



Lengthening Careers In The NBA ... An Enlightened Perspective

2008 Meeting of the NBAPA

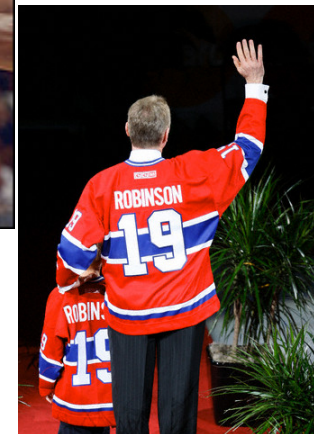




The Observation

“When I First Started Working With Professional Athletes, They Seemed To All Be Injured”

- ✓ What Was Going On That So Many Were Injured In Non-Contact Situations
- ✓ Why Did It Seem The Teams Were Not Providing Definitive Care For These Injuries
- ✓ Where Were The Standard Post-Acute Care Rehab and The Preventative Strengthening Programs





The Hypothesis

“The Career Of An Athlete Playing In The NBA Today Is Shortened As the Result Of A Combination Of Manageable Factors”

- ✓ The Average NBA Player Is Only 26.7 Years Old – Only 7 Are 37 Years Or Older
- ✓ The Average NBA Player Has 4.71 Years Of League Experience - Only 7 Have More Than 13 Years





The Hypothesis

“There Are Several Likely Reasons For These Shortened Careers”

- ✓ Reliance On Genetics & Pre-NBA Skills Experience As A Substitution For Continuous Preparation
- ✓ Inadequate Programs Of Conditioning, Recuperation, And Regeneration
- ✓ Neglect Of Minor Injuries
- ✓ Insufficient & Inappropriate Medical Care





*“In Anything, Failing To
Prepare Is Preparing To Fail.”*

John Wooden

*“The Wizard of Westwood”
UCLA, 1948-1974*





Playing Through The Pain

“Beginning In Middle and High School, Training Habits Are Formed That Contribute To The Shortening Of NBA Player’s Careers”

- ✓ Training Methods Are Used That Increase Risk Of Injury And Do Not Contribute To Improved Performance
- ✓ Ignoring Pain And Playing Through Recurring Injuries Is Expected & Accepted





The Setup

“No One In The Athlete’s Early Development Teaches Or Demonstrates An Appreciation For The Prevention Model Of Health Care”

- ✓ A Preventative Medical Care Model Is Non-Existent, & Therapeutic Treatment Is Both Misunderstood & Undervalued
- ✓ The Concepts Of Age Appropriate Rest & Nutrition Are Not Taught, & Are Generally Neglected





Train For Your Sport



“A Proper Training Model Will Reduce The Risk Of Injury And Enhance Athletic Performance”

- ✓ The Use Of Olympic Weightlifting In College And Professional Sports Is Routine
- ✓ Olympic Lifts Are High Risk, & Often Result In Disabling Low Back, Knee And Shoulder Injuries
- ✓ Making An Argument This Training Improves Performance On The Basketball Court Is Difficult At Best





Don't Ignore The Zingers

“Additionally, Untreated Cumulative Trauma Establishes An Environment For Future Catastrophic Injuries”

- ✓ Small Injuries Accumulate, & The Body Adapts By Creating Pathological Movement Patterns & Functional Asymmetries
- ✓ The Resulting Muscle Imbalances & Improper Loading Often Resulting In Contralateral Injuries





High Schools Understand The Problem



“PubMed, Is A Service Of The National Library Of Medicine & The National Institutes Of Health”

- ✓ A Recent Random Search Relating To Ankle And Knee Injuries & Balance Training Yielded 891 Published Articles
- ✓ High School Athletes Were The Near-Exclusive Focus Of All This Research
- ✓ The Vast Majority Of Injuries Were Determined To Be To The Lower Extremity - Primarily To The Ankle And Knee





The High School Statistics



“The Research Agreed - Balance And Proprioception Training Dramatically Reduces These Injuries, Particularly Reoccurrences”

- ✓ In A Representative Study, Basketball Players With Poor Pre-Season Balance Experienced A 7-Times Greater Incidence Of Ankle Sprains During Games
- ✓ Additionally, The Sprains That Occurred Were More Severe Than Those Experienced By The Group With Good Balance





