

PROPER NUTRITION FUELS THE SUCCESSFUL ARCHER

By: P.J. Reilly

Everyone can benefit from good nutrition. Healthy living is better living.

When it comes to sports, nutrition often is discussed with high-intensity games like football, basketball, soccer, etc. Proper nutrition fuels the body for those sports.

Proper nutrition also is important for archery, even though it doesn't require the same energy level as other sports.

There is physical exertion in archery. For example, a recurve archer shooting a 50-pound bow in a 120-arrow competition would pull a total weight of 6,000 pounds by the end of the tournament.

To maintain peak performance throughout a competition, you've got to eat and drink the right things to fuel your body.



HYDRATION

The human body is nearly two-thirds water. To maintain proper hydration levels, it's recommended people drink as much as 10 glasses of water per day. That's especially important if you're going to be active and outdoors in the sun.

Studies have found that athletes who don't drink enough can see as much as a 30-percent reduction in performance.

Heather Pfeil, head instructor at the Lancaster Archery Academy, regularly tells her students to drink a lot of water starting two days before a tournament to make sure their bodies are hydrated properly. That includes proper hydration for the eyes, she said, which have to be in perfect working order for an archer to be successful.

During a competition, Pfeil recommends archers continue drinking water or Gatorade to keep their fluid levels up.

Stay away from caffeine! Caffeinated drinks will make you jittery – if you're not already feeling that way due to nerves. Jitters and precision aiming don't go well together. Also, caffeine is a diuretic, which means it can lead to dehydration.

PRE-TOURNAMENT

For at least a couple of days before a tournament, a lot of professional archers like to cut out fast foods, heavy foods and fried foods from their diets, and opt instead for lean, clean-burning foods. Chicken, turkey, pitas and fajitas are favorites for Mathews pro Braden Gellenthien, according to an article published by Archery 360.



Foods that are high in carbohydrates also are good for pre-tournament meals. Baked potatoes, oat bagels, brown rice, spaghetti with tomato sauce, pancakes and pretzels fall in this category according to MayoClinic.com

COMPETITION DAY

Two-time reigning Lancaster Archery Classic Women's Recurve Champion Mackenzie Brown, who was the lone female to represent the U.S. in the Rio Olympics last summer, has lived at the U.S. Olympic training center in Chula Vista, Calif., the past several years.



There, nutrition is discussed in depth with the archers as they train and compete. For competition days, Brown said, the coaches and nutritionists stress eating enough of the right foods to maintain a high energy level throughout the event.

“The idea is to have sustained energy, so a lot of granola bars like Clif Bars are good, and fruits and vegetables too,” she said.



The Easton Foundation mentions baby carrots, broccoli florets and cherry tomatoes, along with bananas, grapes and apples, as good foods to have on hand during a competition.



Watch out for foods with lots of processed sugar – like candy bars. They will give you a nice boost of energy, but that boost is always followed by a crash.