



Sports drinks multiply

The latest wave of sports drinks are a diverse lot, but all embrace nutrition science and healthy functionality

By Heather Landi

New brands from small entrepreneurial companies are making inroads in the sports drink/workout performance and recovery drink category.

One brand to watch is BodyArmor Super Drink, which launched about three years ago. The company, BodyArmor Nutrition, now holds the No. 4 spot within the sports drink category, after Gatorade, Powerade and private label brands, according to IRI, and the brand grew 40 percent from September 2013 to this past September, ringing in \$8.6 million in sales.

Mike Repole, co-founder and chairman of BodyArmor, says he and co-founder Lance Collins saw an opportunity for a premium sports drink. “When I was growing up about 30 years ago as a kid I only knew one sports drink, Gatorade, and that same formula has been around for 50 years. And, I thought, somebody could do a better-for-you sports drink,” he says.

Gatorade essentially created the sports drink market when it was developed by University of Florida physicians in 1965 as a carbohydrate-electrolyte beverage for the Florida Gators football players. Since then, the combination of carbohydrates and electrolytes, usually in the form of high levels of sodium and potassium,

have been the dominant ingredients in sports drinks.

Repole says he and Collins developed an upgraded, premium sports drink that contains more electrolytes in the form of high levels of potassium combined with vitamins, coconut water and natural flavors. At the same time, the BodyArmor Super Drink is low in sodium and sweetened with pure cane sugar. Coconut water was also included due to its high potassium content and hydration benefits.

Another drink, NuAquos launched this past January as a protein-based sports drink that aims to help athletes rehydrate, restore and recover. According to Chuck Walkley, CEO of New Whey Nutrition, NuAquos is a superior sports drink due to its proprietary blend of protein, electrolytes, vitamins and minerals.

BodyArmor SuperDrink contains electrolytes in the form of high levels of potassium combined with vitamins, coconut water and natural flavors.

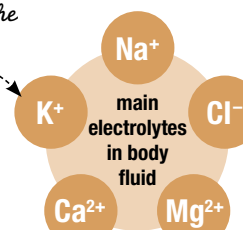


VPX' Amino Rush targets muscle protein synthesis and recovery time, according to the company.

“Most of the sports drinks on the market right now are electrolyte and carbohydrate blends and that’s 1965 technology that has not changed in 50 years. Sports nutrition has come a long way. Protein is extremely important for the recover and rehydration process,” Walkley says.

VPX Sports/Redline also offers a number of RTD products with ingredients beneficial to sports performance and the company has differentiated its products based on sports nutrition science and patented ingredients, such as its creatine glutamine blend. The company’s Amino Rush was formulated to increase muscle protein synthesis and recovery time with a formula that includes 10,000 milligrams of water-soluble branched chain amino acids, says Jon Owoc, director of marketing, VPX Sports/Redline.

Also capitalizing on the buzz around protein is Core Power, a post-workout recovery drink and high protein shake owned by Fair Oaks Farms Brands and distributed by The Coca-Cola



“I thought, somebody could do a better-for-you sports drink.” –Mike Repole



Trends + Innovation

Co. Core Power is made with filtered low-fat milk as a source of natural protein and real honey and offers 26 grams of protein.

Some products on the market combine the health benefits of high alkaline water with nutritional ingredients to offer fitness enthusiasts and athletes a new take on sports drinks. AquaHydrate is marketed as an electrolyte enhanced and alkaline supercharged performance water. It offers a combination of performance-grade electrolytes and a higher pH of 9 which can help to restore and balance the body during intense performance and exercise.

Another high alkaline water and performance drink is X-Treme PH Sports Water. The company behind the brand says it achieves a high alkalinity with a pH of 9 using a proprietary plant-derived mixture of calcium, magnesium and potassium.

The sports and performance drink market



NuAQUOS is a protein-based sports drink that aims to help athletes rehydrate, restore and recover.

is even expanding to include wellness drinks, such as Karma Wellness Water, which comes in five varieties. What makes it particularly unique is the proprietary KarmaCap that stores the vitamins and nutrients until the consumer is ready to mix them into the water. According to its CEO CJ Rapp, the KarmaCap is user friendly, holds three to six times the amount of competitive caps and includes a hermetic seal to ensure the quality of the vitamins.

Historically, convenience stores have been

the primary channel for sports drink sales but that has been shifting to mass merchandisers and grocery stores. At the same time, consumers are shifting away from sports nutrition stores to more mainstream channels.

With new brands coming in, the sports drink market could change significantly, especially as brands like BodyArmor SuperDrink aim for the top spot. “Lance Collins and myself see a massive opportunity for a premium sports drink and it’s going to take time, effort, marketing and money, but we’re in this for the long haul,” Repole with BodyArmor says. **BW**