

SCIENTIFIC TRAINING & THE UNQUESTIONABLE PROOF

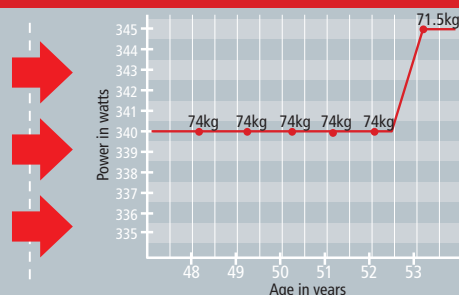


Chris Brand, multiple South African masters mountain bike champion, is a dedicated disciple of scientific training. The 53-year-old racer has got the statistics to prove pre-, during and post-exercise nutrition really does lead to performance improvement.

Chris Brand – SA Master’s XC Cup series winner 2010 and SA Marathon Champion 2008, 2009, 2010.

My supplementation strategy:

- **USN EPIC PRO** – during and straight after long rides and races (three hours or more). I have another full serving if I still feel a bit fragile a few hours after my ride or race.
- **USN 100% WHEY PROTEIN** – as a ‘snack shake’ in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon and again at night



I’m a skeptic, which is why shortly after I started cycling six years ago, I decided that guesswork and marketing hype weren’t for me. I wanted scientific feedback from my training and racing so that I could measure where I was and what I needed to achieve in order to improve.

For those that don’t know, the best way to measure cycling performance from a scientific perspective is with a power meter. I’m fanatical about keeping records of my power statistics during training and races so am able to objectively track improvements or dips in my performance. I do all my quality training sessions on an indoor-trainer where the conditions are predictable and unchanging.

Racing is what motivates me and it’s where I measure my success. I’m 53 years old, which means that any effort I put into my training or racing needs to be very calculated, because recovery at this age isn’t very rapid. I remember doing races and taking days, sometimes over a week, to see my power measurement figures reflecting a full recovery.

But one thing that’s made a significant, factually proven difference to my performance is the addition of USN supplements to my regime. I never believed in using nutrition supplements, thinking that they were more marketing mumbo-jumbo than anything else.

I’m very lean and have a naturally fast metabolism. This means that I am constantly hungry and

in search of food, which really is the best way to get all the relevant nutrients, but it’s far from convenient; and how do you measure it to ensure you have the right quantities and ratios of all the important nutrients?

In January 2010, a friend convinced me to try using USN supplements, specifically Epic Pro and 100% Whey Protein. It solved my hunger problem and I felt like I was recovering quicker after hard training sessions and races. But since I’m a slave of science, I examined my power stats to see whether or not these supplements were making any difference. To my surprise, I discovered they were!

It’s not easy to improve your power threshold through training alone. But what I found, 12 weeks after I started incorporating the USN supplements in my daily routine, was that my power threshold had improved by 5 watts – from 340 watts where it was for over five years, to 345 watts. And generally, as you age, your power output should begin to drop, not increase! I’d done everything the same year after year and the only change I’d made in 2010 was adding the USN supplements to my schedule.

I did the MTN Cross-country National at Saasveld, George in 2009 and again in 2010. The course direction was reversed in 2010, but had a very similar amount of elevation to the

2009 edition. In 2009 I crashed and broke my shoulder and came second; then in 2010 I won my age group title, but my average watts recorded for my 2010 race was 301 compared to 294 watts in 2009. Seven watts average in a sub-1hr15min race - that’s a huge improvement!

I’ve also noted that in one of my hardest cross-country training sessions, where I ride intervals at increasing wattages, how my average heart rate has dropped from 169bpm to 163bpm. My body weight has also decreased since January from being a very consistent 74kg since I started training seriously to 71.5kg (I’m 1.84m tall).

Normally, a loss in weight will mean a lower power output, but my power output has increased with my weight loss. This has given me a significant increase in watts per kg from 4.6 to 4.8! Again, I put this improvement down to the USN supplements, which I now list as essential in my quest for improved performance.

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