

## Team Technotes

Reference: Injured team members

Date: 10/2000 Issue: 1

Reference to gymnastics related injuries. Concerned about progression and emotional state of athlete. Most people are not aware of the following, including general practitioners, pediatricians and regular orthopedic surgeons.

In the past twenty years, sports orthopedics has become a separate medical science and is considered different from regular orthopedics. The science was started by Dr. Savastano in Providence RI and became an instant success nationwide especially with the professional ball clubs. The Boston Celtics were one of the first to adopt sports orthopedics. There are also very few physicians in this area that are sports orthopedic specialists. Some orthopedic surgeons will claim to be in the field, but, in fact, are not. Additional schooling is necessary. Twenty years ago my wife and I took the symposium for sports orthopedics at URI, some of the local regular physicians thought the presenters were “off-the-wall”. Today, there is a very different attitude and a new respect for orthopedic physicians that specialize in sports orthopedics, because it has stood the test of time with great results.

The basic concept is to continue an athlete’s training during an injury so that when the injury heals, the athlete returns in top physical condition with no “catch-up-with-the-group-time”. Personally I think the concept is perfect especially in the gymnastics community because of the year-round training schedule that it takes in order to compete. If an athlete “sits out” when he is injured, the amount of time it takes them to “catch up” with the group, is very discouraging. Most athletes get so depressed during that “catch up” period that they quit the sport that has become their passion. This is the most important reason to us at OSSG, so I’ll repeat; Most athletes get so depressed during that “catch up” period that they quit the sport that has become their passion. Sports orthopedics has virtually done away with that.

During the workout for an injured athlete, the gymnast’s program should be designed to enhance his weaknesses while exercises are designed to strengthen the muscles, tendons and ligaments of the surrounding areas of the injury. This injury time will afford extra time to work on that part of the body which normally the athlete wouldn’t have the time to focus on. An example would be to weight train for strength or focus on flexibility training. By rehabilitating in the gym environment, the athlete will continue to feel part of the team. Also, a coach can oversee the training to make sure it is being done properly.

At OSSG one of our orthopedic sports successes was with one of our A Team girls that took a “freak” fall off the uneven bars and dislocated both her elbows with a fracture on her left radius. She went to a regular orthopedic surgeon and was casted and given a prescription of physical therapy. The surgeon and the physical therapist both told her she would never do gymnastics again. To make a long story short, we began our own physical therapy program while she was still in her cast. She came to the gym everyday and worked our prescribed program and within three months she was back. The therapist couldn’t believe it and wanted to know what we were doing. The gymnast went on to Springfield College and took first place on floor at nationals in her third year.

Tim Lyons-OSSG Head Coach