

GearRx tackles funky sports gear Freshening up !

By Harold Davis
Special Correspondent / Norwalk, CT

Swine flu might be the talk of the town as of late, but let's not forget MRSA, also known as methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, and flesh-eating bacteria.

GearRx of Stamford, a new company, wants to help eliminate the risk of such communicable diseases hitting the athletes among us.

Jeffrey Pandolfino, Dr. Joe Boldt of Greenwich and Mike Loga of Larchmont, N.Y., set up **GearRx** in March. Their business offers cleaning services using a specially designed washing machine for sports gear that helps prevent staph infections and illnesses caused by the build-up of bacteria.

"Basically this machine cleans things that you can't get cleaned at the dry cleaner," Pandolfino said. "It's cleaning without harsh chemicals, it's eco-friendly. You're not going to have allergic reaction from this like you would to Tide (detergent)."

GearRx can clean items such as hockey pads and helmets, wetsuits, life jackets, yoga mats and firefighter equipment. It uses a machine manufactured by an 11-year-old company called Esporta Wash System Inc. in British Columbia, Canada. The manufacturer said the machine, which can clean 160 pounds of gear at a time, kills 99.9 percent of the harmful bacteria hiding in hard and soft goods.

GearRx charges \$65 to clean a full set of hockey gear and \$50 for football or lacrosse gear. Customers can drop off their athletic clothes and equipment for **GearRx** at Stamford Twin Rinks and Whitie Benson Athletic Equipment in West Haven.
Advertisement

Pandolfino, who ran Plum Catering in Greenwich for five years, saw the potential for such a service in Fairfield County, where school and amateur sports are big business. The partners took about six months to develop their business plan and secure funding through Greenwich Bank & Trust. Along with sports teams and individual athletes, **GearRx** is generating interest from restaurants, country clubs and gyms. Pandolfino also sees the company expanding services.



Jeffrey Pandolfino of Stamford-based **GearRx** holds items that can be sanitized in a specially...



~ continued ~



May 2009
Page 2 of 2

GearRx tackles funky sports gear Freshening up !

~ continued ~

"We see ourselves becoming a subcontractor to the insurance restoration industry for fire, water, sewage damage -- making things look like new again," Pandolfino said. "I ran a leather coat that had been in a fire and it came out looking brand new."

GearRx is hoping for relationships with local schools, but that takes time, Pandolfino said.

"A lot of schools have equipment, but they don't have it cleaned. This extends the life of the equipment. A full set of hockey gear costs between \$1,500 and \$2,000 for top-of-the-line gear," he said.

Rob Farfaglia, supervisor in the Division of Environmental Health at the Greenwich Health Department, said a service such as GearRx can help fight bacteria growth, but added that some bacteria are immune to some detergents. Though not endorsing the company, he said he believes its services could be beneficial.

"They're offering a super-duper laundering service for things that you can't do in your home. They're catering to a specific group that soils clothing more than someone with their own personal laundry," Farfaglia said.

-- - *For more on GearRx, visit www.gearrx.com.* - - -

