



THE Journal

OF THE ARKANSAS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Vol.107 No. 6

NOVEMBER 2010

THE SPORT OF HEALING

Team Physicians Share a Passion for Helping Players

THE Journal

OF THE ARKANSAS MEDICAL SOCIETY

Winner of the ASAE Excellence in Communications Award

Loss Prevention

Case of the Month

By J. KELLEY AVERY, MD

Staff Comments Were the Last Straw

100

CASE STUDY

An Unusual Cause of Upper GI Bleeding: Gastric Antral Vascular Ectasia

By *Khurram Abbass, MD; Salma Akram, MD;
Waheed Gul, MD*

108

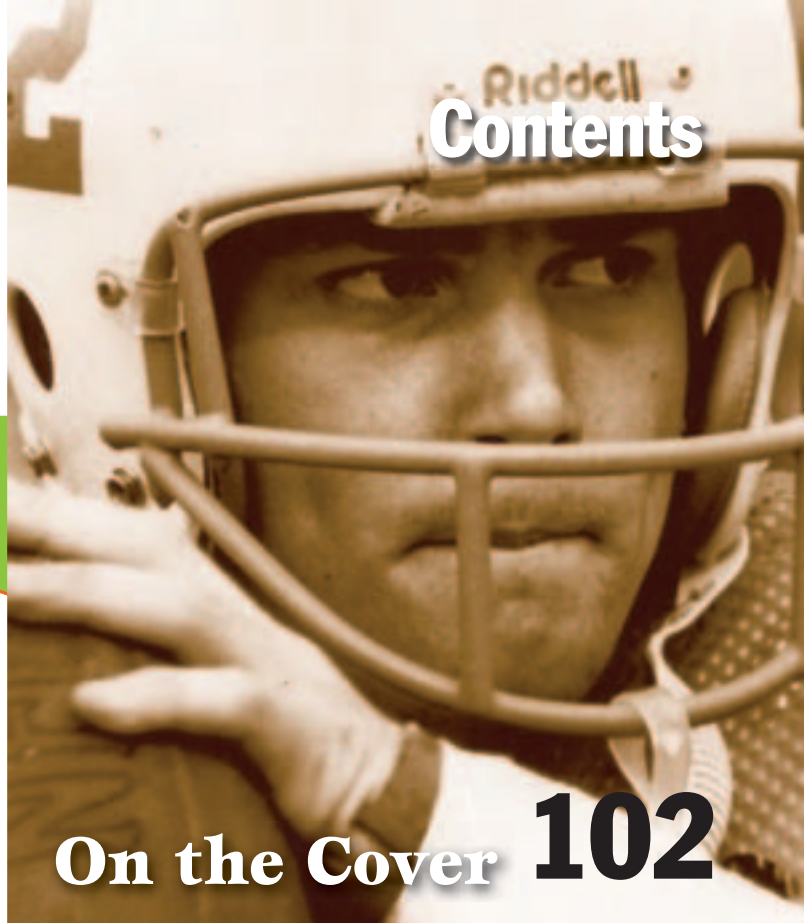
SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

Sports Concussion in the Child and Adolescent Athlete

By *J. Darrell Nesmith, MD, MPH*

111

Contents



On the Cover **102**

THE SPORT OF HEALING

Team Physicians Share a Passion for Helping Players

Frank Griffin, MD, an orthopedic and sports medicine physician, shares his experience as a high school quarterback facing a sports related injury. Read his story and other physicians' as we discuss sports medicine on page 102.

By *Casey L. Penn*

In This Issue

- 98** What Have We Done For You Lately?
By DAVID WROTEN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
- 99** Commentary
By MICHAEL ISAACSON, MD
- 100** Loss Prevention
By J. KELLEY AVERY, MD
- 106** A Closer Look
- 116** People + Events



Design by: *Jeremy Henderson*

Feature
Articles

THE SPORT OF HEALING

Team Physicians Share a Passion for Helping Players

By Casey L. Penn

“If it hurts, don’t do it.”

