

Return-to-play rates high for football players after shoulder instability surgery

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Getting back into the game is important for any athlete after a significant injury but shoulder injuries can be tricky, especially for football players. Researchers presenting their work today at the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine's (AOSSM) Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs, CO, note that surgical treatment for shoulder instability in collegiate athletes is often the best medicine for returning to play, especially in those who performed at high levels previously.

"There was no significant statistical difference in return-to-play rates between the various types of shoulder instability surgery. However, [athletes](#) who played more games prior to injury and then had surgery were more likely to return," said R. J. Robins, MD, lead author, from the US Air Force Academy Sports Medicine Service.

Robins' team of researchers surveyed seven Division I collegiate football programs from the PAC 12, SEC and ACC. Inclusion criteria in the study included all intercollegiate football athletes who were active on their teams' rosters during the 2004-2013 seasons and sustained at least one shoulder instability event which eventually required surgical stabilization treatment. Data was analyzed to determine overall return-to-play rates based on type of shoulder surgery treatment. One hundred seventy-seven shoulder injuries in 153 athletes were identified and met inclusion criteria.

Overall, 85.4% of [players](#) who had arthroscopic surgery without concomitant procedures returned, while 82.4% of players who

underwent anterior labral repair, 92.9% posterior labral repair and 84.8% who underwent combined anterior-posterior repair returned to play. Percentage of games played prior to injury was 49.9% and rose to 71.5% following surgery. Ninety-eight percent of athletes who were starters prior to injury were able to return as starters following surgery.

"Having a scholarship also seemed to significantly correlate to individuals returning following [surgery](#)," said Robins. "Our findings suggest that the majority of players who have some form of [shoulder instability](#) repair are able to return and progress as players in their respective football programs."

Provided by American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

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