

Cool your jets

Doing the proper activities after the final buzzer ensures a player is ready for the next puck drop

BY RYAN DIXON

YOGI BERRA'S TAKE on NHL training regimens might go something like this: It ain't over till it's over – and then it still ain't over.

There has always been ample emphasis on properly preparing for games. Players make sure they've stretched muscles, filled their body with the appropriate fuel and some even get loose by kicking around a soccer ball or hacky sac. But, according to Nashville Predators strength and conditioning coach David Good, the actions a hockey player takes after a game are just as crucial.

"It's definitely a key to recovery, so it's very important," said Good of the post-game cool down. "It's equally important to pre-game preparation."

Fans of the Ottawa Senators are accustomed to seeing Sens players give post-game interviews while riding stationary bikes. A fan with a particularly poor sense of humor might think that's because coach Bryan Murray has ordered them to work on their cycling technique.

Not so.

As Good explained, the reason players pedal away is to ensure they're not lagging behind the next time they're on the ice.

"If you can bring the heart rate down a little bit more slowly or keep it elevated a little bit after competition by riding the bike at a moderate level, it will help the body flush out lactic acids," he said. "That's really what causes the heavy legs."

If a player doesn't want to use a stationary bike to cool down,

other options include the elliptical trainer or a treadmill. There is about a 15-minute window from the time players step off the ice to the time they should be doing some kind of light activity to complete their night.

Good also emphasizes a pair of other activities for his players, one of which is shrouded in secrecy.

"We stress proper post-game nutrition so that we can replenish their carbohydrate stores and get them rehydrated," he noted.

When asked what foods and drinks he pushes on his Predators after a tough game, Good simply laughed and said: "Well, that's the secret."

Good was a bit more up front about the fact that he likes to get some protein in his players' bodies following games, to help repair



muscles after 60 minutes of skating, shooting and shoving.

Good also stressed that replenishing the body is important after every game, but obviously there are parts of an NHL season when it's especially vital.

"The hydration becomes more important in back-to-back situations because you really don't have that long of a window to get the body weight back up," he said.

Then there's the ice treatment. "The cold tubs reduce inflam-

SENS SPIN Mike Fisher and his Ottawa teammates know the importance of a post-game pedal.

mation to the muscles and joints," said Good, referring to the ice cube baths he gets players to take.

No matter the technique, there's no denying the importance of a cool down.

"Whether it's a game or practice the next day, you have to make sure you're back up to where you were," Good said. **TMZ**