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Newsmakers

Trainer creams blister problem

Rodeo injuries helped Johnston develop ointment

Bloomberg News

Back in his days as a rodeo cowboy, Los Angeles Dodgers trainer **Stan Johnston** mixed some items in his medicine chest and came up with a balm that helped heal the burns and blisters on his hands from riding bulls and roping steers.

He kept the recipe, and now "Stan's Rodeo Ointment" mends professional athletes. Dodgers pitcher **Derek Lowe**, whose blisters would cause him to throw blood-stained baseballs when he was with the Boston Red Sox, says the black, tarry goo solved his chronic problem.

"It saved me from just having to make it through a game," Lowe said. "Now talent can dictate a game again, not how long you can hold on and endure the pain."

Johnston, who was a National League trainer at the All-Star Game, has applied for a patent on his potion — a combination of Polymyxin B Sulfate and other ingredients. He says he's aiming to convince a pharmaceutical company to sell it as an over-the-counter medication.

"It heals things faster, any kinds of cuts, blisters, abrasions," Johnston said.

He already has believers. Most other Major League Baseball teams use it, and the Texans have brought it to the NFL. He said he expects to receive a patent July 20.

Johnston concocted the formula during his years in professional rodeo from 1974 to 1983. No ordinary cowboy, he had a bachelor's degree in sports medicine from Western Montana College, which he attended on a rodeo scholarship. After he left the rodeo, he earned a master's degree in the field from Montana State in 1985.

After suffering cuts and burns in the rodeo, Johnston used his expertise and combined Polymyxin B

Suflate, Bacitracin Zinc and Povidone-Iodine, and applied it to his hands to toughen the skin.

"The pressure of the rope and heat from the rope would tear off the skin on my riding hand through my leather glove," Johnston said. "You are riding a 1,600-, 1,800-pound animal. It would put a little bit of force on your hands."

Johnston began using the substance on baseball players when he joined the Dodgers as a trainer in the team's minor-league system in 1985. As players moved to other organizations, word spread.

The Florida Marlins ordered the ointment to help pitcher **Josh Beckett** combat nagging blisters. Traded to the Red Sox before this season, the former Spring standout has been on the disabled list nine times in his six-year career, mostly due to blisters. Beckett said he keeps one tube with Red Sox trainers and another at home or the team's hotel.

Head athletic trainers of major U.S. pro sports teams make an average of \$63,333 a year, according to the National Athletic Trainers Association. Any extra income is most welcome, and Johnston can thank those bulls and steers for his.

"I had many broken bones and cuts," he said. "In rodeo, it isn't if you are going to get injured, it's how bad and when."

Blue Jays' clubhouse not source of staph

The Toronto Blue Jays disinfected their clubhouse after being forced to place righthander **Ty Taubenheim** on the 15-day disabled list with an infection in his left foot, the second Toronto player to be placed on the DL because of a staph infection.

Right fielder **Alex Rios** still hasn't rejoined the club since suffering a staph infection in his lower left leg in late June.

The Blue Jays worked with health inspectors to ensure the Blue Jays' home clubhouse was not the source of infection. Following the inspection, the clubhouse was disinfected for precautionary reasons.

Blue Jays spokesman **Jay Stenhouse** said the clubhouse was not the source of the infection.

They don't know how Taubenheim was infected.

Stenhouse said health inspectors examined the entire clubhouse over the All-Star break, including the shower and hot tub areas.

White making mark on new board now

Olympic champion **Shaun White** won the Skateboard Vert competition in the Dew Action Sports Tour's Right Guard Open in Denver.

The 19-year-old White, from Carlsbad, Calif., scored an 89.75 on his first run in the best-of-two format. Brazil's **Sandro Dias** was second at 89.25.

White won his first professional skateboarding event last season on the Dew Action Sports Tour. He earned a gold medal in snowboarding in the Turin Olympics.

"I just wanted to come out here and win," White said. "I feel like I'm in the game now, and I'm a contender. I'm a skateboarder."

Smith inducted with softball's best

Two-time Olympic gold medalist **Michele Smith** was inducted into the American Softball Association's Hall of Fame in between games at the World Cup of Softball.

Smith was presented with a plaque and a wooden Louisville Slugger bat engraved with her name and her designation as a member of the Hall of Fame.

"There's a lot of historic names in USA softball. To join them is an honor," Smith said.

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