Those words lit a fire in young Frank Griffin, who heard them from an ER doctor after suffering a sports injury during the first game of his senior football season. Griffin had played quarterback for his high school team under Coach Ron Calcagni, an ex-Razorback quarterback. “We had worked out all summer to prepare for the upcoming season,” recalled Griffin. “After throwing my first touchdown pass of the season, I was tackled. I broke my left wrist. I had it set in an emergency room by an on-call orthopedist who told me that I’d miss the whole season.”



Frank Griffin, MD

That young quarterback is now Frank Griffin, MD, an orthopedic and sports medicine physician who tries hard to avoid repeating those words he heard years ago. He didn’t see “If it hurts, don’t do it!” as a valid response back then, and he got a second opinion

from an orthopedist who helped him return to the game within six weeks.

“A sports medicine physician tries to find a reasonable way to restore the athlete to their previous level of function on the field,” said Dr. Griffin, who today upholds the same proactive philosophy about sports injuries – and sports medicine in general. In his private practice at the Complete Knee Center in Van Buren, Arkansas, Dr. Griffin heals athletes from many sports, including football, motocross, rodeo and baseball.

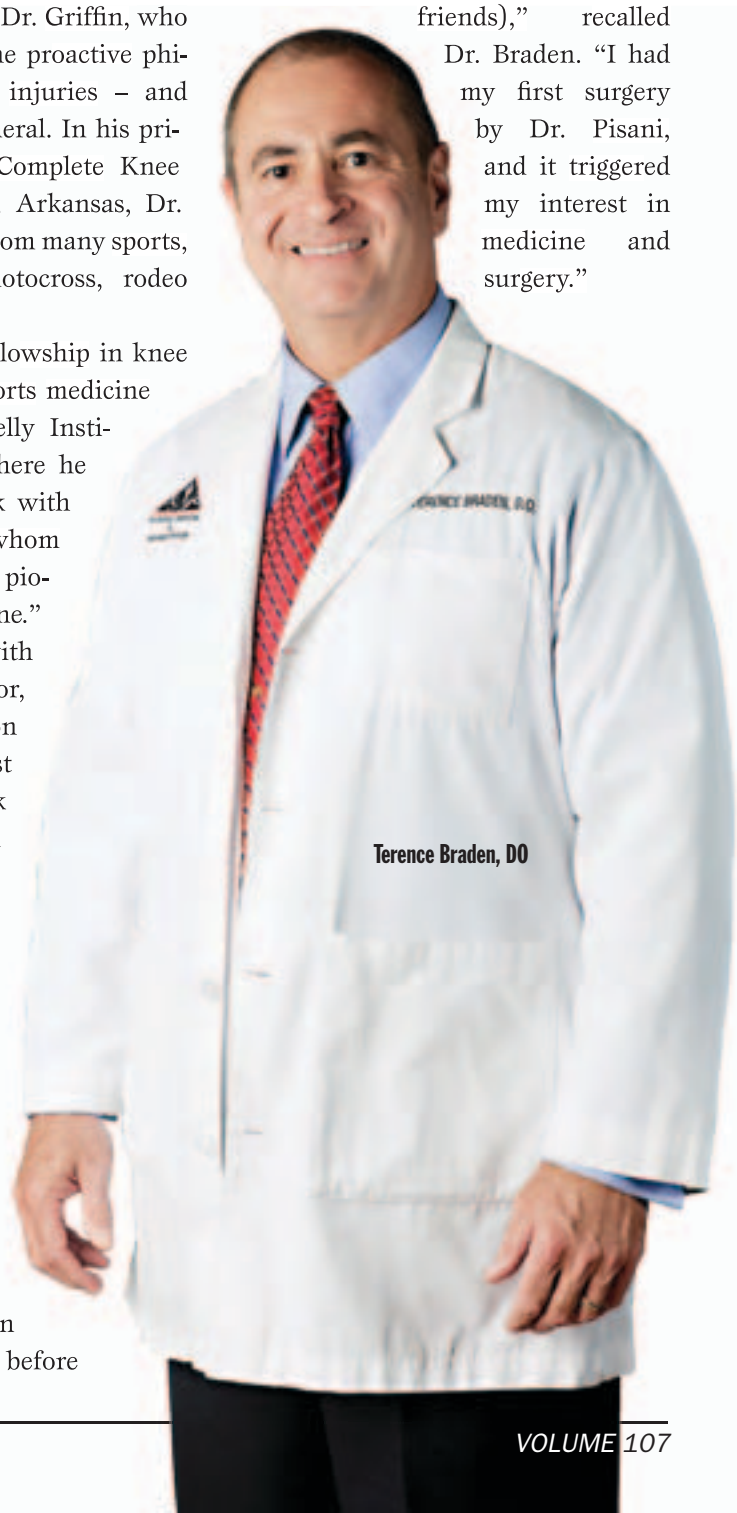
He completed a fellowship in knee reconstruction and sports medicine at the Insall Scott Kelly Institute in New York, where he felt privileged to work with Norman Scott, MD, whom he called “one of the pioneers of sports medicine.” (Dr. Scott worked with Joe Namath’s doctor, and he also operated on Bernard King, the first player to come back and play at an NBA All-Star level after an ACL reconstruction.)

