



WORDS: ED MILLER

THE CRYO GAME

With injuries piling up in the early weeks of the season, Fleet's rehabilitation programme has included some ground-breaking new techniques, including cryotherapy and a link-up with Cryojuvenate UK

For any of you old (or geeky) enough to remember *The Empire Strikes Back*, the above scene might well resemble Luke Skywalker's recovery chamber at the beginning of that film. But this sci-fi-looking treatment is actually part of the Fleet squad's rehabilitation programme using cryotherapy.

Certainly given Daryl McMahon's injury list in the first weeks of the 2017/18 season, the club's link-up with Sevenoaks-based Cryojuvenate UK is proving extremely beneficial.

Whole-body cryotherapy originated in Japan in the 1970s as part of wider research into a cure for arthritis and back pain and has gradually become more widespread through Europe and the United States. We caught up with Cryojuvenate founder and owner Ruth Hyde last week to ask her how Fleet players have been using the therapy and why it's so popular in the sporting world.

ABOVE:
Ice, ice baby...
Yado Mamba gets cooled to -85°C

RIGHT:
Cryojuvenate's Ruth Hyde with Peter Varney and Dave Archer... who definitely aren't there to enquire about arthritis treatments...



“The club weren't sure if Danny was going to play but we put him through a couple of whole-body chambers and a few local treatments and his injury responded well...”

“Cryotherapy is basically cooling treatment,” Ruth explained. “The whole-body treatment is a process where you cool the body to temperatures between -85° and -92°C . That's not freezing the body, it's putting it into a chamber that's set at that temperature. The players go in there for three minutes so it kick-starts the metabolism and in doing so it gets the blood circulating around the body, a lot quicker than it would otherwise. Where it speeds up the metabolism, this in turn speeds up recovery. Blood circulation targets all the areas that might be inflamed and if you're reducing the inflammation, you're reducing the pain and speeding up recovery. That's the concept behind it.”

Cryotherapy, and the whole body treatment in particular, is now increasingly being used by athletes and sports professionals to boost injury healing and training — international rugby and football teams have been using the therapy ahead of tournaments for the past five years or so.

“The concept and the benefits have been picked up by the sporting world very quickly,” Ruth said. “When we opened, we found that most of the sports science people knew all about it already, they couldn't wait to send athletes and players to us for treatment. And the message about cryotherapy is now starting to get out there to the general public as well.”

Having opened their doors in March, Cryojuvinate's link-up with the Fleet followed



ABOVE: As well as whole-body treatment, localised machines can target problem areas, such as Danny Kedwell's broken wrist

soon after with Peter Varney and Dave Archer quickly agreeing a long-term link-up after the first fruits of the treatment began to be noticed.

The first injury to be treated was Danny Kedwell's broken arm just before Fleet's play-off campaign in May. “Danny came down before the last game of the season in April,” Ruth revealed. “The club weren't sure if he was going to play but we put him through a couple of whole-body chambers and a few local treatments and his injury responded well. Going on to play in those games was great for him, for the club and for us. It wasn't 100% down to us, but our treatments contributed and we were delighted when Ebbsfleet won the final with Danny managing to start the game against the odds.”

Since then, the Fleet's walking wounded have been making regular outings to Sevenoaks. Dean Rance, Kenny Clark and Dave Winfield are just three of the players to have experienced the chambers.

“I think the players have found it useful,” Ruth reported. “They've enjoyed coming down here and there is a feeling of instant relief with the treatment. Dean Rance was struggling a bit with his knee

BELOW: Aaron McLean ensures the chamber treatment goes up on Instagram... though looks a little less assured when it's his turn to go in with Kenny Clark





problem but he was down for a few treatments and it was good to see him get back out on the pitch. It is very effective.”

There’s certainly been positive feedback from the Fleet camp and Peter Varney said of the treatments, “The players are regular users of the Cryojuvenate facilities. We’ve found the chamber has been very effective for addressing tiredness and aching limbs and the specialist equipment means we can target injuries.

“We’ve had good outcomes with players making a quicker return from injury than would normally be the case. I really can’t speak highly enough of the professionalism of Ruth and her team.”

Word is spreading fast and the Fleet aren’t the only users of cryotherapy rehabilitation. Ruth’s clients already include a quite varied bunch: Sevenoaks Town FC, their hockey club, jujitsu fighters, the UK’s No.2 strongman, Team GB sprinters and Tyson Fury’s boxing team – with even Rio Ferdinand and his personal trainer having shown an interest as well!

The Fleet had another session at Cryojuvenate last week after the Dover Athletic game and club officials are hoping to see the likes of Kenny Clark and Jack Connors responding well to it over the coming weeks.

While regular readers of this programme might not be at a similar cutting-edge of sporting prowess as our players (well, I speak for myself at least), cryotherapy is not just confined to those of an athletic bent.

ABOVE AND

RIGHT: Fleet’s injured players have undergone several courses of cryotherapy treatment



BELOW:

It’s a thumbs-up from the skipper



“All sorts of people use cryotherapy,” Ruth told us. “Old and young, men and women, sporty people, those looking to lose weight and relieve pain, it’s a real cross-range. It helps tired muscles, strains, energy levels and even sleep, where the body works harder, it aids sleep problems and general wellbeing.

“We have cryotherapy facials for fine lines and wrinkles, too, plus lipo-freeze which vacuums the skin and breaks up fat cells which then dissipate naturally over six weeks.”

So there you go – cryotherapy for the (literally) coolest, most pain-free and rehabilitated squad in the National League. And as an added bonus, Keds will be sent back to us with his wrinkles ironed out as well!

■ Cryojuvenate UK is based on Sevenoaks High Street. For more information, ring Ruth on 01732 449411, email: contact@cryojuvenate.com or visit www.cryojuvenate.com.