The NCAA Understands As Well



*Athletic Trainers & The NCAA
Have Collaborated For 25 years
To Create The Largest Ongoing
Collegiate Sports Injury
Database In The World - The
NCAA Injury Surveillance System
(ISS)*





The NCAA Statistics



“In 2007, The NCAA Published A Report In The Journal of Athletic Training”

- ✓ It Is A Compilation Of 16 Years Of The ISS Statistics, Analyzing 15 NCAA Sports, And Is 172 Pages Long
- ✓ The Data In This Report Is Used By The NCAA ... “To Provide A Foundation For Evidence-Based Decision-Making With Regard To Player Health And Safety Issues”
- ✓ In Other Words, To Educate Those Involved In Collegiate Sports To The Changes In Conditioning Necessary To Protect Student Athletes

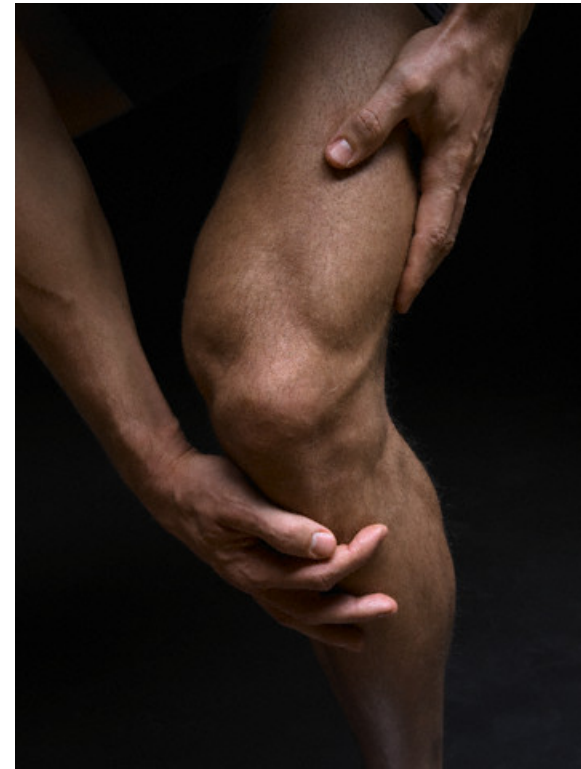




Some Familiar Numbers



- ✓ 60% Of All Injuries In Men's College Basketball Are To The Lower Extremities
- ✓ 26% Of Injuries Are Ankle Ligament Sprains, & 7% Are ACL, MCL, Or PCL
- ✓ 60% Of ACL Injuries Are "Non-Contact"
- ✓ Taping Is Of Questionable Benefit In Preventing Ankle Sprains, Echoing Most Recent Research





And Related Observations



- ✓ Injury Rates Increase By 20% From Division 3 To Division 1 Schools
- ✓ The Likely Reason, An Increasingly Aggressive Style Of Play
- ✓ No Surprise Then That The Rate Of Injuries In The NBA Is Nearly Double That Seen In The NCAA





NCAA Women Have Figured It Out



- ✓ The Same Type & Mix Of Injuries Have Been Recognized Among Female Collegiate Basketball Players
- ✓ Considerable Attention Has Been Paid To The Issue Of Non-Contact ACL Injuries In Female Basketball Players
- ✓ Recent Institution Of Balance & Proprioception Training Has Already Reduced The Injury Rate In NCAA Women's Basketball





The NCAA Conclusions



- ✓ “Injury Prevention Studies of NCAA Men’s Basketball Players Are Clearly Lacking”
- ✓ “Neuromuscular Training Programs Have Been Shown To Effectively Prevent Knee Injuries In Female Athletes”
- ✓ “The Same Interventions May also Be Beneficial In Preventing Serious Knee Injuries In Males”
- ✓ “Men’s Teams Have Been Slower To Implement New Training Modalities”





The Question

“So, Where Is The Same Level Of Concern For Injuries Among Professional Athletes That Obviously Exists At The High School & Collegiate Levels, &...”

