



“Together We Build” Penn Orthopaedics and the Philadelphia 76ers

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Together We Build! As the season began this year against the Miami Heat on October 30th, 2013, every attendee at the opening night game was given a t-shirt with this inscription on the front: “Together We Build.” The evening ended with a tremendous first win over the NBA Champions, and the season was underway. As I reflect on that night, I realize that five years ago, the same process began at Penn Orthopaedics

when Dr. L. Scott Levin joined the Penn family as Professor and Chairman. He, too, challenged us to build together, and the program has flourished with him at the helm. This similarity between the two programs has not escaped me as we near the season’s completion.

It has been a wonderful time at Penn Orthopaedics, as we have become the Official Medical Providers of the Philadelphia 76ers. Serving as the Head Team Physician has allowed me to put together a fantastic medical team utilizing the tremendous assets of our department and Penn Medicine. It is truly a multidisciplinary medical care team. Dr. Rahul Kapur, who works at the Penn Sports Medicine Center and in the Department of Family Medicine, has served as my Chief Medical Physician, overseeing all things non-orthopaedic with conditions ranging from cardiac clearances to migraines to bizarre dermatologic conditions. In addition, Rahul and I are present for almost all home games and typically spend up to five hours at the arena each game day with evaluations pre and post-game. The other Penn Sports Medicine faculty, including Drs. James Carey, John Kelly, and Miltiadis Zgonis, has also been an integral part of our team, providing clearances, evaluations, and game coverage during any absences. Dr. Zgonis has also been intimately involved with the medical care of the Delaware 87ers, the Sixers’ Developmental League franchise. Penn Ophthalmology, under the direction of Dr. Paul Tapino, is also present at all of our home games, providing urgent care for any eye emergencies. Many other Penn Orthopaedic faculty members have also been involved with providing expertise care, ranging from a complex ankle evaluation to Dr. Levin’s surgical care of Brandon Davies’s hand.

While Penn Orthopaedics has tremendous talent, we couldn’t care for a team like the Philadelphia 76ers without all of Penn Medicine. The talent and resources that make Penn Medicine one of the premier medical institutions in the country have allowed us to provide impeccable and

timely care. In caring for the team, every player requires comprehensive medical screening prior to putting on the Sixers uniform. This battery of medical evaluations even includes stress echocardiography on every athlete. MRI evaluations are also frequently done during clearances, and Penn Cardiology and the Department of Radiology have been nothing short of phenomenal in our comprehensive care! During the season, injuries have occurred and, most of the time, need to be evaluated quickly and thoroughly to provide the athlete and team with accurate diagnosis and treatment plans. Travel requirements for the players are more extensive than the rest of professional sports and only add complexities to their medical care.

One of the programs the Sixers have in place is “Heroes Among Us,” in which a special group is honored by the team at each home game. This award for our program would go to the Penn Facilitated Services, who provide the coordination of care between all of the departments. They have been spectacular in allowing us to provide seamless care across Penn Medicine. In caring for the Philadelphia 76ers, many departments have been involved, and it has truly been a multidisciplinary approach to medical care. It definitely has been an extremely busy year, probably the busiest of my career. This would never have been possible without support, and personally I have been blessed to have a wife and nurse practitioner as wonderful as Bobbiann.

It has been also been extremely rewarding to work with an organization as professional as the Philadelphia 76ers. The training staff, led by Head Athletic Trainer Kevin Johnson, who is one of the most experienced trainers in the league, is impressive in its expertise, care, organization, and focus on the health of the athlete. Working with this training staff and a front office who always cares for the health and well-being of their athletes has been a wonderful experience. Sam Hinkie, the President and General Manager of the Philadelphia 76ers, is very similar to Dr. Levin, as they are both extremely bright, focused, organized, and caring. These attributes, present throughout the Sixers organization and Penn Orthopaedics, have made it a fantastic experience with “Together We Build” with the Sixers and for the past five years with Dr. Levin at Penn.

