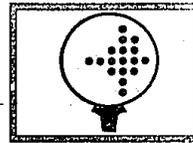


Sports

Chris McCosky, Brad Emons editors/591-2312



Thursday, July 17, 1988 O&E

(D10)

Women more prone to knee injury?

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

IF YOU CAN figure out why so many women athletes are suffering this type of injury, you'll have yourself a major medical breakthrough.

University of Michigan head trainer for women's athletics Sue Peel was talking about knee injuries; in particular, about injuries to the anterior cruciate ligament.

Doctors are performing reconstructive knee surgery at an increasing rate. Now, Peel and assistant trainer Karla Hench have seven women athletes on rehabilitation programs after reconstructive knee surgery. Michigan State University trainer Sally Nogle has between seven and 10 knee rehabilitation patients.

Drs. Ed Wojtyas and Gerald O'Connor, partners at the new Ann Arbor Med-Sport Clinic, said they have performed 800 knee surgeries in the past year, between 35 and 40 percent were performed on women.

The trend is both obvious and ominous. "YES, THERE has definitely been more women having knee surgery and coming back to play," Nogle said. "I think it's because the surgery is better and because women's sports are becoming bigger."

Said Peel: "The old point of view was that women aren't going to go anywhere as far as professional sports so why risk having surgery and having a big scar? They could still play golf and tennis and things like that without having surgery."

"Now doctors realize that, even though they may not play pro sports, athletics are still a very important part of their lives. It's not just women, either. We're seeing more and more recreational athletes — softball players — who are having knee surgery because they just don't want to stop playing."

The injured knee issue has hit close to home in recent years. Three of the most recognizable names in Observer & Eccentric girls basket-

'We tell our patients that their knee will never be the same . . . You are not the same person you were before the injury. We like to say, the knee may not be injured, but it's defective.'

— Sue Peel

Head womens trainer at U-M

ball lore have gone under the knife. Kim Archer, Livonia Bentley grad and MSU star; Emily Wagner, Miss Basketball in 1984 from Livonia Livewood; and Mary Rosowski, U-M via Farmington Hills Mercy, are all in various stages of rehabilitation.

It's been 15 months since the operation, and Wagner is confident that all is well. So confident, in fact, that she doesn't think she'll wear a brace. "My knee is stronger than it was before the injury," she said. "Why wear a brace? A brace is for protection, and I have nothing really to protect."

Both Peel and Hench think Wagner is making a mistake. "We tell our patients that their knee will never be the same," Peel said. "It will never be like it was. You are not the same person you were before the injury. We like to say, the knee may not be injured, but it's defective. She should still wear the brace."

Brace or no brace, Wagner's basketball career appears saved. She just missed making the U.S. team for the National Sports Festival games. "I'm still not completely comfortable on the court, but I don't think I have," she said.

MARY ROSOWSKI can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. But it's taken almost two years.

The all-state standout from Mercy was eager to begin her college basketball career at U-M, and over-

ger to succeed. She worked hard last summer in preparation for the fall season. She was in the best physical shape of her life.

Then, on a freak play at the Farmington Y, she ripped her anterior cruciate ligament and entered the long, dark tunnel.

The first injury had her in a cast for eight weeks. When she was just about to return to the active roster, she was stricken with mono-nucleosis. A month later, she tried to play basketball, and the knee gave out again.

At that point, she tested the surgical skills of O'Connor.

"The worst part is the mental part at Crisler (Arena) at night sometimes, and I'll stop and watch the guys play. That's when I get sad. I miss playing so much."

Rosowski's rehabilitation has been slow, tedious, but so far successful. "She's about 70 percent through her rehab," Karla Hench said. "She's been doing great. She's here every day for about two hours."

Hench and Peel have made it clear to Rosowski that there is no guarantee she'll play again.

"We tell all our patients not to count on it (coming back). And if it happens, then it's an added plus," Hench said.

Said Peel: "If Mary makes it back, it's a tribute to how bad she wants to play and how good a player she really is."

When you watch Rosowski work out, you see the fiery determination in her eyes, you sense that she will indeed make it back.

BUT MAKING it back is just the end of phase one of the wounded knee saga.

People with reconstructed knees face a lifetime of preventive maintenance.

"That's what so many people fail to realize," Peel said. "Once you've gone through rehab, you have to keep the knee strength up or you'll be in for a lot of discomfort. A knee

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DILL BRESLER/staff photographer

Mercy grad Mary Rosowski rides the bike 20 minutes a day five days a week as part of her yearlong knee rehabilitation program.

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Chris Gilles won the singles title at the West Penn National Clay Courts last weekend. She and sister Wendy won the doubles title.

Smashing return Chris Gilles regains winning form

By Chris McCosky
staff writer

The intensity was back. The confidence. The feeling that she could do no wrong. Chris Gilles is having fun playing tennis again.

It's been a long time. Gilles, the Plymouth native and all-time 100 stand-out at the University of Wisconsin, virtually walked through the field at the West Penn National Clay Court Amateur Tournament in Mount Lebanon, Pa.

She won the singles championship, defeating Angeline Ledwicks of New Zealand, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Then she teamed with sister Wendy, also an all-Big 10 player at Wisconsin, to win the doubles crown. They knocked off Laura Glitz of York, Pa. and Anne Marie Watson of Calfon, N.J., 6-4, 6-4.

The Gilleses were seeded No. 1 in

both events. Wendy Gilles was seeded No. 7 in singles and helped her sister by upsetting the tourney's No. 2 seed before bowing out.

"I played well through the whole tournament, although I thought I played better in the early matches than I did in the later ones," Chris Gilles said. "I just wasn't missing anything and I was playing smart. I tried to get myself out right from the start and get early leads. I won my first match 6-0, 6-0 and my second 6-1, 6-1."

GILLES ENDURED a miserable year at Wisconsin, both on and off the court.

"Mentally, I was just a basket case," she said. "I didn't think I could ever hit a ball on the court. I wasn't confident. Even after I won a match I would think I wasn't good anymore. I was so negative. I got into a bad routine and that came across on the

court. "I'm alright now and I'm going to make sure I stay this way," she said. "I helped her seed No. 1. I helped her confidence."

"It affected me two ways, really," she said. "It gave me confidence, but it also made me feel more pressure — a little bit. I just told myself, 'don't win just because you're seeded No. 1.' I have to win for yourself." The win was Gilles' third national amateur title in two years.

Because she was the United States Tennis Association's No. 1-ranked women's amateur last year, Gilles was invited to play in the \$10,000 USTA Women's Circuit of Michigan clay court tennis tournament at the Fairlane Club in Dearborn this week.

She was to play her first match on Wednesday.

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