How Biomarker Testing Transforms Training and Recovery Transcript

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Introduction to Athletic Blood Testing

If you take the broader lens of our industry, whether you're a triathlete or if you're trying to run a marathon, I mean, they're spending a lot of time and money on that effort.

And what we say is this is good money after good in the sense that it's helping inform what you're doing everywhere else within your competition, what you're trying to do.

Bike athletes are trying to, they'll spend thousands to shave ounces on their bike. They may not be feeling right. Invest in yourself, invest in your physiology as much as your gear.

Really, we're helping you really dial in what your engine and what your output is. At the end of the day, even though we're speaking to athletes, this is about how you feel.

When your body is tooled and you're at a high performing level, you feel good. and you feel strong, and you're sleeping well, and you're able to absorb the stress of life in all those types of circumstances.

Our bodies are unbelievable, magical engines, and it really is just about thinking about trying to get some data, whether it's from us or anyone, just get some data on your physiology so you can use that to inform everything else you're doing and investing in time into whatever your sport or your activity is.

This is Doctor Talks. Hey, I'm Dr. Ivan Rosilko. Welcome to the Lifestyle Medicine Podcast brought to you by Access Medical. If your doctor's not doing diagnostics, he's not a doctor.

Today we got an awesome guy. His name's Scott Evans. He is the Chief Revenue Officer for ABT, Athletic Blood Testing. Their main goal, which I think is fascinating, is to bring diagnostic testing into the performance world.

So they're basically turning athletes into super soldiers by making sure that they're tested correctly and often. So Scott, it's an absolute pleasure to have you here.

Likewise, thank you for having me. Heck yeah. So I'm curious, what kind of brought this company up? I think it's a huge industry, and not too many people are capitalizing on it.

And you guys are doing a hell of a job, I must say.

ABT Origin Story and Athlete Focus

Well, thank you. Yeah, the origin story goes back to 2007. with our founder, Dr. Garrett Rock. He was running a clinic out of Boulder, Colorado, and he was catering your typical healthcare services, PCP services and chiropractic services, but specific to athletes and professional athletes, Olympians, Ironman, that type of sport.

And then as you know, athletes can't necessarily go to their normal doctor because they just They may need different treatment protocols than somebody who is who is not necessarily trying to compete every single week.

So, you know, they can't sit and rest an ankle for three months. And so he was providing answers, services and whatnot to professional athletes. And through that, he was noticing quite a bit of overtraining.

And so he just got very curious and really started to throw everything in the kitchen sink at it from a biomarker perspective, different other biometrics and whatnot.

And over 13 years really acquired the science underneath ABT before we launched commercially that really

distilled that all down to something that could be very meaningful and impactful and specific to athletes.

Wellness is a big thing and we're kind of a sub-segment of that where we're really by athletes for athletes and it's really about human performance, not if you're feeling well or whatnot, although those are obviously very much related.

The origin story goes back to 2007, 13 years of acquiring the science before we launched commercially, which we did so in 2018. Oh, that's fantastic. Fantastic.

And are you seeing more professional athletes? Are you seeing more weekend warriors, college, high school, or just pretty much everything? Yep. Great question.

Uh, we have three primary business units, uh, they're direct to consumer and we have a pro team division. And then we have what we call corporate athletes, but the corporate executives and the through line there is a high performer.

So, you know, again, we're really trying to focus on the, on the subsection of, of what humans are really trying to do from a health perspective, really pushing the limits of their physiology.

Whether you're an executive who is working 100 hours a week or if you're a professional athlete or through our direct consumer, again, we're really kind of pulling the cream of the crop.

This market is very much expanding. There's a lot going on with it and we're not really chasing the masses. You know, we're really trying to focus on those that are high performers.

And as a consequence of that, we're the only company in the industry who has hands-on intervention on every single case. So regardless of where you're at within our business units, you know, we're having a sports science expert do your analysis, your blood work, We're taking that along with an assessment form.

We certainly have the biomarker ranges based upon the athlete. That is defined by age, sex, duration, frequency, intensity of the sport and what their sport is.

Power is very different than endurance and females are very different than males. So we're constantly, you know, we're precision profiling. We're individualizing our sports science to that person, their circumstances, so we can lift the veil to their physiology and understand what's going on with them.

