

Building a Sports Medicine Team

Freddie H. Fu, MD, HDS^c*, Fotios Paul Tjoumakaris, MD,
Anthony Buoncrisitiani, MD.

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Center For Sports Medicine, 3200 South Water Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203, USA

Building a winning sports medicine team is equally as important to the success of an athletic organization as fielding talented athletes. Acquisition of highly qualified, motivated, and hard-working individuals is essential in providing high quality and efficient health care to the athlete. Maintaining open paths of communication between all members of the team is the biggest key to success and an optimal way to avoid confusion and pitfalls.

There have been a growing number of participants in high school and collegiate athletics in recent years, placing ever-increasing demands on the sports medicine team. With tremendous advances in athletic medicine and the specialization of medical care increasing in the United States, a wide array of specialists are now deemed necessary to care for athletes. Questions arise as to who should serve as part of the sports medicine team, which care provider should serve as the coordinator, what are the defined roles of each member, and how can a coordinated approach be maintained to best care for the athlete? The answers to all of these questions have been hotly debated over the years [1]; however, some agreement exists as to the importance of each member to create a coordinated and comprehensive approach to medical coverage, providing optimal care for the athlete [1].

This article outlines the importance of each member of the sports medicine team and provides a guideline for sports medicine physicians on how to assemble the optimal team of specialists in order to provide the best medical care for the athlete. Defining which members warrant inclusion and how care is administered are discussed.

*Corresponding author. Center for Sports Medicine, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, 3200 S. Water Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203, Email address: ffu@upmc.edu (F.H. Fu).