

GB Rowing unveils its secret weapon

Siemens' RAPIDPoint 350 Blood Gas Analyser used to gain valuable athletic performance data

The GB Rowing Team has hailed the Siemens RAPIDPoint® Blood Gas Analyser as its 'secret weapon' in its athletic arsenal following a win of 14 medals at the 2011 World Rowing Championships in Bled, Slovenia.

As the High Performance Partner, Siemens works with the GB Rowing Team on innovative ways to assist the team's training and the performance of its male, female and adaptive crews. It provided the GB Rowing Team with the blood gas analyser so that the team could gain valuable performance data by monitoring athletes' adaption to high intensity training.

The Blood Gas Analyser measures blood pH (an indication of muscle acidity) and bicarbonate (the body's acid buffer) from small blood samples. During the build-up to the racing season, it enables observation of increases in resting bicarbonate. This provides valuable information about the rowing athletes' anaerobic system and its contribution to race performance. Blood gas testing is used to evaluate oxygenation. For example, if a rower is displaying symptoms of an acid/base imbalance, difficulty breathing, or shortness of breath, a blood gas test may determine respiratory difficulties.

Mark Homer, physiologist with the GB Rowing Team states, "The benefits and effects of training are difficult to measure in the field. While we can effectively monitor aerobic fitness, the adaptation to high intensity training is more difficult to track. For the past two years we have been using the Siemens RAPIDPoint to measure blood pH and bicarbonate. Changes in resting bicarbonate levels over time give an indication of anaerobic adaptation; for example, increased bicarbonate levels demonstrate an increased ability to buffer acidic muscular conditions at high intensities. This information also helps us to understand the differences between rowers; areas for improvement; and the importance of this area

of physiology to rowing performance in general. The information we have gathered has allowed us to track how individuals are adapting to high intensity training towards the climax of the racing season.”

Helen Glover, World Cup winner 2011 and World Championship silver medallist 2010, women’s pair comments, “As international rowers we are used to undergoing various testing procedures during training but the testing involved with the RAPIDPoint is painless and non-invasive. The results have been very helpful to me in understanding how my body reacts to intense periods of training. As an athlete who has experimented with Sodium Bicarbonate, information regarding its effect on my physiology and the optimum supplementation strategy is crucial.”

Afia Boamah, Blood Gas and Stratus CS Product Manager at Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics states, “Siemens is delighted to assist the GB Rowing Team. We are extremely pleased that our RAPIDPoint Blood Gas Analyser has been of value in the current training program. It is a small, low maintenance and easy-to-use system making it ideal for hospital critical care environments, plus a huge range of other testing environments, including sport.”

A RAPIDPoint Blood Gas Analyser features in a new display in the Science Museum in London’s Antenna contemporary science gallery. The display, called ‘Can this kit help create a champion?’ includes a piece of GB Rowing kit and an interactive exhibit featuring interviews with scientists and the GB Rowing team. Visitors can also learn more about the technology and meet the GB Rowing team in person at a special three day event being staged at the Science Museum from 25-27 October 2011.

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Notes to editors:

High resolutions images available on request.

Photo caption: Siemens’ RAPIDPoint 350[®] Blood Gas Analyser is used by GB Rowing to gain valuable athletic performance data



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