Who Is Championing Efforts To Develop A New Model Of Conditioning & Medical Care & Treatment That Supports Careers Free Of Devastating Injuries”





The Possibility



“All This Discussion About Shortened Careers Is Taking Place At Time When The New Research Is Strongly Supporting The Contention That Professional Athletes Should Be Able To Maintain High Levels Of Performance At Increased Ages”





The Possibility

“Of All The Variables Limiting Performance In The Older Athlete, Physiological Changes Aren't Enough By Themselves To Prevent Him From Staying Near The Top Of His Game“

*Wojtek Chodzko-Zajko, PhD
Professor of Kinesiology
University of Illinois*





The Possibility

“ If An Athlete Maintains Consistent High-Level Training And Avails Himself To Advances In Nutrition And Injury Prevention, He Can Remain Productive At The Highest Level.

Vonda Wright, MD

Director

Performance and Research

Initiative for Masters Athletes

University of Pittsburgh





The Possibility

“The Performance Of A Professional Athlete In Their '40's Need Not Diminish More Than 4-6% From Their Career Best”

“I believe that if you maintain your passion and train and eat smart, then you can keep getting better at your game”

*Laird Hamilton, 44
Big Wave Surfer*





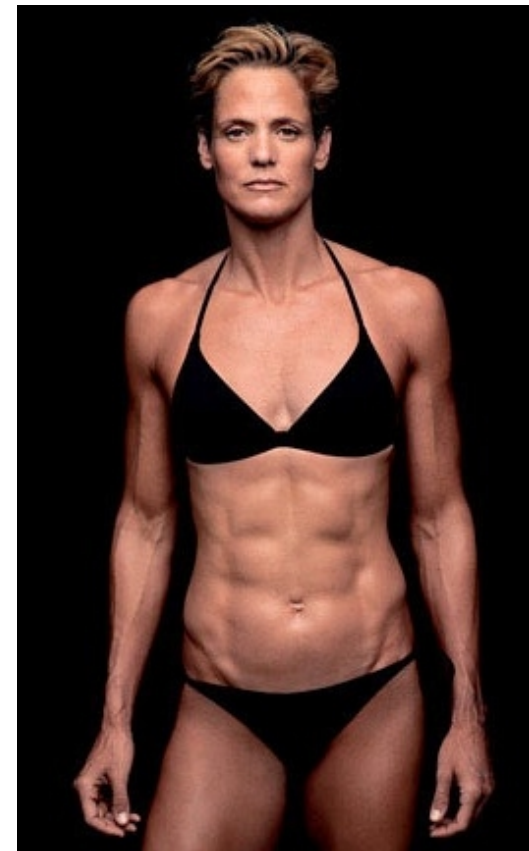
The Possibility

“An Age-Defying Performance Is The Product Of A Strong Belief In Your Own Abilities”



“They may be harder to achieve, but your dreams can't stop because you've hit a certain age or you've had a child”

*Dara Torres, 41
Mother & 5-Time Olympian*





Experience Makes The Difference



“There is a sweet spot for men between the ages of 40 and 45...

If you can keep him healthy and motivated, then the 40-year-old is the most dangerous athlete you’ll ever come across”

Paul Chek, 44

Founder, C. H. E. K. Institute





The Bottom Line



“The will to succeed is important, but what's more important is the will to prepare.”

*Bobby Knight
“The General”
Indiana University,
1971-2000*





Principles For A Career



“It’s Not A Sprint...It’s A Marathon. Long, Successful Careers Are The Result Of A Disciplined Lifestyle Incorporating Many Elements”

- ✓ Year-Round Conditioning Based On Periodic Functional Evaluations
- ✓ Ongoing Preventative Medical Care & Appropriate Treatment Of Injuries
- ✓ Rest Appropriate To Age
- ✓ Proper Nutrition & Smart Supplementation
- ✓ Continual Skill Development





Who Do You Trust



“NBA Teams Understandably Remain True Only To Themselves. They Are A Business, & You Are An Expensive, But Replaceable, Commodity”

