

Weil makes the jump to cyberspace

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By DR. ROBERT WEIL Guest Columnist

This month marks the second anniversary of The Sports Doctor columns in The Naperville Sun and almost a year in Aurora's The Beacon News.

With the launch last week of Sportsdoctorradio.com, it will be possible to call up any of the past columns. So check it out!

The Web site will also have available "The Sports Doctor" radio shows from this year and as always, your questions and comments are welcome.

Special categories on the site will include info on orthotics, the role of the foot in sports, training and conditioning, common injuries and treatments and foot screening locations. This is really exciting and I'm really looking for some great local input.

Congratulations to Naperville's Evan Lysacek -- world champion figure skater -- wow! After missing the national championship three-peat in January, with the 2010 Winter Olympics here before you know it, the pressure was enormous.

In his adopted hometown of L.A., Evan went out and won the gold medal. I've watched him since he was 11 years old and we first put orthotics in his skates -- 13 years later, a world champ. Check out my Web site and see his picture.

So often on the radio, we talk about the young star athletes in all sports and what it takes physically and mentally. The support of their families is always crucial. Evan's has been great!

I always told Tanya and Don (Evan's mom and dad) that I thought Evan could be "the best in the world." Here he is!

Finally, the nice weather is here and we're all looking forward to being outdoors and active. That's great. But remember to take it easy, especially if you've been inactive all winter.

Emergency room doctors always note a spike in visits and injuries over Memorial Day weekend. I call it the Memorial Day syndrome. Often the weather is nice, good times are here and the temptation to get out and play hard is there. Running the bases, throwing the ball, aggressive tennis or volleyball - we've all been there.

Try not to compete too hard too soon or keep up with the kids. Let's not run long distances if our body is not ready, overuse injuries can be waiting for you. The start of spring and summer is a great time to initiate a good walking or running program.

If you're just starting, I recommend walking for the first month or so, 15 or 20 minutes at a comfortable pace three or four days a week.

Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes and very importantly, get yourself a good pair of walking or running shoes. It is still very common to see people with the wrong shoes, for their foot type, or just using shoes that are worn out.

If your shoes are pushing a year old, treat yourself to new ones and make sure you are fit properly. The Naperville Running Co. and Dick Pond Athletics are places that you can count on to help you get the proper shoe for your foot type with the right fit. Whether you're a newcomer or champion, you can be sure that they can help you!

If after a month or so of successful problem-free walking, you want to start running, great. Learning some proper warm-up exercises as well as cool down, is important.

Also try to continue to walk the first five and last five minutes no matter how far you run.

Both Ponds and the Running Co. have people with great expertise for walkers and runners of all types and ages.

If there is a history of foot or lower extremity problems or past running-related injuries then getting a foot mechanics evaluation or screening is important.

Last month's *The Sports Doctor* article on acute and chronic injuries talks about many common foot-related problems.

Other past articles talk about shin splints, runner's knee, arch and heel problems and orthotics. Just go to Sportsdoctorradio.com and click on to the newspaper articles.

Click on to foot screenings and you'll see where and when the screenings are available. Enjoy the season, see you next month.

Dr. Robert Weil is a sports podiatrist from Naperville with an office in Aurora. You can hear him on his weekly radio show at 6:30 p.m. Thursdays on 90.9-FM. Contact him at drrweilsportsdoctor@yahoo.com and visit his Web site at Sportsdoctorradio.com.