On the Forefront of Sports Medicine

Lacrosse Legend Gets Back to the Game After Expert Care

THE FIELD OF SPORTS MEDICINE

has been growing exponentially since the 1970s, when Americans began to turn to exercise. MedStar Orthopaedic Institute, which includes the first hospital-based program on the East Coast at MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, was, and continues to be on the forefront of this trend.

“"Our treatment of athletes has set us apart since 1978, when our sports medicine program was first established,” says James Dreese, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon who is fellowship-trained in sports medicine.

“What makes us different is our level of experience in treating athletes and our dedication to understanding all aspects of sports injuries, even the most complex,” notes Dr. Dreese, who is board certified in both orthopaedic surgery and orthopaedic sports medicine.

In fact, more than 40 sports organizations, including the Baltimore Ravens, Baltimore Orioles, and US Lacrosse, as well as the majority of collegiate, high school, and recreational teams in the region, have specialists from MedStar Sports Medicine on their official medical teams.

Dr. Dreese is one of them, serving as team physician for the Baltimore Ravens, and head team orthopaedist for Loyola University. Among those benefiting from his expertise in recent years is Jen Adams, head coach for Loyola’s women’s lacrosse program since 2008 and one of the most highly regarded female lacrosse players of all time.

A native of Brighton, South Australia, Adams has been playing lacrosse since she was a child. Eventually, she began playing for the Australian National Team, first at the junior level and then at the senior level. Recruited by the University of Maryland in 1998, she put together what many call the greatest collegiate women’s lacrosse career in the sport’s history and was the first recipient of the prestigious Tewaaraton Trophy in 2001.

Even with her move to the states, she continued to represent the Australian National Team, including captaining them to victory against the United States in the gold medal game of the 2005 World Cup, which was played in Annapolis. “It was a landmark moment,” Adams says.

It was while training for the World Cup in 2013 that she tore her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) at the age of 33. “I was doing a shooting drill that I’ve done thousands of times. I pivoted and went down. Right away I knew it was serious,” she says.

An MRI confirmed an ACL tear, which was repaired at a hospital near the team’s training facility. But she continued to have pain and swelling in her knee. Over the course of the next year, Adams saw several different doctors and had another surgery with no further improvement.

Adams had gotten to know Dr. Dreese as a result of his work with Loyola’s athletes, including several members of her lacrosse squad. “I suspected she was suffering from a lingering meniscus injury,” he says. “Another MRI revealed a possible lateral meniscal root injury, which is common with an ACL tear. The meniscus, a piece of cartilage that cushions and stabilizes the joint, protects the bones from wear and tear. When the meniscus root is torn from the tibia, the meniscus is no longer adequately attached, and its function is lost.”

In 2014, Dr. Dreese performed surgery and found that her meniscus root was detached from the tibia. After successful repair and recovery, Adams is now back to her old self, leading her team to one successful season after another. “I am very fortunate to have been cared for by Dr. Dreese,” says Adams. “He is very committed to what he does.”

Dr. Dreese’s clinical interests are in the conservative and surgical management of shoulder, hamstring, and elbow injuries in addition to knees. He has extensive experience in the treatment of all types of meniscus tears, ACL knee injuries, complex ligamentous knee injuries, and kneecap instability, and focuses on non-joint replacement solutions for knee and shoulder injuries.

He also serves as research director for the Orthopaedic Sports Medicine fellowship and is actively involved in ongoing clinical and biomechanical research.

For more information or to make an appointment with a sports medicine specialist at MedStar Orthopaedic Institute, visit MedStarOrtho.org or call 877-34-ORTHO (877-346-7846).