



Sports Medicine Division Update

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Sports Medicine Faculty



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The Sports Medicine Division at Penn Orthopaedics has continued to grow and expand over the past year. While the Division has continued to excel in their pursuit of clinical care, education and research, the year has been a banner year of relationships and contributions. While the Division of Sports Medicine has traditionally provided medical coverage for Penn Athletics, the University of the Sciences, and many local high schools, the Philadelphia Flyers and the Philadelphia Eagles have reached out to Penn Orthopaedics and the Division of Sports Medicine to provide care for their athletes.

Penn Medicine and Comcast Spectacor, the Philadelphia-based professional sports and live entertainment company, announced a major partnership making Penn Medicine the official health system for the Philadelphia Flyers and Wells Fargo Center. Penn Medicine will also become the team's official medical services provider, including on-ice, orthopaedic, and general practice, as well as the preferred provider for Comcast Spectacor front office employees.

A team of Penn Medicine physicians, led by Gary Dorshimer, MD, section chief of General Internal Medicine at Pennsylvania Hospital, and Brian Sennett, MD, chief of Sports Medicine and vice chair of Orthopaedic Surgery, will be at the ready to care for the Flyers players on the ice at each home game. Dorshimer has been a long-time team physician for the Flyers and will remain a medical provider, while the orthopaedic care of the team will now be led by Sennett. Although Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine care are at the forefront for the new partnership, the team will also have access to many more Penn Medicine providers in areas such as cancer and cardiology.

At the heart of the partnership will be a comprehensive community program that will have a lasting impact on Philadelphians. Among the highlights of the community program will be annual events promoting both partners' dedication to cancer research and treatment, as well as cardiovascular health. In addition, Penn Medicine will become the presenting partner of the Gritty 5K, the highly-popular event launched in 2019 that benefits Flyers Charities. Furthermore, the partnership will include PSAs featuring Flyers players and a social media series highlighting the importance of healthy lifestyles, physical fitness, and proper eating habits.

In addition to the partnership with the Philadelphia Flyers, the Philadelphia Eagles reached out and selected Dr. Arsh Dhanota to be both the Head Team Physician and Chief Medical Officer of the Philadelphia Eagles in 2019. He was initially signed to a 3-year agreement which has already been extended to a 5-year commitment. He has been the guiding medical force behind the Philadelphia Eagles. In his first year at the helm, he significantly decreased soft tissue injuries and improved the team's ranking in the category of "games missed due to injuries". He has done a stellar job in his first year not only in decreasing injuries but in transforming the medical care provided.

While the fight against COVID 19 has taken center stage this year, you would not traditionally expect the Division of Sports Medicine to have much of an impact as almost all organized sports have come to a crashing halt. However, several faculty members have had significant impact in Penn's fight against COVID -19. Dr. Kris Fayock served as a Deputy Director of Triage Medicine at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center during the crisis. He has worked tirelessly during this period of time and is a faculty member that we are very proud of due to his tremendous medical knowledge and organizational prowess. In the area of philanthropy, the division played crucial roles in assisting with the donations made by local teams, owners, and players. Dr. Arsh Dhanota played a pivotal role in providing guidance to Mr. Jeffrey Lurie, the principal owner of the Philadelphia Eagles, in understanding the Penn difference and secured 1 million dollars of funding from Mr. Lurie to establish the COVID-19 Immunology Defense Fund for Penn. He continues to work with Mr. Lurie to secure additional funding through relationships with donors looking to contribute to the fight against COVID-19. Dr. Brian Sennett played an equally pivotal role in providing guidance to Joel Embiid, the All-star basketball player of the Philadelphia 76ers, in making a significant contribution to set up a program of antibody testing for COVID-19 in front-line health care workers. This effort was quickly joined by two of the owners of the Philadelphia 76ers, Mr. Joshua Harris and Mr. David Blitzer. Joel and the two owners generously donated 1.3 million dollars to provide support to the front line workers.

Combining all of these efforts, 2.3 million dollars was donated to fight COVID 19. This was a tremendous contribution from members of the Eagles and the 76ers.

While the new professional team affiliations have dominated the news around the division, the cornerstone of cartilage restoration has continued to be one of the primary focuses with respect to all three areas of clinical care, research, and education. Dr. James Carey, Director of the Penn Cartilage Center currently serves as the lead Principal Investigator and Chairperson of the Clinical Steering Committee for the MACI Pediatric Study – PEAK (PEdiatric AUtologous cultured chondrocytes treatment of cartilage defects in the Knee).

In addition, Dr. Carey, Dr. Mauck, Penn Sports Medicine, and the Penn Cartilage Center hosted the International Cartilage Repair Society (ICRS) Traveling Fellows and their godfather Dr. Tom Minas in late September 2019. In the area of research, a landmark study entitled “Autologous Chondrocyte Implantation as Treatment for Unsalvageable Osteochondritis

Dissecans: 10- to 25-year Follow-up” has been accepted for publication in the American Journal of Sports Medicine. Dr. Carey traveled to Gothenburg, Sweden twice to work on this project. This study reports the longest follow-up of outcomes following autologous chondrocyte implantation.

Other areas of expansion have continued with the addition of orthopaedic and sports medicine coverage to Drexel University and expansion at Penn Medicine at Radnor. With the new expansion of Penn Medicine at Radnor, the footprint of sports medicine is growing. Dr. John Vasudeven, who along with Alexis Tingan provide coverage of our largest running events, will expand clinical and educational experiences for patients at the new Radnor facility.

It has been a busy year in the Division of Sports Medicine and we are looking forward to getting back on the ice, fields, and courts. No matter what comes our way, we are ready to be teammates for Penn Medicine and all athletic individuals across the Tri-State region.

