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Sani Sport: Conquering the NHL



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La Presse

When the Canadiens take the ice tonight, each player will wear protective equipment that does not feel as if the devil was soaked with sweat more than 20 times since the start of training camp on Sept. 18 .

Since 2006, the Montreal Canadiens have used two Sani Sport machines to disinfect 6kg of equipment worn by each player, including their pads, helmets, gloves, knee pads and more.

If you (or your children) have played hockey, you know of the powerful scent that is present in a hockey bag after the game. This pungent emanation that resists soap is caused by bacteria that live in equipment that is soaked in sweat.

The stench was for all practical purposes the official smell of the National League before Montrealer Steve Silver invented the "disinfection cabinet" Sani Sport, a machine that looks like a big stainless steel fridge which subjects bacteria to a deadly ozone treatment enriched with hydrogen peroxide. "For many, that smell permeated every locker room in the league," says Mr. Silver.

Today, Sani Sport is a recognized official supplier of the NHL: 27 of the 30 teams in the league have Sani Sports, like 15 NFL teams, 6 CFL teams, and 4 MLB teams.

A new machine, the Sani Sport VE (Virus Eliminator), was launched recently and is experiencing strong sales in the NHL, says Silver. The Canadiens got one in 2010.

"These are machines that spray the same disinfectant throughout a room. It kills the bacteria in the air and those on hard surfaces. " - Steve Silver

"Being a supplier to these teams gives us tremendous credibility," says Silver. Most Sani Sport customers are small businesses, often "family businesses that operate a machine in a truck that moves from arena to arena to accommodate parents who do not want to smell the equipment." A normal machine costs between \$ 14,000 and \$ 16,000. For its retail customers, Sani Sport offers a less sophisticated version for about \$ 8,000.

HELMET TO HELMET HOCKEY RIOT

Mr. Silver has created the Sani Defenx division - a successful inroads into the security market.

"The armed forces, police and prisons have the same odor problem with their equipment and in their locker rooms," he said. He has sold the machines to the Montreal Police, Longueuil Police and to several Canadian and American prisons. "The first prison where I made a sale was Archambault." He sold 22 machines to a large Air Force training base in Lackland, Texas, 15 other machines were sold to an Air Force Base in Eglin, Florida, and one to the Navy in Guantanamo.

NEXT FRONTIER AND HEALTH

"When we developed this product, it was for the smell, says Mr. Silver. But there is a health issue behind it, he said. Various bacteria can be transmitted in a locker room via equipment, often through a scratch or wound. "The NHL had severe cases of MRSA - center Joe Thornton, when he played in Boston, and Maple Leaf right winger Mikael Renberg had to be operated on.

"When we started in 2000, nobody was talking about these antibiotic-resistant infections," says Silver, whose machines came to market as the league was becoming aware of the risks associated with infectious diseases.

"Ozone is 3000 times more powerful than disinfectant bleach. We, in addition, we also use vaporized hydrogen peroxide, "says Silver, which their competitors do not, he said. "In 12 minutes, the treatment kills around 95% of germs such as MRSA, C. difficile, H1N1 and possibly other infectious diseases which we did not test. "

Mr. Silver thinks the RAMQ and other major hospital managers worldwide could use the Sani Sport VE machinery to combat antibiotic-resistant infections. "It would be much more efficient, more comprehensive and faster to disinfect the rooms where there are fears of C. difficile or MRSA with our machines, rather than manual methods," he said.