You know, we're not trying to compare them to Joe Schmoe down the street. You know, everybody's physiology is different and it changes over time. And we really honor that by that human intervention on every single case.

I think that's fantastic. And so when you're seeing that, like when it comes to the science behind ABT and the whole diagnostic testing, are you taking blood?

Are you taking saliva? Are you taking urine? Are you taking pretty much everything? Yep. So we anchor on the blood biomarkers. That kind of gives us the right snapshot of both now and a little bit in arrears and into the future.

We certainly do genetics. We do supplemental testing, certainly on the GI, if we're seeing some GI issues there.

Blood Biomarkers and Customized Panels

So we're really allowing this blood to be A, a screener so if data is informing the data if we want to do or need to do additional labs that will kind of point us in the right direction and then B the biomarkers we run definitely give us enough information to give them some actionable insights for them right now which really fall into nutrition training and recovery.

So yes, I'm curious. So I mean, can you mention a couple of the actual biomarkers that you guys really focus on?

Sure. I mean, our panel is kind of made up of an array of biomarkers.

We definitely tailor to the male or the female, given the different physiology there. And so the hormones certainly will be a part of that. As an example, iron is a big thing with our endurance athletes.

So we're doing an array of things on the iron. Cortisol, as an example. So on our website, athletebloodtest.com, Each of the panels have the full list of the biomarkers you can see.

And it's really set up to be a baseline and some follow-ups. But we really customize that. That's just kind of the starting point. And based upon the data, we'll recommend very specific biomarkers to follow up with based upon what's going on in their case.

And that's great. I'm sorry, that's on the direct-to-consumer side. And then what we do with pro teams is different. And the medical director as well as the performance team of those pro teams are kind of driving what we're testing in those scenarios.

And on the corporate athlete, the use case is a little bit different. So that looks differently as well as what we're doing on the biomarker side. Now I'm curious.

What would you say your percentages are when it comes to the weekend wars, the corporates, and the actual professionals? Sure. Our roots started in direct-to-consumer.

And it really started with triathletes in the sense that they were the first biohacks. They're pushing their physiology so much that they really have to understand what's going on in their system from an endurance perspective.

They also had discretionary income back in the day to be able to spend on it. So that's where we started on the direct-to-consumer side. And that's still very much a hallmark of our business and is growing.

Our fastest growing business unit right now is the pro team space. And then the corporate athlete is more of an emerging market where we're really kind of cultivating and growing it.

And it's very highly specialized, very high touch in what we're doing there. No, I can bet. Now, for your panels, do they differ when it comes to, so if it's a weekend where you aren't testing as much and the pros, you're going super in-depth, or is it one panel for men in certain athletic builds versus female versus that, or is it customized to the patient picks, or how does that work?

Definitely. So there's baseline, and there's shared biomarkers regardless of the use case. Those are ubiquitous enough. And then yes, we start tailoring if your endurance, that's very different than an NFL lineman who is looking for power at mass.

So we definitely start to customize what we're testing based upon the objectives of that particular person, as well as their underlying physiology. And a lot of people come to us symptomatically, right?

So then we're kind of trying to be specific to whatever symptomatically they're experiencing. No, that's true. And again, I think precision medicine is probably the most important thing that's coming out today.

I mean, the wellness brand is such a such a juggernaut right now. I think it's a 6.7 trillion expected to grow three trillion the next two years or something like that.

And it's just super unique to see that, you know, companies such as yours coming out, we're really, I guess, dominating niches and inside of that, you know, and I think that's the other that's that's proof behind the pudding, you know, precision medicine doesn't exist without diagnostics.

So you know, when it comes to the actual how doctors I think need to proceed, or if you have the actual direct to consumer, I think that's one of the most important thing.

Now, do you see a bunch of PCPs and general practitioners or any physician, you know, for that matter, are they contacting you to kind of get a better understanding of, you know, how athletes differ from the regular Joe Shmo?

Yeah, absolutely. So on the pro team side, we are really starting to unify pathology and sports science. That is historically very much in silos. And so now that we kind of speak to both of those audiences, and they should be cooperative, they should very much not be operating in silos.

But on the pro team side, we're helping to start to unify that. Now on the direct consumer side, You know, ironically, we have a lot of our customers are doctors.

