

& Joint News

Bone

TRI RIVERS SURGICAL ASSOCIATES

FALL/WINTER 2005

Don't Get Tackled by Shoulder Pain

During the high school football season, hundreds of local athletes hit the gridiron. Mixed in with the cheers of victory and anguish of defeat are bound to be some bumps and bruises.

Thomas S. Muzzonigro, M.D., and Robert L. Waltrip, M.D., both orthopedic surgeons with Tri Rivers Surgical Associates, provide stats on football-related shoulder injuries.

"These injuries are often caused by on-field collisions," Dr. Muzzonigro said. "Injuries caused by repetitive use are also becoming more common. Shoulder dislocation and what is commonly known as a separated shoulder occur fairly frequently on the football field as well."

The most common symptoms associated with shoulder injuries are severe and persistent pain, a decreased range of motion, loss of mobility, stiffness, swelling or a popping sensation in the joint.

"After an initial evaluation by a team physician, treatment often involves rest, ice, compression and elevation, along with an over-the-counter pain medication," said Dr. Waltrip, a sports medicine and shoulder specialist. "Physical therapy or a home exercise program may also be required."

Seek additional medical attention if pain is persistent, symptoms do not subside after a week or two or there is an obvious change in appearance of the limb or joint.

"The need for surgical intervention is rare but may be necessary if conservative treatment fails, if the bone is broken or shifted out of place, or if a tendon is torn or separates from the bone or socket," explained Dr. Waltrip.

Tri Rivers surgeons now routinely perform minimally invasive surgical techniques, including arthroscopic rotator cuff repair, arthroscopic shoulder stabilization and other, less invasive, "mini-open" surgeries.

"During arthroscopic surgery, the physician inserts a small camera into a quarter-inch incision. This enables him to see inside the joint and aids in diagnosis and surgical management," said Dr. Muzzonigro. "Using newer arthroscopic techniques may result in less pain and an easier and more rapid rehabilitation."

Following treatment, most patients can expect a gradual return to sports-related activities.

Play It Safe

Drs. Waltrip and Muzzonigro, along with D. Kelly, Agnew, M.D., an orthopedic specialist with Tri Rivers, are team physicians for the Pine-Richland Rams and Mars Planets. They recommend taking the following steps to avoid being sidelined this season.

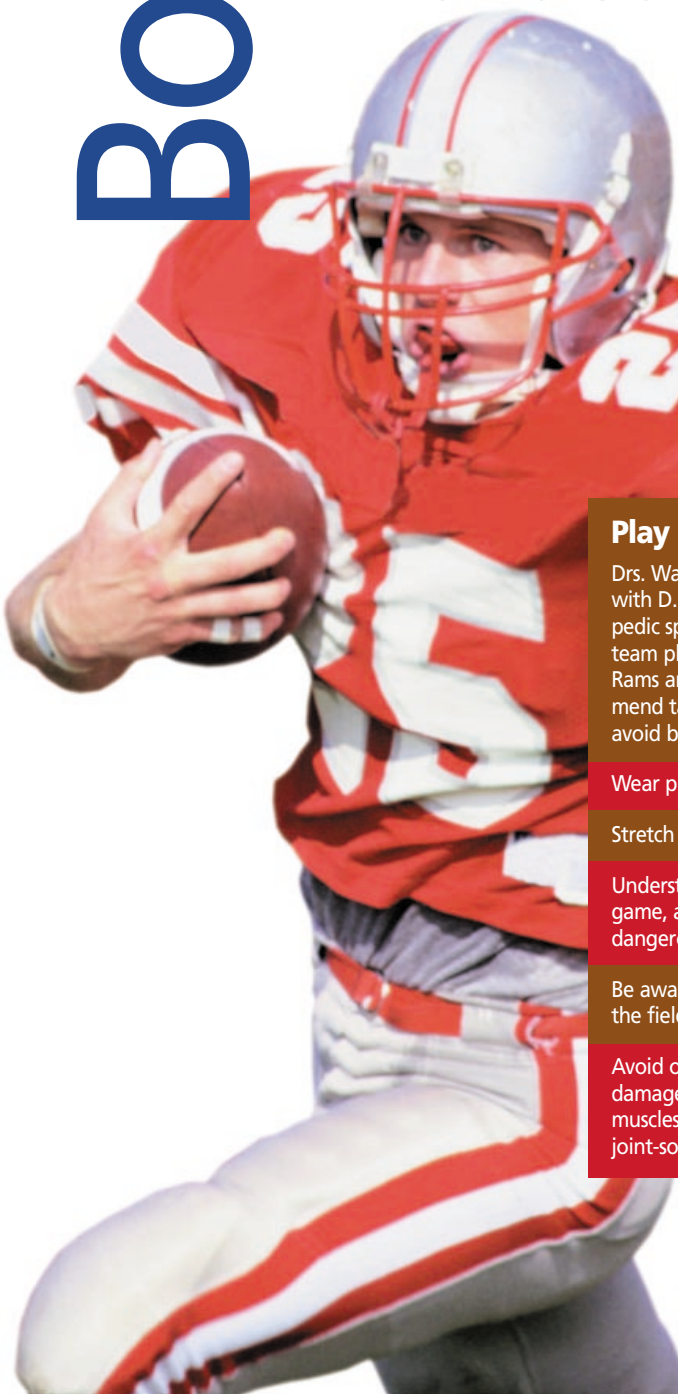
Wear protective gear.

