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# **BA**sem

British Association of Sport  
& Exercise Medicine



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**Is my athlete REALLY  
ready to return to sport  
following injury? : the  
role of psychological  
readiness**



## **Aim 1**

**Create a rationale for the consideration of psychological readiness when making return to sport decisions**

## **Aim 2**

**Explain what psychological readiness to return to sport is, it's importance, and it's antecedents**

## **Aim 3**

**Explain how the sports medicine team can monitor and make judgements over psychological readiness for optimal return to sport**

# The return to sport landscape

## Return to the Preinjury Level of Competitive Sport After Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction Surgery

Two-thirds of Patients Have Not Returned by 12 Months After Surgery

Clare L. Ardern,<sup>††</sup> PT, Kate E. Webster,<sup>†</sup> PhD, Nicholas F. Taylor,<sup>††</sup> PhD, and Julian A. Feller,<sup>†</sup> FRACS

## Injuries impair the chance of successful performance by sportspeople: a systematic review

Michael K Drew,<sup>1,2</sup> Ben P Raysmith,<sup>1</sup> Paula C Charlton<sup>1</sup>

*European Journal of Sport Science*, May 2012; 12(3): 274–282

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Sport injuries as the main cause of sport career termination among Finnish top-level athletes

LEENA RISTOLAINEN<sup>1</sup>, JYRKI A. KETTUNEN<sup>2</sup>, URHO M. KUJALA<sup>3</sup>, & ARI HEINONEN<sup>3</sup>

Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group



# Returning athletes back to sport after injury: are we winning?



OPEN ACCESS

Original article

Time before return to play for the most common injuries in professional football: a 16-year follow-up of the UEFA Elite Club Injury Study

Jan Ekstrand,<sup>1,2</sup> Werner Krutsch,<sup>3</sup> Armin Spreco,<sup>4</sup> Wart van Zoest,<sup>5</sup> Craig Roberts,<sup>6</sup> Tim Meyer,<sup>7</sup> Håkan Bengtsson<sup>1</sup>

Original article

Likelihood of ACL graft rupture: not meeting six clinical discharge criteria before return to sport is associated with a four times greater risk of rupture

Polyvios Kyritsis,<sup>1</sup> Roald Bahr,<sup>1,2</sup> Philippe Landreau,<sup>1</sup> Riadh Miladi,<sup>1</sup> Erik Witvrouw<sup>1,3</sup>

Systematic review

Which criteria are used to clear patients to return to sport after primary ACL reconstruction? A scoping review

Ciara R Burgi,<sup>1</sup> Scott Peters,<sup>2</sup> Clare L Ardern,<sup>3,4</sup> John R Magill,<sup>1</sup> Christina D Gomez,<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Sylvain,<sup>6</sup> Michael P Reiman<sup>7</sup>



Consensus guidelines suggest athletes should be physically and psychologically ready to return to sport (Andersen et al., 2016)

Physical aspects of return to sport (Podlog et al., 2016)

Sport medicine practitioners fell underprepared and overchallenged to address psychological aspects of return to sport (Heaney et al., 2017)

Athletes recovered more quickly from injury after returning to sport (Phelan et al., 2019; Takuya et al., 2019)

# What concerns do athletes tend to have when they return to sport?

(Carson & Polman, 2012; Forsdyke et al., 2016; Podlog, Dimmock & Miller, 2011)

How do I stop getting re-injured?

Will I be able to perform like I used to do?

What will my team mates, manager and fans expect from me?

Will I still be selected for the first team?

Will I still be considered a reliable athlete?



Who do I turn to if I have concerns?



# What is psychological readiness to return to sport?

(Forsdyke et al., 2016; Webster et al., 2008)

## Anxiety

(re-injury & performance)

## Confidence

(remaining injury free & performance)



# How is psychological readiness to return to sport developed?

(Forsdyke et al., 2016; Meierbachtol et al., 2018; Podlog et al., 2015; Webster et al., 2018)

