



THE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION

ISPA NEWSWIRE

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Special Announcements

New Internal CEU Program

ISPA launches three CEU courses! Obtaining CEU's is now easier and more affordable than ever.

Fall Membership Drive

ISPA will be launching a fall membership drive shortly. Stay tuned for special referral incentives.

ISPA/NP2 Publishing

Remember, we are still actively seeking submissions for publishing. Click the following link for submission guidelines: [Submission Guidelines](#)

Video Blogging

ISPA is now video blogging! Click the following link to check out our video blog: [Video Blog](#)

Coming Back When is an athlete fully recovered when injured?

By Robert Andrews

The most upsetting and traumatic thing that can happen to an athlete is to suffer a serious sports related injury. The injury sends a shock wave through the athlete that impacts not only the athlete, but the athlete's family, friends, teammates, coaches, and trainers.

The World of the Athlete

Being an athlete helps build self confidence and self esteem. Athletes learn how to compete, how to be coached and mentored, how to be part of a team, how to be a part of something bigger than themselves. Involvement in sports helps create social networks and support systems. Life long friendships are built on the field or court, in the gym or pool.

The farther the athlete goes in their sport the greater these rewards. Beyond the social, physical, and personal gains of high school are college scholarships, lucrative professional contracts and endorsements that all continue to enhance the athlete's sense of self.

Each athlete has an identity centered on their sport. They are ball players, gymnast, swimmers, and lacrosse players. They wear their cap, leotard, or letter jacket with pride.

Crashing to a Halt

Now imagine what it must be like for an athlete to be on top of their game in one moment, and in the next lay motionless on the field or court with a broken bone, a torn ACL, a concussion.

The loneliest place in the world for an athlete is on the sidelines. Watching your teammates or competitors do what you should be doing is traumatic, and the worse the injury, the more traumatic the impact on the athlete.

Current Treatment

Sports injuries are painful. The pain from tearing tendons, ligaments, muscles, and broken bones is so intense that the body produces powerful

hormones and chemicals to detach the brain from the intensity of the pain.

For many years sports injuries have been treated on a physical level by the trainer, the orthopedic surgeon, the rehabilitation specialist, and others. Their skill, and advances in technology have created breakthroughs that get athletes back in weeks instead of months.

With these breakthroughs comes an expectation that once an athlete is "100%" they should be ready to go. Playing as well as they did before the injury.

The current definition of 100% recovered only takes into account the physical integrity of the injury. It does not examine the mental and emotional impact to the athlete and those around him or her.

If the athlete does not come back quickly they are often labeled weak or a "head case". The next athlete is moved into their spot and life goes on. This is painful and traumatic to the injured athlete.

Athlete's Stories

In my work with injured athletes I have listened to their stories of mental and emotional suffering.

I talked with a volleyball player who cried herself to sleep the night before surgery.

I visited with a football player who recalled being at home alone on the couch after surgery to repair a torn ACL. He had family there but he was not at school with his friends and teammates. He felt terribly alone, cut off and isolated from his support system.

I helped a baseball player who suffered a concussion. He was angry and hurt by comments from teammates and coaches. They made fun of him and embarrassed him because he did not come back fast enough.

A New Paradigm

To clear an athlete as "100%" we must treat the mental, emotional, and spiritual issues affecting the athlete, not just the physical aspects of sports related injuries.

Sports injuries are often so traumatic that athletes cannot put words to what they have experienced. The physical pain is unbearable. The losses they suffer are enormous. Confusion about their identity, loss of connection to the sport they love, diminished time with teammates and coaches,

inability to work out and train, and the feeling of being on the outside looking in create a cauldron of emotions and feelings the brain and nervous system can not begin to process and integrate.

My Own Experiences

I suffered a serious knee injury in high school as a sophomore. I was playing varsity and had moved from defensive back to defensive end mid season and loved it. I felt at home as a DE and received affirmation and acknowledgment from the upper classmen and the coaches. In the tenth game of an undefeated season I was hit covering the opening kickoff. I tore three of the four knee ligaments and tore a cartilage.

The shock was life changing. I was crushed.

I watched our team go all the way to the state semi-finals. It was unbearable to stand on the sidelines with crutches. There were plays I knew I could have made.

I came back the next year 100% physically. We won the Texas state championship and went undefeated. But I was not the same.

It was not until I began to learn techniques to help people through stress and trauma that I considered the impact my injury still had in my life all those years later.

I applied the techniques I use to treat my own injuries and was astounded at the amount of fear and confusion I still carried twenty five years later.

What's next?

The technology is here. It is time to shift the paradigm. We can help athletes leave behind the grief, anxiety, and fear of re-injury that plague the injured athlete. It is time to create a new definition of "100%". By working through the injury on all levels, mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical we can help athletes return to their sport confident, mentally strong, and ready. More importantly they can become wiser and stronger as a result of their injury. This can be carried into all areas of their life making them better young men and women. Something we need more of.

ISPA member Robert Andrews wrote the exceptional article above.

Robert B. Andrews is a licensed therapist and certified sports counselor in Houston, Texas. His primary area of focus is working with the injured athlete to help them work through the mental, emotional, and spiritual issues surrounding their sports related injury. Robert has created a unique practice that weaves together his love of sports, his passion for working with athletes, and his professional experience as an expert in personal empowerment.

Robert is available for consultation and can be reached via email at robertandrews@tinssp.com or by phone at 713-522-2200. You can also visit his website at www.tinssp.com

Online CEU Program

**Online CEU Courses Are Here!
ISPA launches new internal CEU program.**

In order to reduce the cost of obtaining CEU's ISPA is now providing it's CEU courses internally. Check out the links below for the brand new ISPA online CEU courses. Each course is filled with practical content for helping you improve your professional standing. The online program is being launched with three courses. These are:

Establishing and Maintaining a Sports Based Practice- A 3 Course Sequence

The Identity of a Sports Professional (Are you 'right' for this field-applies across fields)
Setting up your Practice (Very comprehensive)
Building Your Career (Proven techniques for Success)

Although these courses are themed for the sports professional, individuals across many professions will find their content valuable. These courses are great supplements to graduate school curriculum as they discuss practical issues that many graduate programs simply don't have the time to teach. Now you can obtain your CEU credits without attending costly seminars and without travel and attendance fees. Online courses save you time and money.

Visit our website ISPA Education