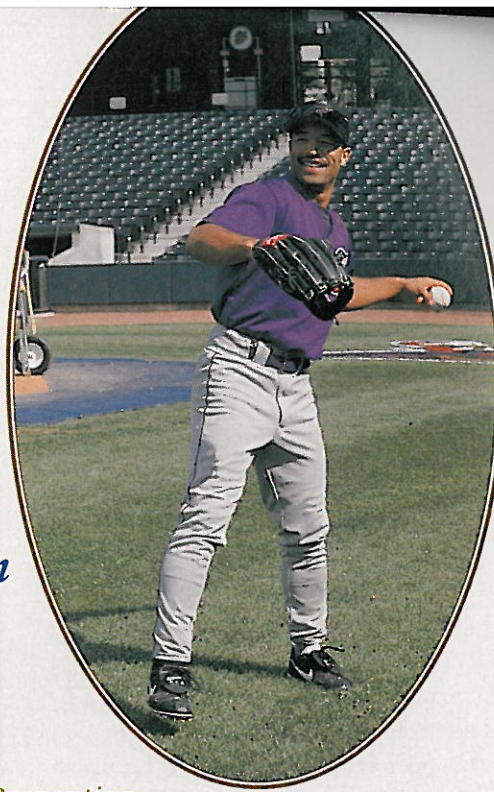


Back in the Swing of

Summa's Sports Medicine Specialists preach prevention

If you follow baseball or Akron happenings, you might already know that David Roberts, 26, played center field for the 1998 Akron Aeros. You may also know that, prior to stepping up to the plate as an Akron Aero, he used to play ball for the Detroit Tigers ("AA" Jacksonville Suns).

You might not know that Roberts' favorite color is purple, his favorite food is Mexican and that he and his wife of one year, Tricia, are high school sweethearts. You also might not know that in August 1998 he underwent rehabilitation therapy for an ankle injury at Summa's Sports Medicine Specialists, located at St. Thomas Hospital.



Practice Injury Prevention

"Injuries occur at all levels," says William Moats, M.D., the center's medical director and team physician for the Aeros. "However, we do see more amateur than professional athletes. For professionals, spring training or preseason conditioning is a major contributor to injury prevention."

The spring training camps that usher in the baseball season should remind recreational athletes to undergo a pretraining phase as well. As thoughts turn to heading outdoors for tennis, running, golf and baseball, spring is a good time to practice injury prevention.

"Without proper training, any sport has potential for causing an injury," says Moats. "For prevention, we will write an exercise prescription to help you train in the proper manner. For example, we can advise runners on how far, how soon and how fast to go."

Sport Authority

If an injury does occur, as was the case with Roberts, Summa's Sports Medicine Specialists is an all-purpose, one-stop shop for treating injured athletes, children and workers. In addition to providing immediate medical care for injuries, the center works with the patient's physician to offer complete rehabilitation plans for recovery, strengthening and conditioning. An executive testing program, which includes a complete physical evaluation, laboratory evaluation, treadmill testing and colon examination, is also available.

The center's location, at St. Thomas Hospital with complete diagnostic



Akron Aeros player, David Roberts, finishes up a pregame workout.

Things

By Lin Danes

capabilities nearby, eliminates the need to travel to off-campus facilities for X-rays and other tests. This speeds up the diagnostic process. Adding to a prompt diagnosis is the fact that the staff's expertise in the field of sports medicine allows them to recognize that particular problems affect different age groups and genders.

According to Moats, Little Leaguers often develop elbow or shoulder problems from throwing too hard, too soon and too often. Other springtime injuries include running injuries, such as tendonitis, which affect a large number of women who engage in high training levels too early, and back injuries, which tend to plague more men because so many of them golf.

"The most common injuries we see would have to be those affecting the ankle," says Dr. Moats. "These occur in all sports and with all ages of athletes." In fact, those affected can range from youngsters injured during dance class to senior citizens injured while playing tennis.

First Base

Because everyone and every injury is different, a thorough evaluation of a person's condition is an important first step in correcting fitness injuries. After the diagnosis is determined, Summa's Sports Medicine Specialists will discuss treatment options and structure the best program possible considering the patient's individual problem, body structure and activity level.

"Depending on the injury and where it is, some athletes will need to stop exercising," says Moats. "With others, we can modify what they are doing. For example, if a runner has a stress fracture, we can recommend alternate aerobic activities such as cycling and swimming, so he can remain active without placing stress on the injured area."

For Roberts, an intensive seven-day treatment at Summa's Sports Medicine

Specialists began with stretching and working the muscles around his ankle, which he injured while running the bases during a game. Rehabilitation also included bike riding, slide boarding, manual resistance exercises, trampoline work and agility exercises.

"They were very personable and efficient," says Roberts, who returned to the field much sooner than he anticipated. "On my first day of rehab, I expected to be there for an hour and a half—it took two hours instead, they didn't rush me through. They took their time with me."

Spring Training Seminar for You

As baseball players gear up for spring training, you can, too.

Summa's Sports Medicine Specialists will offer a free spring training seminar for recreational athletes on Thursday, February 25, from 7 to 9 p.m., in the Professional Center South auditorium, Akron City Hospital.

Athletic trainers and physical therapists from the center will make presentations on general sports injuries, training strategies and prevention techniques which will be followed by small group discussions covering baseball, running and tennis.

For more information or to have Summa's Sports Medicine specialists speak to your organization about exercising safely, call (330) 379-9544.

Recover for the Game

"We have a variety of equipment for use in rehabilitating any injury, from head to toe," says Terri Angelo, an athletic trainer at the center. Under the guidance of physical therapists and athletic trainers, some of the specialized equipment and services offered include:

- computerized strength and endurance testing;
- the latest weight equipment and training technology;
- hydrotherapy;
- ultrasound and electronic muscle stimulation therapy;
- custom-fitted pads, splints, orthotics and braces; and
- the reformer, the Pilates-based exercise program

"As spring sports approach, remember the saying 'no pain, no gain' is *not* a good rule of thumb," says Moats. "If there is persistent pain while exercising, especially if it lingers *after* exercising, you should seek treatment."

With help from Summa's Sports Medicine Specialists, Roberts and many others with sports injuries have been able to get back in their game much more quickly.