Like Dr. Griffin, physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist Terence Braden, DO, developed an interest in the field while in high school. After suffering a torn left median meniscus that locked his knee, Dr. Braden saw three physicians before

finally receiving the correct diagnosis from a semi-retired orthopedic surgeon.

“He sat me in his office and called the New York Giants team physician, Dr. Anthony Pisani (the two were school friends),” recalled

Dr. Braden. “I had my first surgery by Dr. Pisani, and it triggered my interest in medicine and surgery.”



Terence Braden, DO

Sports Medicine – A Team Approach

These physicians are among a growing number of sports medicine physicians in Arkansas and the nation.

According to The American Board of Medical Specialties, a physician specializing in sports medicine is responsible for continuous care related to the enhancement of health and fitness as well as the prevention of injury and illness. According to its website, “The specialist possesses knowledge and experience in the promotion of wellness and the prevention of injury from many areas of medicine such as exercise physiology, biomechanics, nutrition, psychology, physical rehabilitation, epidemiology, physical evaluation and injuries. It is the goal of a Sports Medicine specialist to improve the healthcare of the individual engaged in physical exercise.”

AMS members and Arkansas doctors Braden and Griffin offer a more casual description of sports medicine and the team physicians who practice it. Sports medicine involves prevention, care, and treatment of injuries and illnesses in athletes. “It encompasses the neuromusculoskeletal realm,” explained Dr. Braden, “but also the medical, physical and psychological aspects.”

Sports physicians are integral to a sport, according to Dr. Griffin, because they work with many parties – at all levels – to implement a team approach to injury prevention, health education and proper training techniques. Those caring for athletes’ health include coaches, athletic trainers, sports physicians and, of course, the athletes themselves.

Athletic trainers, usually employed by the schools, keep track of athletes, evaluate them and refer them to an orthopedic surgeon or other physician as needed. “Athletic trainers are important for players and coaches,” said Dr. Griffin. “I hope that at some point,



Jeremy Swymn, MD serves Arkansas State University athletics as well as other area schools.

Arkansas schools will require them. During the summertime, many schools have intensive weights and running. Some of these do more harm than good. Good athletic trainers can modify certain athletes’ training and help them compete at their full potential.”

Dr. Braden shares his Jonesboro practice with sports medicine surgeon Jeremy Swymn, MD, Spencer Guinn, MD, and Brian Dickson, MD. The three serve as medical directors for St. Bernard’s Sports Medicine and also work together to cover all of Arkansas State University athletics as well as Williams Baptist College, Crowley’s Ridge College, four local high schools and other local athletes and programs.

A New Philosophy in an Advancing Field

Dr. Swymn, who trained in a fellowship under James Andrews, MD, the team doctor for Auburn and Alabama, also believes strongly in a team approach to prevention and treatment. “Our job is to diagnose and treat injuries of our athletes operatively or non-operatively and get our players back on the field as soon as it is medically safe to do so,” he said. “It is also our job to work with the athletic training staff and strength training staff to keep our players healthy with the proper diet and physical preparation. Certain pre-

season workout programs can help prepare players for an injury-free season. Athletic trainers, strength training staff members, coaches and parents all work toward protecting and strengthening the players.”

