

Racquetball

Put more ZING in your SWING!



By Dan Young



RACQUETBALL

There are two ways of playing this game; first, if you're like me, you run around like a mad man only stopping to serve or receive the serve; the other, for the more polished and groomed, you control the ball and your movements, so therefore you exert less energy. Both styles are a workout, but either way, you are a middle-distance athlete and you require stamina.

Because of the time constraints health club management puts on their courts, play usually lasts just one hour. That's plenty of time for your body to utilize all of its three energy systems; the Immediate, Glycolytic and Oxidative systems. Understanding where your body is pulling its energy from and further more, understanding how to maximize the storage and usage of that energy, will help you to achieve much greater levels of performance ultimately putting a real zing in your swing.

ENERGY SOURCES

In racquetball, energy output is primarily anaerobic (without oxygen), hmm, that is unless you're me. Serving, returning and volleying the ball all require finesse but also lightening-quick reflexes and high tolerance to pain and fatigue from lactic-

acid build up in the muscles. In addition, this sport does require stamina, speed, explosive bursts, flexibility and also a high level of anaerobic-strength endurance. All of which requiring an estimated 80% of your energy needs coming from the Immediate energy system, while 15% from the Glycolytic and only 5% from the Oxidative energy system.

Every bit of your training and diet must reflect these elements. In fact, since racquetball tends to be explosive, improved recovery and tissue repair plus increased speed and strength are your year round training and dietary goals. Nutritionally, this means emphasizing short-term energy needs and maximizing the muscles' recovery and tissue processes. Muscles grow when they are stressed. In the racket sports, the aim is to make the muscles grow as strong and as quick as possible. Muscles grow when they are stressed. In the racket sports, the aim is to make the muscles grow as strong and as quick as possible.

How does it apply to me? Your target macronutrient ratios should be 55% - Carbohydrate, 25% - Protein and 20% - Fat.

SIMPLE RULES

- Low-glycemic complex carbohydrates are your best source for energy because they most efficiently refill Glycogen stores in the muscles and the liver. They should be consumed throughout the day in several meals and be carefully measured.
- Consume Protein in all meals throughout the day. This will provide the much needed nutrients to repair

muscle damage and for effective recovery.

- Train anaerobically on a regular basis to failure, this stimulates increased storage of Glycogen in the muscles and liver, which provides additional energy for greater capacity.
- Consume five to six meals a day. Eating several smaller meals rather than three larger ones will keep your blood-sugar level, stable throughout the day and will ensure that a supply of protein is always available for your muscles.
- Keep your fat intake to a minimum. Large amounts of fat in your diet will add to your body fat and cause mineral loss through frequent urination.
- Consume low-glycemic meals about two to three hours before a workout or game. By the time of your match, these carbohydrates are stored in your muscles as glycogen – the most effective forms of energy.

RECOVERY

I can't stress recovery enough. Recovering quickly following your match is essential to muscle repair and the volumization of your cells. You only have a small window of time immediately following exercise to maximize delivery of the nutrients necessary to initiate recovery and maximize the storage of glycogen so that your next match will be stronger than the last one. Consume a high glycemic liquid meal (Recovery Shake) with a 3 to 1 ratio of carbs vs. protein immediately following your match.

Eat well and remember, you are what your food eats!

Dan Young is President and CEO of Performance Food Centers, Corp. He is certified in personal training, sports nutrition and is a triathlete. He has competed in Body Building as well as Endurance Sports Activities. Accomplished in juice bar concept and design, he applies this knowledge to whole-foods nutrition and the efficiency to serving them.