Trust in sports medicine team

Quality of social support

Feeling wanted

Expectation management

Subjective symptoms and function

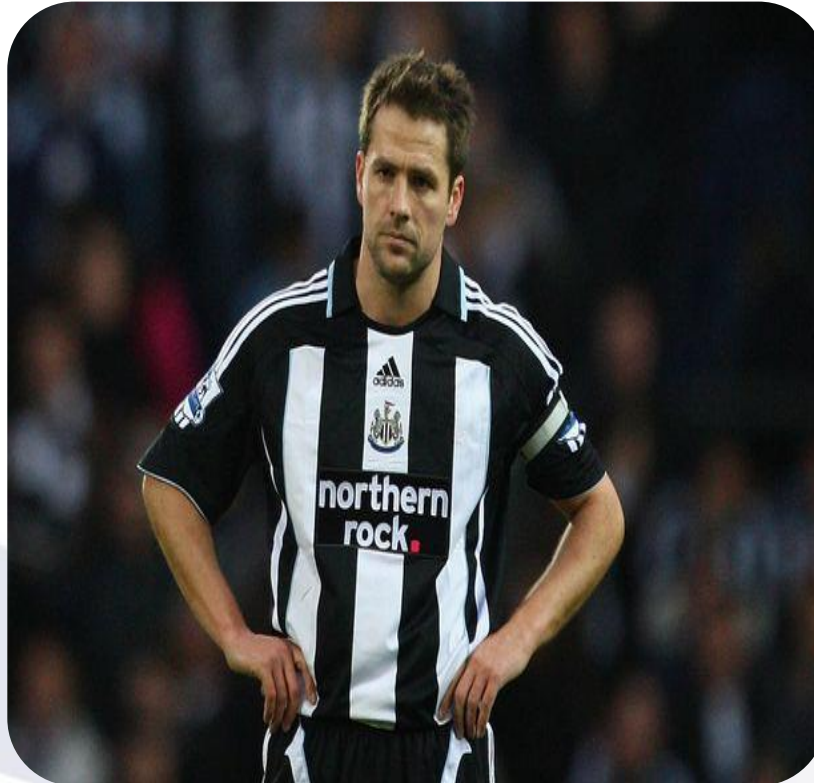
Achieving goals and specific criterion



# What happens if an athlete is not psychologically ready to return to sport?

Increased risk of re-injury  
(McPherson et al., 2019)

Less likely to return to their pre-injury sport  
(Ardern et al., 2014)



Less likely to return to pre-injury sport performance  
(Kitaguchi et al., 2019)

Reduced functional task performance  
(Zarzycki et al., 2019)

# How can I monitor & evaluate psychological readiness to return to sport?

**ACL-RSI** (Webster et al., 2008)

**ACL-RSI (SF)** (Webster et al., 2018)

**SIRSI** (Geromotta et al., 2018)

**I-PRRS scale** (Glazer, 2009)

**Psychological  
readiness**

**TSK** (Miller, Kori & Todd, 1991)

**RIAI** (Walker, Thatcher & Lavallee, 2010)

**Anxiety/ fear/  
kinesiophobia**



## Psychological readiness to return to sport: three key elements to help the practitioner decide whether the athlete is REALLY ready?

Dale Forsdyke,<sup>1</sup> Adam Gledhill,<sup>2</sup> Clare Ardern<sup>3,4,5</sup>

Box 2 Examples of tools (questionnaires and inventories) that may be used by practitioners to monitor psychological readiness to RTS (formatted versions of the tools are available as on-line resources)

► Re-injury Anxiety Inventory (RIAI):  
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1466852X09000006>

**Characteristics of an athlete who is psychologically ready to RTS are multifaceted and include, among others: realistic expectations, high levels of self-efficacy and low levels of anxiety (in context of performance and re-injury)**

**#1 Use tools to monitor injured athletes**

**#2 Use your working knowledge of the athlete**

**#3 The need for athlete-centred & interdisciplinary shared decision-making**

# A return to sport 'quadrant of doom'

Physical readiness to return to sport



Psychological readiness to return to sport

# **So in summary.....**

- **Currently, data suggests that returning athletes to back to sport after an injury in an optimal way is challenging**
- **Ideally, athletes should only return to sport when they are physically and psychologically ready to do so**
- **Psychological readiness to return to sport appears important and therefore should form part of the return to sport decision making process.**

# Key further readings and resources

- Ardern, C.L., Glasgow, P., Schneiders, A., et al. (2016). Consensus statement on return to sport from the First World Congress in Sports Physical Therapy, Bern. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50, 853-864.
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- Forsdyke, D., Smith, A., Jones, M., & Gledhill, A. (2016). Psychosocial factors associated with outcomes of sports injury rehabilitation in competitive athletes: A mixed studies systematic review. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50, 537-544.
- Webster, K., Nagelli, C.V., Hewett, T.E., & Feller, J. (2018). Factors associated with psychological readiness to return to sport after anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction surgery. *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*, 46, 1545-1550.
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- Zarzycki, R., Failla, M., Capin, J., & Snyder-Mackler, L. (2018). Psychological Readiness to Return to Sport Is Associated With Knee Kinematic Asymmetry During Gait Following ACL Reconstruction. *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*, 27, 1-21, DOI: 10.2519/jospt.2018.8084.



# Any questions?