Stretch before and after each game.

Understand all aspects of the game, and be aware of particularly dangerous techniques or positioning.

Be aware of your surroundings on the field at all times.

Avoid overthrowing, which can cause damage to the muscles, cause the muscles to become lax and lead to joint-socket damage.





Racing to get into shape may result in an injury if you don't approach running in stride. Each year, an estimated 70 percent of runners experience an injury. With a little mental preparation and a common-sense approach to this sport, many of these conditions may be preventable.

"When you make the commitment to get into shape by running, it is important to plan a long-term strategy and outline goals," said William D. Abraham, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon at Tri Rivers.

According to Dr. Abraham, most of the conditions he treats in patients can be reduced with proper planning and realistic expectations.



"When setting fitness goals, many people become impatient and try to do too much too soon," he said. "They want the physical benefits to become evident quickly, and that's when injuries can occur."

Although acute injuries can occur, chronic injuries are more commonplace among runners, Dr. Abraham said.

Conditions such as stress fractures, shin splints, plantar fasciitis, tendonitis and knee pain are some common running injuries he treats.

"If you experience an injury, stop doing things that hurt. Treat the symptoms with home remedies — rest, ice, compression, elevation and occasional use of over-the-counter inflammatory medication. Once symptoms have subsided, return to activity in an incremental fashion to prevent re-injury," he said.

If pain is persistent and your performance continues to suffer, seek medical attention before racing back to the track.

"Running can be a great form of exercise," Dr. Abraham said. "It's a weight-bearing activity that strengthens your bones and conditions the surrounding muscles."

SPORTS MEDICINE SPECIALIST JOINS TRI RIVERS' TEAM



Tri Rivers Surgical Associates is pleased to welcome sports medicine and shoulder specialist Robert L. Waltrip, M.D., to our practice. Dr. Waltrip brings world-renowned sports medicine training to local athletes.

Knowing that serious athletes demand peak performance from their bodies, Dr. Waltrip provides a full scope of orthopedic services, including arthroscopic rotator cuff repair, ACL reconstruction,

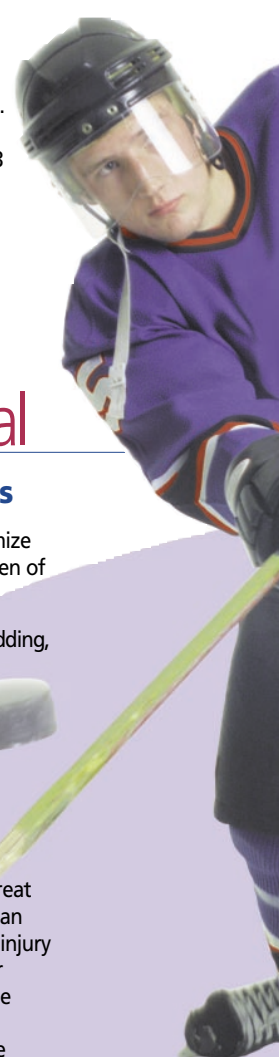
arthroscopic surgery, hand and upper extremity specialty care and fracture care.

He also offers diagnosis and treatment of other orthopedic concerns, including knee problems; shoulder, elbow and wrist pain; and foot and ankle disorders.

