PR Lotion works and its benefits for hockey. We also talked about how using a lotion will eliminate some of the side effects they experience when ingesting other products. By the end of the conversation, we had clearly demonstrated why they should adopt PR lotion.

Once our 5 players had integrated PR lotion, we started to remove some of the other products they were using as pre-game supplements. The goal was to see how much of a meaningful impact there was or if it was placebo. The answer; PR Lotion worked and was proving to be more beneficial and produced better results than some of the products players had been using. Our players felt PR Lotion was something that could help them really perform at their best and allowed them to stop using things that were “synthetic”and required to be taken orally

That is how we implemented PR Lotion into our model.

FEEDBACK

After the first use, the players felt as if their legs weren't as "beat up", they felt fresh. We have a number of players who get heavy minutes due to penalty kills or just over the flow of play; the consensus was that they were less fatigued than they expected, which was a phenomenal sign. They just didn't feel tired. From there, the team really helped each other better understand PR Lotion. It's seen in the locker room as a tool to help, and is now added to their daily routines before practice and games.

Peer to peer feedback is always the best. PR Lotion can enhance performance and aid in the rate of recovery for the next training session or game; that's a great thing. That's why the team use the product and have stuck with it.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our style of play is very aggressive and it pushes the tempo of the game which has an effect on the other team but also has an effect on our guys. We had players getting a ton of minutes on penalty kills and they felt great using PR Lotion - for me, that is a massive win. Earlier in the season the guys would start to wear out earlier and more frequently, but with the use of the PR Lotion in the playoffs, we saw less breakdown and fatigue. I'm looking forward to seeing more case studies on PR Lotion that look to demonstrate how it works in other spaces.