If these local doctors are any indication, sports medicine physicians today seem less inclined to look at sports injuries as career-ending tragedies and more inclined to putting athletes back in the game when it’s safe to do so – just as one doctor put Frank Griffin back in the game during his senior year. “I’ve never forgotten how important that was to me,” he said. “It’s why I chose to become an orthopedic surgeon, and why, when possible, I’ve always tried to get my patients back on the field as quickly as is reasonable after an injury.”

But is getting players back in the game an invitation for increased injury? Dr. Griffin insists not. Though there are times when a player must take some time off, a good outlook and the right training can go a long way in helping athletes recover. “My fellowship training taught me some things that have allowed me to get players back to their sports rapidly with some injuries,” he said.

Sports medicine, indicates Dr. Griffin, has taken on a new philosophy and has advanced greatly in recent decades. Indeed, it is recognized as a growing subspecialty. Related technology has im-

“Our job is to diagnose and treat injuries of our athletes operatively or nonoperatively and get our players back on the field as soon as it is medically safe to do so.”

— *Jeremy Swymn, MD*

proved – i.e., the invention of the arthroscope and the MRI – as have research and physician interest.

Dr. Swymn agrees that the field has changed much over the years, and he hopes to see many more improvements as sports medicine physicians pull together to push for proven research in the area of injury prevention.

Dr. Swymn gives credit where due, however, saying that much research has been conducted in relation to ACL

injury prevention programs. “Anterior cruciate ligament tears are a fairly common injury that is season ending and requires reconstructive surgery,” he added. “There are not definitive studies yet stating that the programs are definitely effective at decreasing injury rate, but the current literature suggests that these programs may decrease ACL tear rates. We currently employ these programs with our athletes. We also believe that we can decrease rates of injuries in overhead athletes with simple shoulder stretching and strengthening programs, which we also employ with our high school and collegiate overhead athletes.”

To help promote injury prevention and education, Dr. Swymn and the physicians in his clinic host an annual coaches’ clinic for high school coaches in their area. Through the clinic, they demonstrate prevention strategies that coaches may employ with their kids. “Many coaches are very knowledgeable when it comes to strength training and

injury prevention,” said Dr. Swymn. “At the collegiate level, we are fortunate at some of our schools to have great strength training coaches that are up to date on prevention programs and use these to help keep our athletes healthy.”

Passion On and Off the Field

Sports physicians – whether working on or off the field – are all about supporting their team and its athletes, according to Dr. Swymn, who shares the same passion as the players he helps educate and protect and is present at Friday and Saturday games. “We don’t get paid to do it, and we are not forced to be there,” he said. “It is voluntary, and being a part of these kids’ lives and being there for our teams is something that we enjoy and is an invaluable part of being a sports medicine doctor.

“I entered the field because I enjoy taking care of high school and college athletes. I like their motivation and excitement. They work hard to get where they want to be. I identify with that kind of attitude.” **AMS**

Unsure about your EHR decision? Our team can help.

As **unbiased** consultants, we specialize in assisting the Arkansas medical community in evaluating, implementing and maintaining **Electronic Health Record (EHR)** solutions. We are hardware/software vendor neutral; our only allegiance is to you. We have decades of experience. Our methodology and processes are deeply rooted in our **IBM** heritage.

“We are thrilled with Coleman Technologies! Don’s years of experience with large IT projects made his staff of professionals our invaluable technology team during our EHR implementation and beyond.”

— **Dr. Sandra Marchese Johnson**
Johnson Dermatology, Fort Smith



16609 Cantrell Road, Suite 11
Little Rock, AR 72223
5100 South Thompson, Suite 215
Springdale, AR 72764

Phone: 501-821-1325
EHRhelp@colemantechllc.com
www.colemantechllc.com



Experience matters.

EHR Consulting  Computer Services  Networking