

# The Sports Doctor: Five years writing this column

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Believe it or not, it's five years this May that I've done the monthly Sports Doctor articles. A good time had by all! Today I'm listing some of the headlines from past articles with some current thoughts.

May '07 — The Sports doctor is in The Sun. I'm still here and my office's free foot screenings continue. If you've got a question or problem, let's hear from you.

July '07 — Playing with pain hurts in the long run. This still is a problem, whether you're a recreational athlete or a serious pro. It continues to filter down to our youngsters, and that's of real concern. Pay attention to "intelligent rest" and even more attention with persistent and ongoing overuse injuries.

Feb. '08 — Build support around high-performance youngsters. These elite young athletes are really something special. I tell parents all the time: "All that changes is the uniform." Whether they're figure skaters (Hey, Evan!); volleyball, football, basketball, baseball or tennis players; gymnasts; dancers; or runners, being an everyday athlete is tough. Physical and mental demands are high. Making decisions about specializing or multiple sports can be argued both ways. Pay attention to ongoing lower extremity problems — they're often foot-related.

June '07 — Orthotics could be the right fit for you. The importance of foot type, mostly inherited, cannot be overemphasized. Flat type, pronated feet are often the cause of aggravated foot, shin, knee and back problems. Prescription orthotics are used to redistribute weight, control abnormal motion, and properly align the lower extremities. A common misconception is that orthotics are arch supports, They do much more than that. Pay attention when your young athletes or you have ongoing foot or leg problems. Orthotics can improve speed, balance and stability.

Nov. '08 — Master your balance to become a much more complete athlete. Can you think of a sport that doesn't require balance and stability? Neither can I. Working balance, called proprioception, which uses unstable surfaces, is great training. Using mini-trampolines, wobble boards or bosu balls are some of the ways to do this. I call it "instability training." What's great about this is that almost all ages at all levels, can benefit from balance work, from Olympian (Hey Evan!) to grandmothers. A good trainer or therapist can show you how.

Jan. '09 — In sports, it all starts with the feet. Our feet are mechanical marvels. Foot mechanics involve our feet acting as shock absorbers and ground shape positioners called pronation to rigid level propulsive positions called supination. If the foot is in the wrong position at the wrong time, muscles and tendons and joints can be abused, stability and balance can be compromised, and speed and quickness are affected. Orthotics can really help to properly position the feet and control abnormal motion-causing problems. Having the right shoe for your foot type is important, especially if you are a runner. Make sure you're fit properly.

Jan. '10 — Girls knee problems often foot-related. Besides acute traumatic knee injuries, persistent discomfort, tendonitis, soreness often are foot-mechanics related. Girls, women have more flexibility and wider hips. Pronated feet increase twist and torque forces to the knees. Serious ACL knee traumatic injuries continue to be five times more common in females.

March '10 — Celebrating Evan's golden moment. Wow, what a few months it's been since Evan Lysacek won the Olympic gold! We're all still cheering and voting for Evan with "Dancing with the Stars." You're watching one of the great physical challenges — the combination of skating on tour across the country with dancing at this level is the highest level of sports performance. This Naperville hometown kid is something!

Dec. '10 — Tips for bringing up kids in a sports culture. A must-read for all parents and coaches. Family psychologist Dr. Marty Kraus of Naperville discusses important points for all aspects of the young athlete.

Sept. '11 — The Sports Doctor: Podcast highlights “Kids Beating Obesity” WDCB’s on-demand program with Dr. Weil and Rick Osbourne, creator of Operation Pull Your Own Weight.

Nov. '11 — Twenty years of The Sports Doctor on the radio.

Feb. '12 — Overuse injuries: all that changes are the uniforms. Challenges and injury similarities of adolescent athletes in various sports.

Looking forward to the next few years!

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