

Editorial

Teamwork is Essential to Success: Sports Physical Therapy is No Exception

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We are honored and thrilled to pen this first editorial for the NEW International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy. We wish Dr. Mike Voight, the editorial team and entire staff continued success as this publication moves forward, pressing into the exciting future on the horizon for sports medicine and sports physical therapy.

TEAMWORK IS NOT A PREFERENCE, IT'S A NECESSITY – COACH JOHN WOODEN

There is no cogent argument against the fact that championships at any level are won by a team, not any one individual, regardless of their talent. The three of us have worked together in one form or another for over 40 years now and the only way we have all been as successful as we have is through a combined team approach to the care and rehabilitation of the patients and athletes it has been our distinct privilege to help.

We cannot lay claim to inventing the use of a team concept in sports medicine, that distinction goes to Dr. Frank McCue and Joe Gieck, PT, ATC. They pioneered a team approach as the team physician and head athletic trainer at the University of Virginia. In addition, Dr Jack Hughston and George McCluskey, PT were creating their own team concept to sports medicine at the Hughston Clinic in Columbus, Ga. Dr. Andrews learned the benefits of this coordinated approach to patient care from these individuals and started his own team at the Hughston Clinic in Columbus, Georgia with TAB Blackburn, MEd, PT, ATC. Building his team again with Dr. Kevin Wilk in Birmingham, Alabama - a team that has worked side by side for nearly 30 years. Since we have leveraged teamwork in every association we have found ourselves in over the years. Bob Mangine, Med, PT, ATC, who cultivated a team approach relationship with Dr. Frank Noyes in Cincinnati, Ohio, chaired the first Sports Physical Therapy Team Concept Meeting in 1979 in Houston, Texas. This conference brings orthopaedic surgeons and physical therapists together to share and exchange ideas and knowledge.

There are numerous excellent Physician/Physical Therapy teams that practice this approach: Thomas Byrd, MD and Mike Voight, DPT, SCS, ATC in Nashville, Tn. Walt Lowe,

MD and Russ Paine, PT in Houston, Tx, Steve Nicholas, MD and Tim Tyler, PT, ATC in New York and many more excellent clinicians that are part of a team approach to sports medicine.

Why does a team concept approach in Sports Physical Therapy work so well? It mirrors the process used by any successful sports organization dedicated to winning championships - the creation of a coordinated effort that puts the right players in place, provides them with the necessary resources, creates an outstanding game plan, and is guided by astute coaching. As Bill Bethel said, "A successful team is a group of many hands and one mind." One common goal - that is what we strive for - providing the best care possible to every athlete we treat.

We arrive at this goal together through coordinated communication that is bidirectional, open and timely. The physician shares the details of their examination, physical findings and thought process for treatment, surgical details including pictures, video and necessary information that informs and shapes the rehabilitation process. The physician and therapist learn from one another, developing a common understanding of patient management, treatment approach and a language of effective dialog. This culminates in an interactive relationship of mutual respect that bridges all professional boundaries.

The team approach to sports medicine is often the evening phone call from the surgeon explaining the patient's surgery and the unique injuries of the patient that you will be seeing in physical therapy the next day. It is the conversation a Physician and Physical Therapist has exchanging thoughts on the pathology and treatment ideas. It is the physical therapist who contacts the sports medicine physician to provide an update, progress summary, discuss a setback, or provide return to play testing results and opinions regarding the readiness of the athlete to resume play. It is assessing patients together in the clinic or sports medicine facility.

IT IS ALL THIS AND SO MUCH MORE!

The result of this level of teamwork and shared relationship is better patient care. The patient benefits from everyone in the process being on the same page, coordinating care, effectively communicating, timely addressing any issues - the creation of a unified plan that has the athletes best interests at heart and places them in the best possible position

to return to sport as quickly and safely as possible. This association has professional benefits as well, producing highly skilled clinicians who share their learned knowledge openly with others.

The team approach for the three of us has been a memorable and rewarding journey. It has included thousands of patients, countless post-operative recheck visits, viewing many surgeries, developing a plethora of rehabilitation protocols and programs, participation in teaching conferences all over the world and speaking together on numerous occasions. None of this, regardless of the talent each of us possesses individually, would have been possible without adopting a team approach to our patient care and athlete management. This team concept approach has worked successfully for us. We encourage every clinician to collaborate with an orthopaedist creating their own distinct team dedicated to the successful management of patients in an atmosphere of cooperative professionalism - In this environment, we are sure you will find a rewarding professional career and lasting memories from a lifetime dedicated to taking great care of every athlete you treat.

Team Concept care makes each day rewarding, enlightening, and exciting and provides a framework of anticipation for the possibilities you will discover the next day.

We hope you experience the same rewarding professional dynamic that we have found in the Team Concept Approach to Sports Medicine.

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