

All-Knight Repair

Rutgers is the first step in preparing students to be pro sports trainers—a vital role behind the scenes that influences team success on the field.

Sports trainers never get the game ball, but no team could survive without them. They arrive hours before a game to tape athletes' ankles, compare injury reports with coaches and doctors, tend to myriad nagging injuries, and even make the calls to make sure the ice arrives on time.

Following the game, trainers evaluate old and fresh maladies, and they give departing athletes pointers on how to treat their injuries. By the time trainers call it a day, their cars are often the only ones in the parking lot.

Armed with undergraduate degrees from the Department of Exercise Science and Sport Studies, hands-on internships, and graduate degrees, alumni Brian Mikesell, Stephan Lipinski, and Dean Crowell went on to work as trainers for professional sports teams before, weary of the travel, taking positions assisting college and high school teams. "We are the first line of medical treatment and the middleman between the athlete and the parents, doctors, and coaches," says Crowell, a sports trainer for the University of Georgia football team. "We are called athletic trainers, but that's misleading. We are really sports-medicine specialists."

Brian Mikesell LC'90

Experience: New York/New Jersey MetroStars soccer team, Saudi Arabian national soccer team, Philadelphia Eagles.

Common soccer maladies: Sprained ankles, muscle strains, knee injuries, sports hernias.

Vocational demands: "We are the first wave of medical

treatment. I've treated everything from hemorrhoids to sore throats, from skin care to toe nails."

Advice to athletes: "Massage therapy is highly underrated and prevents injury."

Stephan M. Lipinski CC'96

Experience: Philadelphia Flyers, New York Rangers minor league hockey, arena football.

Common hockey maladies: Facial lacerations, broken teeth, shoulder separations, concussions, knee injuries.

Vocational demands:

Strength and conditioning. "The more fit an athlete is, the more punishment he or she can endure. Balance, core stabilization, and cardiac testing evaluate flexibility, prevent wear and tear, and help aerobic conditioning."

Advice to athletes: "Consider traditional treatments, acupuncture, chiropractic, and nutritional supplements."

Dean Crowell RC'97

Experience: Philadelphia Eagles, New York Jets, New York/New Jersey MetroStars, Rutgers University, University of Georgia, University of North Carolina.

Common football maladies: Shoulder

separations and knee and back injuries.

Vocational demands: "There is no off-season anymore. More college athletes aspire to play in the NFL, and you want to do all you can to help them achieve their goal."

Advice to athletes: "An extra 30 minutes in a prehabilitation program is crucial for staying healthy. Strengthening the muscles around your knees helps prevent knee injuries."

— Bill Glavin