And so they just have an underlying understanding of what we do. And they have an appreciation that the healthcare system cannot and does not provide what we do.

Precision Medicine for High Performers

You know, they are looking at pathology. We're looking at performance. So, you know, we do have a lot of medical doctors come to us as customers. We do have a lot of medical doctors coming to us as a partner.

They're wanting to kind of resell what we're providing into their practice, especially on the concierge side of the segment of medical doctors. We also have a lot of performance centers that tailor to pro athletes out of season or for collegiate athletes going into the draft.

So we're kind of integrated into those pathways. So more and more, we're starting to integrate into the medical field and we're being cooperative because we need to do something a little bit differently there.

And then on the corporate athlete side, you know, we're partnered with their PCP. So it is a much more tighter, very sophisticated program where their PCP is part of that process, getting our data feeds, and then we're customizing the sports science experts based upon their case.

You know, somebody may need a sleep specialist. You know, somebody may be pre-diabetic. Somebody may have thyroid issues. So we're bringing kind of the integrated care of sports science versus just a lab.

You know, the lab is helping us define who that expert should be and what that curated team should look like based on that case. No, I think it's fascinating.

I mean, I do something similar, it's more of a broader stroke. You know, and I think, you know, having the right lab partner as well as the correct place to point the patient when you're done.

So when it comes to once you have the results and everything, now, are you utilizing things like AI to help with that? Or is it just straight up, you know, you're going through this is what it is, go through it, and then you kind of customize it from there?

I mean, AI is obviously a good thing happening right now. Sports science is probably one of the leading markets for adopting AI. Just because, you know, what predated AI was algorithms.

And algorithms were very much used in our space to kind of help measure or match some of the different biomarkers and come to certain recommendations.

Now for us, we will always lean into this human intervention. So there's, you know, there's a half a billion dollars of venture capital that came into our specific industry in 2024, but that is predominantly driven to AI.

And so most companies, most entrants into our space are exclusively AI. And where we sit from a philosophical standpoint is we believe, especially now, it should be AI assisting the practitioner.

Exactly. So we're not putting all our eggs in the AI basket and riding that wave, but we also honor and respect that

that is real technology. It is legitimately helping in a lot of respects, but in our world, left to its own devices, it's leaving our customers unsatisfied.

So that's where we are coming in and bringing in our practitioners to take that AI accelerated data set and then customizing it. based upon that case and what the human understands of that case.

So we're really blending the two together and allowing technology to do what it does really well and the human capital to do what it does really well.

So we are using AI in our business. It's emerging. So in our pro team space, we resell some of these other organizations out there in the space that are exclusively AI, such as Vitality Blueprint and Oracle.

They're two very good brands, very well respected. So we resell those technologies into our pro teams when they're wanting to participate in that. In our other business units underlying our operations, we're scraping some of the data that are coming from the lab forms and getting it into a format that our practitioners can work with a little bit better, making some of those collections of the data and the cross biomarker analysis And then again, our human is coming over the top and giving it that customized, curated, individualized analysis on top of that.

So once you have that, where does the fulfillment come into that? Are you partnering with pharmacies? Are you partnering with supplement companies? Or is this something that the physician or the end user needs to figure out themselves?

Yep. So one of the things of many that ABT is well, well known for is the blood draw operations side of the business.

AI, Human Review, and Lab Logistics

You know, that's not sexy. Nobody really wants to do it. Um, and ABT is really cut our teeth on willing to do the dirty work that really others don't do.

So as, as evidence of that, you know, some of these organizations that are technically our competitors, like Vitality Blueprint and Oracle, They are outsourcing their blood operations to us because we do it with white glove service.

We're working with athletes or an executive. So we just really understand the needs of that market and what their expectations are and not be thrown to the masses.

So in the pro team space, we have our own phlebotomist. We're dispatching that to the team's facility. And we're doing all the blood draws in those scenarios.

And the direct-to-consumer, we are partnered and integrated into the retail footprint of LabCorp and Quest. So we are taking advantage of those brick and mortars for our direct consumer.

And then likewise on the corporate athlete, we're dispatching a phlebotomist, giving them that higher level of service, sending them to their home so they're doing it first thing in the morning before they go into the office.

