

THE SPORTS DOCTOR - Bigger, Faster, Stronger-Be a Better Athlete!

My most recent "The Sports Doctor" radio show featured the three key players at Acceleration Naperville, a facility dedicated to training young athletes in all sports to do and be better prepared to prevent injuries and enhance performance. General Manager and kinesiologist, exercise physiologist, Chris Minor joined brothers J.R Niklos, 6-year NFL veteran, head of sports performance, and Mike Niklos, head strength and performance coach and former Chicago Rush cornerback for a great overview of what "Acceleration brings to the table".

Dealing with youngsters as young as 7, all the way to high school, college and professional athletes in all sports is no easy task--the show emphasized the importance of FUN for the kids mixed with all the serious aspects of sports training both physical as well as mental. Speed and quickness training was discussed. JR talked about the inclusion of "visualization-mental rehearsal " training. All of us touched on the importance of nutrition, rest (remember "intelligent rest"?), and recovery. Check these guys out at www.acceleration.com, 630-355-6600. Hear the complete radio show at www.sportsdoctorradio.com/radio_shows/

It's been awhile since we've answered e-mails so let's do it.....

Q: Ann from Naperville: My 11-year old daughter plays club soccer 3-4 days/week and is complaining about heel pain. Our doctor said rest and heel pads and cups--didn't help much--she has flat feet like her dad.

A: Dr. Weil: Most persistent heel pain at that age is caused by inflammation of the growth center at the back and bottom of the heel (this growth area will "solidify" by about 14 years old). Switch away from cleats which aggravate this area to multiple-nub shoes, and be aware that the flat pronated foot is more likely to be "perpetuating" this problem. Orthotics are very helpful in stopping and preventing this problem especially if it has been persistent.

Q: Gerry, Glen Ellyn: I've followed with interest your history with Olympic Gold Medalist figure skater, Evan Lysacek of Naperville. I've seen that he's had orthotics in his skates since he was 10 years old. My son skates every day and is very talented. He's also 10--he's not complaining of problems. My question is do orthotics help skating performance?

A: Dr. Weil: YES THEY DO! In my 35 years (gosh is it that long?) of putting orthotics in skates, be it figure skates, hockey, or speed skates, that's been my and most coaches experience. Even though most of the time it's because there's a problem (foot, ankle, knee, back), that initiates orthotics use, the exciting ADDED BENEFIT is better balance, edging, speed, jumping, and quickness. Definitely something to look into--just make sure that the doctor has experience with skaters--it's an art.

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 website at sportsdoctorradio.com.