

ACL tears are not the end for college football players

March 15 2014

High-level college football players frequently return to the field after an ACL reconstruction, according to research presented today at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's (AOSSM) Specialty Day. The study added to earlier research by exploring specific factors that affected return to play, including player standing on rosters and year in school.

"Our data shows that about 82% of Division 1 NCAA football [players](#) return after ACL surgery, with that percentage reaching up to 94% when we focus on players who were starters before being injured," commented lead author Dr. Jimmy Hoshang Daruwalla from the Emory University Department of Orthopaedics in Atlanta. "Athletes who rarely saw playing time returned about 73% of the time, while those who saw at least some playing time returned at a rate of about 88%."

The study used data from 13 institutions in major Division 1 FBS conferences, including the Southeastern Conference (SEC), Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and Pacific 12 (Pac-12). A total of 184 athletes participated, with 151 of the general group returning to play. Sophomores and juniors returned approximately 90% of the time, with scholarship players returning approximately 87.6% of the time.

"Our research shows that returning from a major knee injury and surgery is definitely possible. Furthermore, we've found that the more motivated and skilled players are more likely to achieve this goal," noted Daruwalla. "Sports medicine specialists will be able to use this data to

help counsel players and tailor treatments for these collegiate athletes."

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

Citation: ACL tears are not the end for college football players (2014, March 15) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-03-acl-college-football-players.html>

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