So, you know, our healthcare system is very decentralized and it's a little chaotic and It's hard to do this on a cash basis if you're not going through insurance, which we're 100% cash basis.

So some of our special sauces is like Walmart, you know, the logistics behind everything and pulling that together and stitching it together into a single source experience for our customers is really one of our special secret sauces.

No, it makes total sense. And I think the whole aspect of having the blood fairies that actually go to the houses was one of my favorite aspects when it comes to me.

I work with Axis for that. And again, I think patients again, it is kind of a rich man's game at the moment to be able

to do that since, you know, insurance, it doesn't cover a lot of this, you know, unique stuff.

But I do wholeheartedly hope that eventually like, you know, everything's going to kind of trickle into this industry. I think there's been a massive exodus of not only physicians but patients coming from traditional medicine after seeing the debacle that's gone over the last four years.

So I'm curious, have you seen an uptick since 2020? Yeah, well, let's say it wouldn't be that linear. The pandemic definitely had a downward pressure on our whole market.

You know, on the direct-to-consumer side, we were pretty much directly tied to competitions, you know, marathons, 100-mile ultras, you know, the different bike races, swimming races, so on and so forth.

So when that shut down, you know, that did put downward pressure on the direct-to-consumer. And so we are seeing a rebound to that, but it wasn't necessarily 2020. All of a sudden, everything took off.

But we're coming back stronger, interesting enough. You know, we're somewhat of an emerging market. I mean, wellness is well known, but getting into the nitty gritty of performance is something more unique.

And so the market was pretty finite pre-pandemic. And now we're just seeing a much broader, more open, bigger market coming out of the pandemic that is ready to adopt this type of products and services.

Are you seeing it more from the physicians or more from the actual direct-to-consumer that the uptake is coming with? So definitely a big uptick, I wouldn't say 2020, but in the last 18 to 24 months on the direct-to-consumer side, the pro team side, they were just in survival mode.

They were having to do COVID testing on their athletes every single day, so they weren't really necessarily adopting new technologies like sports science.

And, you know, they were in that mode for a good three years. But now that we're kind of out of that phase, we're seeing a huge wave of adoption of our services in the pro team space.

We are having hyper growth in that space. And that's coming from a combination of the medical director, the performance director, and that title is based upon team and league.

But interesting enough, a lot of this is coming from the players. You know, the players are younger, they're biohacks, they're demanding this type of services and data from their staff.

So there's a big groundswell happening from a player perspective, really putting demands on their staff to bring in products and services like we provide into that club.

No, I love that. I love that. And when it comes to the whole biomarker testing, so you're treating a broad range of things. You're obviously testing hormones, like you said, you're testing nutrition, you're testing the basics, things like iron and stuff like that.

Are you guys also going after things like heavy metals or hidden pathogens or everything? Yeah, and again, it depends upon the business unit and what we're doing.

And the direct to consumer, you need to be a little bit more uniform because they're kind of taking a product off the shelf and putting it into their cart.

But again, we're using that information to help them inform the next time what they should be testing. you know, if it's heavy metals, if we're seeing something in their case.

Now, on the pro team side, a lot of this is regulated by the collective bargaining agreement. So, you know, whatever their contract says can be tested is basically the guardrails that we need to operate within.

And within the pro team space, we actually have two different stakeholders there because we are running their blood draws from a physical perspective.

So at the beginning of every preseason, just like you in high school needed to have a physical before you reported to the next school year, you know, these athletes need to go under a physical before they start their new season.

And it's a battery of test biomarker testing is just a part of that. But the point being is that is clinical. So we are just putting our wide glove service, you know, providing them the clinical data input, and then we are integrating that into the medical director's EMR.

Pandemic Impact and Market Growth

So they're just cranking through, making sure the pathology of that athlete is sufficient where they can participate. But then we also have the stakeholders on the performance side.

So we have kind of the one blood draw, two data streams, one going to the medical staff and one going to the performance staff. And that's why we're giving them insights into the individual from a nutrition training and recovery perspective.

Okay, cool, cool, cool. So are you guys suggesting diets? Because I know things like intermittent fasting and all these things are crazy right now in the athletic world.