- ✓ The Team Training Department Is Generally Undervalued & Understaffed By Management
- ✓ The Education & Capabilities Of Staff Is Limited - Where There Are ATC Practice Acts, They Generally Allow Only Assessment & Referral Of Injuries, Bracing, Heat, Cold, & Stim Treatments
- ✓ Conditioning Is cursory, Utilizing “Old School” Training Models That Have No Value On The Court
- ✓ There Is No Process To Identify & Properly Vet The Capabilities Of Outside Medical Resources





The Unfortunate Result



“The Team Training Model Is Based Upon Treatment Of Injuries, Not Prevention”

- ✓ Players Continually Suffer Preventable, Non-Contact Injuries Resulting From Inappropriate Or Insufficient Conditioning
- ✓ Once Injured, Players Are Rushed Through What Should Be A Staged & Methodical Process Of Recovery
- ✓ They Are Then Encouraged To Return To Full Contact Prematurely, Leading To Cycles Of Recurring & Increasingly Severe Injuries





So, Who Do You Go To



“The Clinical Consulting Model Of Performance Development & Health Maintenance Works”

- ✓ Based On The Structural Relationships Of Your Retained Business Advisors; Agent, Attorney, Investment Banker, PR Firm, Etc.
- ✓ Consists Of A Nurse Case Manager (CM), Physical Therapist, Nutritionist, Sports Psychologist, Trainer, & Skills Coach & Others As Needed
- ✓ The Team Works To A Goal-Driven Plan, Developed To Deliver Outcomes, & Managed By The CM
- ✓ In The Event Of An Injury, Your CM Manages Your Care & Treatment – Not The Team





Conditioning



“Train From The Inside Out And From The Floor Up”

- ✓ Functional Training Is Training For Sport – On Your Feet & Moving
- ✓ Core, Stability, Balance & Flexibility Are Foundational
- ✓ Core Endurance Is King
- ✓ Training With Intensity Prepares You To Compete
- ✓ Neuromuscular Confusion Is Key To Rapid Improvement
- ✓ Build Endurance Without The Pounding





Medical Care & Treatment



“Untreated Micro-Trauma Will Lead To Career Ending Injuries”

- ✓ Weekly Physical Therapy, In And Out Of Season Is Critical Regenerative And Preventative Work
- ✓ Playing Through Injuries Is Not Manly, & Only Invites Catastrophe
- ✓ Major Injuries Require Precision And Patience - Part Of A Staged Process





Rest

“Of All The Elements Necessary To Extend The Careers Of Performance Athletes, Rest Is Most Important”

- ✓ 3-4 Days Of Hard Training Per Week In The Off-Season Is Adequate
- ✓ Diversify Your Interests & Fill Your Spare Time With Active Hobbies That Are Unrelated And Relaxing – Bicycling, Swimming, Hiking, Bowling, etc.
- ✓ Leave The Basketball At The Gym





Proper Nutrition



“Food is Fuel – All Day Long. Just Don’t Make It MacDonalD's ”

- ✓ Six Small, Balanced Meals Per Day - Eat Before And After Workouts & Games
- ✓ Nutrition During A Game Is Necessary – This Is An Endurance Sport, & Hitting The Wall In The 3rd Quarter Is Not Desirable
- ✓ Water Is The Elixir Of The Human Body
- ✓ Proper Supplementation Can Enhance Your Body’s Ability To Sustain Performance At High Levels





Sharpen The Saw



“If The Engram Isn’t Working, Imprint A New One”

- ✓ Excellence Is The Result Of Extraordinary Effort
- ✓ You Never Should Stop Working To Improve What You Do
- ✓ Be Open To Ways To Improve Your Skill Set & Add Tools To The Toolbox
- ✓ Continuous Improvement Should Be The Goal Of Every Athlete





In Conclusion

“If You’re Going To Play, Play To Win – Suffer In Training, Or Bleed In Battle - It’s Your Choice”

- ✓ You Should Continue In Your Career Until It’s Not Fun Or Profitable Any Longer
- ✓ Age Is Not A Barrier To Performance In Professional Athletics
- ✓ Pay The Same Attention To Both Maximizing & Safeguarding Your Career As You Do Your Investment Portfolio
- ✓ Be The Best You Can Be Now, & You’ll Be Glad For It Later





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