

New sports brand builds on branded ingredient foundation

By Hank Schultz, 20-Jun-2017

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A commitment to using science-backed, branded ingredients is the cornerstone of the new sports nutrition brand Innov8 Nutraceuticals, one of the founders said.

The company, founded by NFL front office veteran Andy Hecht and competitive bodybuilder and trainer Gus Lawrence, recently signed a distribution partnership with Complete Nutrition, an Omaha, NE-based chain of franchised supplement outlets. Hecht spoke with NutraIngredients-USA.

Hecht, who was a broadcasting executive with the NFL, said in his 19-year career with the league he saw lots of marketing about supplements and loads of misinformation but little real education or science. Promises about efficacy were shrouded in proprietary blends, and in-transparency about ingredients made the common practice of blaming failed drug tests on tainted supplements plausible, he said.

"Besides working for the NFL, my other passion was fitness and the problem was that the athletes couldn't take anything that they could be confident in," Hecht said.

"We wanted to put together a line that was safe and effective, but that contained no proprietary blends. We all know that you'll see a proprietary blend that might say 750 mg and it's loaded with caffeine," he said.

"So we decided from the start let's used the highest quality ingredients," Hecht said.

Branded ingredient focus

The brand features branded ingredients from a who's who of supplement suppliers. The pre workout product features Nitrosigine from Nutrition 21 to boost nitric oxide levels. It also includes elevATP from FutureCeuticals, which has been researched for its effect on boosting ATP levels. The post workout product features Carb10, an low glycemic index carbohydrate derived from peas that was developed by Compound Solutions. It also includes branded ingredients from Natreon and Glanbia. Other suppliers whose ingredients appear in the company's products include OmniActive Health Technologies and Sabinsa Corporation.

The question of tainted supplements and what products athletes can safely use is being addressed by certifiers such as NSF Certified for Sport and Informed Choice. Hecht said product testing is being done by ChromaDex, so he said he's confident that the products are clean, but they are not currently certified. Seeking a certification is part of the company's future plans, he maintained.

Promotion-heavy launches of products that feature glitzy graphics and the names of prominent endorsers on the label but contain commodity-level ingredients inside the bottle have been the bane of the sports nutrition field. While Hecht said his company's emphasis has been on the selection of ingredients, the brand has not eschewed marketing, Hecht said.

Education tour

Competitive body builder Mike O'Hearn and former NFL player Heath Evans, who are also co-owners of the brand, are making a nationwide tour of Complete Nutrition locations to help promote the brand and to educate franchisees on its benefits. Complete Nutrition's focus on education made the partnership a good fit, Hecht said.

"We were approached by Vitamin Shoppe and GNC and the concern we had there was with the saturation of products," Hecht said. *"Complete Nutrition focuses on one of the most critical needs of the supplement industry — education. It was important for us to offer our products in an environment where consumers were educated on what they were purchasing, what those products were made with and how each product would help them conquer specific goals,"* he added.

"It was obvious we each shared the same values — integrity, honesty and transparency. At Complete Nutrition, the customer comes first. After learning more about Innov8's mission and the science behind their products, the partnership was a natural fit," said Angie Kubicek, director of marketing of Complete Nutrition.

Scientific conference

NutraIngredients-USA will be reporting from the upcoming meeting of the [International Society of Sports Nutrition, whose conference takes place later this week in Phoenix](#). Watch the NutraIngredients-USA LinkedIn group and twitter feeds and upcoming newsletters for reports from this conference.

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