So are you guys incorporating those kinds of things in there as well? Yeah. And again, we're precision and individualizing the science. And so, you know, a macro statement is too many athletes are blind dieting and supplementing.

You know, maybe they want to try a keto diet or they want to be a hundred percent vegan. And we see athletes in the spectrum be very successful in all of those kinds of diet segments.

However, not everybody can really operate as a vegan. or they shouldn't be taking this supplement. So all we're doing is lifting the veil to their physiologies, telling them what's going on within them and what they could benefit from.

So we are helping them kind of retool their diet, if you will, based upon what we're seeing in their physiology and what kind of real foods really kind of work for them versus trying a fad and A, B, testing on yourself.

We can kind of see that within the physiology. And same thing on the supplementation side. I mean, a lot of people are, in our athlete population, 35% of the athletes are over supplementing B12.

You know, B12 is in everything and people are kind of taking it indiscriminately, but that has both performance and health implications if you over supplement that.

So, you know, we're really trying to help them dial in what they are doing because, you know, You can listen to your body, but this is data and it's often leading indicators to what's going on to the physiology.

We can see things in their system before they're feeling those symptoms. So we can kind of give them that information in advance of that and they can just tweak and tool what they're doing from a fueling and supplementation perspective.

Oh, makes complete sense. So now, so I mean, this is a physician geared, but you know, there's all kinds of people who are gonna be watching this. Question is, so say I'm a primary care doctor, I'm listening to this and say, hell, I want to jump on this train.

How do physicians go about becoming part of the ABT team? Yep, we just have an affiliate program. So it's very easy to sign up. They don't have to carry inventory or anything like that.

So they basically are selling our panels into their client population and we are sending the data to them. And we are basically an administrator where we can process these blood panels and do the interpretation at scale.

Um, but when we are providing it to a practitioner, whether that's an MD, maybe it's a registered dietitian, you know, maybe it's a performance coach, but they have even more context on that athlete than we have.

So that's why we really love to give our analysis. We take it like 95% of the way there and then the doctor is taking that analysis and putting additional context to it and doing a consultation with their client.

Physician Partnerships and Affiliate Program

to make sure that they're creating the right protocols and they're answering all the right questions. So it's very easy for a practitioner sign up with us.

We have an affiliate link on our website and all things happen via e-commerce and we have a portal in which all this data is pushed to for that practitioner so they can engage and consult with their client.

So it's super streamlined then. So I mean you get in there, it's point click and boom. That's the idea of e-commerce. So yeah, that's especially for physicians.

I've come to find I've done enough talks. I've done enough conferences and everything like that. You know, easy is easy. You know what I mean? So yeah, that's super cool.

That's super cool. And so you said when it comes to your competition, you guys are kind of pretty much when it comes to specifically just athletes, you guys are kind of king of the castle then, right?

Yeah, and it's really because this isn't by happen chance. This is how we designed it. We're the only one I'm aware of in our space where we don't have outside capital.

We are self-funding ourselves. And that may not mean anything to a lot of people, but really the punchline of that is we don't have the pressure to chase the masses.

You know, we're not trying to become a hundred million dollar business because we got to deliver returns to our venture capitalists who are looking for a hundred X multiple on that business.

You know, so we are, the growth is in our control. We always want to work with the cream of the crop. those high performers who associate as such and aren't looking to be just another mass number in a very large corporation and not have that personal touch.

A visual capitalist would not look at our business model and say, that's investable because they see a cap on scale because of our human intervention.

Now that can scale and there's creative ways to do that and that type of stuff, but that's okay, that's what we want. We want to only work with those that are willing to pay a premium and want that hands-on intervention type of service, which contrasts from the majority of the marketplace because they are automated.

They are using AI. They are trying to become a hundred million dollar business. And so they need scale and athletes just are too small. It's too finite of a market for them to be able to go out and chase.

Whereas for us, You know, we want to be a small company. We want to always control our own desk and we don't want to take outside capital. So we can be really hyper focused on those high performers and always be focused on delivering a high level of service to them.

No, great. So I've talked to a lot of people too, and they think the whole hedge fund push is kind of diluting the industry in a way, because everybody's going more towards the traditional medicine type route, you know, factory,

factory, factory, go, go, go.

