

# **Sports injuries on the rise: Local orthopedic surgeon offers tips to prevent sports injuries**

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MARYVILLE, IL – The dorm rooms are filling back up and university campuses are buzzing with students. It's time, once again, to pack the bleacher seats and cheer on our favorite college sports team. The student athletes have been training hard. Despite taped ankles and wrapped wrists, this is the moment they've been waiting for—to compete at the college level; likely with hopes of one day playing professionally.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association and the National Athletic Trainers' Association estimate that there are nearly 12,500 college athlete injuries per year, with concussions and ACL injuries ranking among the top-reported injuries. However, two local doctors are working towards injury prevention among college athletes.

Dr. Brett Grebing and Dr. Paulo Bicalho, both board-certified orthopedic surgeons, have seen their share of sports-related injuries. They specialize in adolescent and adult sports injuries, as well as general orthopedic surgery, at The Center for Advanced Orthopedics, which serves the greater St. Louis area.

“Adolescents are still growing, making them vulnerable to specific injuries,” stated Grebing. “Their muscles and tendons may become tighter due to the growing bones they are attached to.”

Sports injuries have been steadily on the rise. Some of the most common injuries include sprained ankles, bone or growth-plate injuries and overuse or repetitive motion injuries. In fact, overuse injuries comprised almost 30 percent of reported college athlete injuries, according to the Journal of Athletic Training.

Long-term effects of sports injuries are also a concern. A 2014 study performed by Indiana University, which interviewed former Division I athletes between 40 to 65 years old compared to non-athletes in the same age range, found that 67 percent of the former athletes had endured a major injury during their collegiate athletic career. Also, 40 percent of the former athletes received an osteoarthritis diagnosis versus the non-athletes at 24 percent.

Grebing and Bicalho recommend the following for sports injury prevention:

- Do not play through the pain. Doing so can result in extended healing time and/or worsen an injury to the point of temporary or permanent exclusion from the sport.
- Wear appropriate attire and safety gear.
- Warm up and stretch before all practices and games. Do several cool-down exercises after.
- Always follow the sport's safety rules.
- Participate in various sports, as opposed to specializing in just one, to avoid overuse injuries.

If injury does occur, it is best to seek medical attention as soon as possible.

“Warm up, cool down, and adherence to proper technique are important to preventing injury,” stated Bicalho.

Foregoing treatment can lead to permanent damage and alter a young athlete's athletic career. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

## **About Center for Advanced Orthopedics**

**The Center for Advanced Orthopedics is a multi-specialty practice that offers a highly qualified team of fellowship-trained, board-certified orthopedic surgeons. Their specialties include sports medicine, foot and ankle surgery, hip, knee and shoulder reconstruction, joint replacement and minimally invasive surgery. They serve the greater St. Louis area with locations in Maryville, Staunton and Highland, Illinois. For more information, please visit <http://c4ao.com/>.**