



Protein POWER

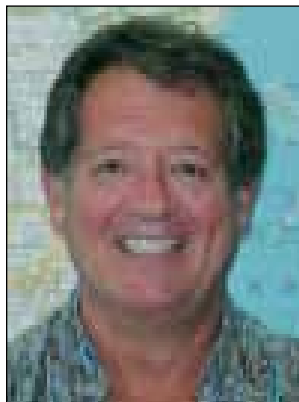
By Roy Benson

Most athletes know that carbohydrate is the primary energy source for moderate to high intensity exercise. But what many athletes don't know is that during prolonged workouts lasting 90 minutes or more, protein can supply up to 15% of your muscles' energy needs. Under normal circumstances, the needed protein comes from the breakdown of muscle proteins, which can cause muscle soreness and can decrease performance.

The body only burns protein as a last resort because of the muscle tissue damage it causes. But when carbohydrate fuel runs low, the stress hormone cortisol is released into the bloodstream. Cortisol breaks down muscle proteins into their constituent amino acids, which are then burned for energy. But when this point is reached, exhaustion is near.

By consuming a sports drink such as ACCELERADE that contains carbohydrate and protein in a 4:1 ratio during prolonged workouts, you can reduce muscle protein breakdown and soreness. The carbohydrate content helps maintain blood glucose levels and thereby delays cortisol release. The protein content provides an energy source that the muscles can use instead of the proteins contained in muscle cells. Most sports drinks contain no protein, so they only do half the job that ACCELERADE does.

Roy Benson is Director of the Smokey and Green Mountains Nike Running Camp and is contributing editor to Running Times. (www.coachbenon.com)



from the editor

E. Gary Hill

EVER BEEN AT THE POINT where your classic old car really needed help? You've already repainted and reupholstered it, added mag wheels—heck, maybe even hung fuzzy dice in the window. But you know that what it really needs is a new engine. That's where the Grand Prix/Golden League Circuit is at this juncture—sadly in need of a major overhaul.

If you check p. 51 you'll see that mile great Steve Cram, now a BBC commentator, has come to the same conclusion. The only difference between his position and mine is that I already found the GP Circuit too often stultifying back when he was still running in the mid-'80s.

Is this a race
or a damned
parade?

To be sure, the meets are great if you're a local who just sees one of them. But to be successful in the modern sports world, track has to be a major TV presence. So the Golden League gets a TV package. But as Crammie notes, the sameness of the meets is scary. As the old movie title goes, If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium. Who can tell the difference?

One of the main problems, as I see it, is rabbits and their use in the increasingly fruitless hunt for World Records. Whether it's John Walker '75, Saïd Aouita '85, Noureddine Morceli '95 or Hicham El Guerrouj '05, do I really need to see another 1500/mile where the rabbits sprint away with the designated record-chaser tucked in behind and the rest of the field dutifully following in single file? Is this a race or a damned parade?!

While listening to the BBC's coverage of one of the Golden League meets (hey, I really don't remember which one, so alike are they) on my computer, with the description of the 1500's usual lockstep progression, I literally started yelling at the monitor. I was offering a month's salary to any non-rabbit willing just to jump in front of El Guerrouj. Two months salary if a pair of Kenyans would jump in front and box him.

Taking nothing away from El Guerrouj, one of the most incredible running machines we've ever seen, but I prefer to think of the real El G as the one who hasn't won an Olympic gold medal in two tries. Who when forced to run in traffic and has to actually think about pace and strategy becomes mortal, even if only briefly.

My favorite athlete of the summer? How about Turkey's Süreyya Ayhan? She's starting to dominate women's miling as much as El Guerrouj is the men's. The big difference is that at Brussels she said she didn't want a rabbit, preferring to do it on her own. That's my kind of runner.

• • •

The Performance Of The Year, so far at least, has to be Paula Radcliffe's incredible on-her-own 10K at the European Championships. It's a good thing she had a chance to run it there, because women never get the chance to do 10s on The Circuit anymore.

How tough is it for women to run good 10Ks? Look at the all-time lists as this year began. There were 34 men's performances at 27:11.62 or better. Two were made in Atlanta, the rest in invitational meets (19 at Van Damme). Other than Atlanta, all were assuredly well rabbitied, and in sites where the weather was usually optimal.

The women on the other hand, had 32 performances through 30:57.70. Lots of Chinese stuff in there to skew it, but the main thing is to note that only 5 of them were made in invitationals. And the 2 fastest were by Ingrid Kristiansen at Bislett, '86 and '89. Bislett doesn't even have a women's 10K anymore (I remember in '91 when I was there they had two). This is part of the curse of the GP Circuit: unless there's a set-up WR attempt, it's unlikely to be run.

So the women are left to have their biggest clashes in the World Champs and Olympic Games. But check out the chrono list of those sites since Kristiansen's WR (*=weather not conducive to fast running; **= altitude not conducive): Rome*, Tokyo*, Barcelona*, Stuttgart, Göteborg, Atlanta*, Athens*, Seville*, Sydney, Edmonton**. So there have been 10 majors since Kristiansen and in only three did the women have a fighting chance to impact the all-time list. As Radcliffe proved, you don't have to have a rabbit to run fast; you just need the chance to run.

Uh, Mr. Mechanic, make that a 4-barrel carb, will you?