Infographic: Winning road cycle races: a Team Sky perspective


Published in:
British Journal of Sports Medicine

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version

Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:
Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal

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Download date: 11. Dec. 2018
Winning Road Cycle Races
A Sport Medicine Perspective

**Medicine and Training:**
- **Team Sky medical department.**
- **National Sports Clinic, Belfast.**
- **Centre for Public Health, Queens University Belfast.**

**Post-Exercise Recovery Strategies:**
- Compression garments
- Ice-baths
- Post-race massage and stretching
- Good quality sleep, aiming for at least 8 hours sleep per night.
- Good personal hygiene.
- Appropriate stress management.

**Cross Training:**
Do at least one non-bike training session per week. Strength and conditioning work has been shown to improve bike speed and endurance capacity (3), without causing weight gain.

**Multi-Disciplinary Support Team:**
Includes doctors, psychologists, sport scientists, nutritionists, sport scientists and ‘carers’.

**Reducing Effects of Travel:**
a. Chewing gum with xylitol e.g. pre-flights, to reduce risk of infections when flying.
b. Stay well-hydrated during the flight, avoiding alcohol, and keep mobile in-flight.
c. Start adjusting to the new time zone before you leave.
d. Compression stockings.

**On-Race Health Monitoring:**
a. First pass urine osmolality and early morning weight checks to assess hydration.
b. Early morning health screen to detect infections early.

**Health Screening:**
a. Pre-season medical.
b. Regular blood screen.
c. Vaccinations – influenza, hepatitis A and B, traveller’s diarrhoea.
d. Regular ‘well being’ monitoring via an app.

**Expert Management of Common Cycling Medical Issues:**
a. Infection – commonest reason for being ‘off bike’. For example, common cold viral infections use zinc lozenges at a dose of 80mg/day started within 24 hours of symptoms and continued for up to 2 weeks.
b. Trauma. Road rash, with associated wound management, and fractures from falls, especially management of clavicular fractures.
c. Overuse injuries, especially common around the knee (e.g. patellofemoral pain) and low back pain.

**Dietary Supplementation:**
Generally not needed if you have a well-balanced diet but ones to consider with appropriate review:
a. Vitamin D, particularly in winter months.
b. Probiotics.
c. Iron, particularly if considering altitude training.

**References:**