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Ethical aspects of the role of a physiotherapist in a basketball club

A cooperation between a physiotherapist, club's physician and the athletes themselves is sometimes the key to sports results.

The contemporary way of training has reached such a level that each athlete is required to make maximum effort, self-denial and good physical and medical condition. On the other hand, to bring an athlete to the maximum shape and keep it without damage to his or her health is the basic aim of the abovementioned team. It would be difficult to strictly differentiate between the work and functions of the members of the team. That work is so intertwined that one cannot emphasize the greater importance of one member of the team over the others, but the good and mutual cooperation produces good results.

There is no doubt that the fields of the cooperation of the members of the team are numerous and important but that cooperation is particularly sensitive and significant when it comes to working with younger age groups of athletes, from the selection of basketball schools, youth under sixteen and juniors. These are the ages in which all characteristics of the organism, both morphological and psycho-physiological, are in full development and the influence of physical effort, i.e. training and competitions are more expressed in these age groups. Only correct pedagogically planned work have positive influence, and it has to be based on morphological and psycho-functional personalities of these young athletes.

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When it comes do diagnostics of sports injuries, a physiotherapist is usually the most important and crucial factor because he or she is on the spot when the injury occurs and is usually present during a training process and during every competition of his or her team so he or she has to make a correct and prompt decision. He or she has the advantage over the others because he or she can analyze the entire move which was made at the time of the injury. The care of the injured athlete will depend on the method of treatment, which is the role of the club's doctor.

Ethical issues arise in the cases of so called "alibi injuries" and in those cases the mentioned team is of major significance. A physiotherapist is the one who receives the first information from the athlete and forwards it to both the club's doctor and the coach. In my practice, I have had instances in which athletes approached me with some bad news: family problems, love problems, school problems. I have never gone past coach or club's doctor in those situations, on the contrary, correct mutual decisions brought us to solutions. There were cases in which players estimated that there was no sense in going through preparatory programs because they felt like a surplus so they would stage an "injury" in order to justify their absence. On the other hand, there were cases in which injured players wanted to go through that part of the sports program at any cost.

At the end, I have to emphasize that the limits in sports medicine has to be moved because of the sport itself. Sports medicine must be in the function of sport. Sport is a phenomenon of contemporary society and many have chosen it as their occupation. That is the field in which a lot is invested and a lot of profit is gained. The fact is that the way of training and competition leads to numerous injuries and damages which limit athletes in their activities, which imposes the need on a club for their quickest possible recovery.

In conclusion, a PHYSIOTHERAPIST is crucial member of every sport club's professional team.