And it seems like you guys have kind of found a way around that. So, you know, what are your thoughts on the hedge funds coming in, dumping millions of dollars in the companies, and it kind of dilutes out the message or kind of gives it a bad name sometimes, which I've seen many times in this industry.

Yeah, it's not a binary analysis. I think the counterpoint to what you're saying is, in some ways, they're creating the market. This was an emerging market pre-pandemic, and now that all this capital is flowing into it, it's actually kind of creating the market.

It's also creating market awareness. So the consumers are more aware of it. Pro teams are more aware of it. So there's going to be a lot of losers. We're very much in an expansion.

epic of our industry, and we will go through a contraction, a consolidation at some point in time, just as every industry and every segment goes through, that's a very common scenario.

So we will go through that, and we are in the expansion period. But I'm thankful for it, because again, I think it really is Creating a bigger broader market, but there there will be casualties along the way because we control her own destiny You know, we're not a one hit wonder, you know We've been here before a lot of these guys came and we have a lot of sustainability and we're still having high growth Regardless of so much choice from a competition perspective Oh, I love that.

I love that. Well, fantastic. Fantastic. So I guess we're coming close here to our time. I always ask two questions to everybody. The first one is any physician who's looking to get involved in your company?

What's probably the best pace or the best piece of advice you can actually offer them? Yeah, I mean, there's a segment of PCPs who are ideologically not predisposed to this.

Competition, Business Model, and Advice

You know, they only see a lens from pathology and we're not looking to convert anybody. But there is a segment of PCPs who just intrinsically understand that there's a limit to what they're providing.

And so they need to go beyond what they're providing and treating pathology or treating disease and actually work with the whole human and what is their nutrition and how much are they exercising.

And that has implications to everything from a disease and pathology perspective. So, you know, really those PCPs and providers who understand the value of lifting the veil to their patient's physiology and understanding some underlying things that they're not necessarily told to uncover themselves, but this is information that really empowers the provider to give better service and quality to their patient.

That's the person that we're looking to work with, and they'll be able to self-identify, and that's easy business from that perspective because they just intrinsically have an understanding and appreciation for what we're providing.

Oh, I love that. I love that. And the second question is, as a patient or somebody looking to get in this, who is an athlete, a weekend warrior, Barry's bootcamp, and a CrossFit person who's like, you know, I might not be a pro, but I would love to really tailor my life, which I mean, I'm in South Beach, so it's pretty much everybody I see these days.

What's the best piece of advice you can give about anybody looking to do this when it comes to diagnostic testing and really taking their precision medicine to the next level?

Yeah, it's funny, you know, if you take the broader lens of our industry, whether you're a triathlete or if you're trying to run a marathon, I mean, they're spending a lot of time and money on that effort.

And what we say is this is good money after good in the sense that it's helping inform what you're doing everywhere else within your competition and what you're trying to do.

Bike athletes are trying to, they'll spend thousands to shave ounces on their bike. But, you know, they may not be feeling right. So, you know, invest in yourself, invest in your physiology as much as your gear.

Heck yeah. Exactly. You know, you're the engine. And really we're helping you really dial in what your engine and what your output is. And at the end of the day, even though we're speaking to athletes, this is about how you feel.

You know, when your body is tooled and you're at a high performing level, you feel good and you feel strong and you're sleeping well and you're able to absorb the stress of life in all those types of circumstances.

Our bodies are unbelievable magical engines and it really is just about thinking about trying to get some data, whether it's from us or anyone, just get some data on your physiology so you can use that to inform everything else you're doing and investing in time into whatever your sport or your activity is.

Yeah, I think that's great, man. And I really love what you guys are doing. I think you're taking, you know, precision medicine to the next level, especially for everybody who is athletic.

And I think, you know, athletic is becoming the new cool this day and age, which is kind of cool to see. So Scott, I want to say thank you so much for stopping by again.

Scott Evans, Chief Revenue Officer of Alletic Blood Tests. So thank you so much, man. It's been enlightening. We'll make sure to get you as many athletes out there as possible with this podcast.

Appreciate your time, it was a great conversation. All right, my man, you have a good one, okay? Thanks, cheers. Have a good one. Thank you for tuning into Dr.

Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health. Each day is a new opportunity to make choices that empower your well-being.

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