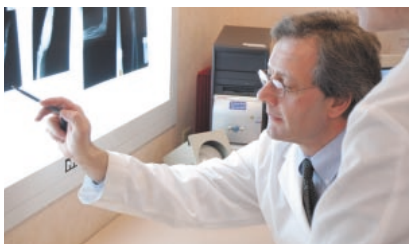
Dr. Waltrip attended Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He completed his internship and orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Waltrip then completed a sports medicine fellowship at the internationally renowned American Sports Medicine Institute in Alabama. There he refined his skills in sports medicine and arthroscopic and joint replacement surgery. Dr. Waltrip has written numerous articles on orthopedic surgery techniques and performed several clinical studies.

He has also lectured on health education and served as team physician for athletes at various competitive levels.

Dr. Waltrip is now seeing patients at the Butler Bone and Joint Center in Butler, Pa. For more information or to make an appointment, call toll free 1-866-874-7483 or visit www.tririversortho.com.



HOCKEY PLAYERS: Make injury prevention your goal



Ice hockey has all the elements of a great sport — high speeds, aggressive strategies and unpredictable outcomes.

Yet the very things that give hockey its appeal can make it dangerous for players. Fractured bones, pulled muscles, dislocated joints, and head, neck and facial injuries are hazards of the game.

"Speed and intensity help win championships," said Trenton M. Gause, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon with Tri Rivers. "Unfortunately, they also put players at greater risk of injury."

"The shoulder and knee are most prone to injury, though we also see a significant number of injuries involving the head, face, wrist and leg," said Dr. Gause.

Fortunately, about 40 percent of all injuries are minor. These injuries result in minimal loss of ice time and little or no long-term damage. The remaining injuries, which include fractures and dislocations, are more severe, often requiring medical intervention and longer rehabilitation.

With improved rules, there are fewer traumatic injuries to the head, neck and spine. But when injuries do occur, they can have serious consequences, such as a concussion.

"Hockey will always be associated with injuries," said Dr. Gause. "Fortunately, with a few simple precautions, many players find that they can compete aggressively and safely."

Preventing Hockey Injuries

Stay fit. Proper conditioning helps minimize injuries. Players should maintain a regimen of stretching and aerobic exercise.

Wear protective equipment. Helmets, padding, face guards and other equipment should fit properly. Well-fitting skates protect against foot and ankle problems.

Play by the rules. Some rules, such as no checking from behind, are in place to protect players.

Treat injuries early. To reduce swelling, treat minor injuries with rest and ice, and use an over-the-counter pain reliever. Once the injury heals, gradually resume activity. See your doctor if you experience: instability of the bone or joint; severe bruising, swelling or pain; an inability to put weight on the affected limb within a day or so; or pain that persists or recurs.

Female athletes fouled by torn ACLs

She shoots and scores.

After sinking a three-pointer, your daughter lands and folds to the floor in pain. She, like many other young female athletes, has been fouled by an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury. In fact, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, nearly 60 percent of ACL injuries in female basketball players occur when landing from a jump.

A primary stabilizing ligament within the center of the knee joint, the ACL protects the knee from stress and prevents it from buckling and rotating as you move. When torn, this ligament unravels like a braided rope.

"Some athletes may experience a full ACL tear, while others partially tear the ligament. A partial injury can sometimes be managed with conservative treatments like physical therapy or bracing. A full tear, however, is a more serious condition," said D. Kelly Agnew, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon with Tri Rivers.

"Unfortunately, a full ACL tear does not heal on its own," Dr. Agnew said. "It requires reconstructive surgery, which uses ligaments or tendons from elsewhere in the body. Using newer surgical techniques, reconstructive surgery combined with physical therapy may help many people recover their full function."

Although both men and women injure the ACL, studies suggest that the injury patterns are different in men and women who participate in the same sport. Exactly why young female athletes have a higher incidence of ACL injuries than their male counterparts may have several explanations, said Michael W. Weiss, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon with Tri Rivers.

"There are several different theories. The susceptibility may be due to hormones, anatomy or biomechanics. There isn't a clear-cut reason," Dr. Weiss said.

ACL injuries are often seen in both basketball and soccer players because there are a lot of quick twisting and pivoting moves in these sports.

"Continued research into the problem may shed some light on how female athletes can prevent injuring the ACL," Dr. Weiss said. "Precisely what causes the tendency toward injury isn't known. However, proper stretching and training techniques are always an important strategy for injury prevention."

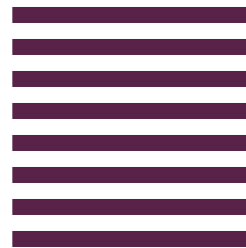


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