

Amateur football players not always keen on returning to play after ACL injuries

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Despite the known success rates of reconstructive Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) surgery, the number of high school and collegiate football players returning to play may not be as high as anticipated, say researchers presenting at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's Specialty Day in San Francisco, CA.

"Previous research shows that reconstructive surgeries are a generally effective treatment for ACL injured knees. While athletes may be physically capable of playing, we sometimes ignore other factors that may prevent them from getting back out there," said senior author Kurt P. Spindler, MD, of Vanderbilt [Sports Medicine](#).

The study examined data from patients enrolled in the Multicenter Orthopaedic Outcomes Network (MOON) cohort who underwent ACL reconstruction in 2002 and 2003. Of 149 high school and collegiate players, 62 and 70 percent returned to play, respectively. Among this group, 28% felt they did not perform at their previous level. Of those who did not return, 53% of the high school and 44% of collegiate players said fear of re-injury played a major role in their decision not to return.

"While return to play may be perceived as the central concern for a competitive athlete recovering from an injury, it is easy to ignore [psychological factors](#) keeping a player off the field," noted Spindler. "Fear of re-injury and concern over decreased performance may hinder even the most physically capable athlete."

Authors suggest additional research needs to be performed to examine more recent years of data, as well as to analyze specific positions played as they relate to rate of return.

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

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