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Return to Performance: An Athlete Centred Model

Mr Selwyn Griffith

Brisbane Lions AFC

Sustaining an injury playing sport is a common occurrence and can result in a significant amount of time loss for an athlete. It is important for coaches and practitioners to understand how to return an athlete to performance as quickly and safely as possible. Current research suggests that a criterion based rehabilitation approach assists in the decision making processes of a successful rehabilitation and decreases the risk of re-injury. Early intervention has been shown to decrease the amount of time lost due to injury when compared with a delayed intervention with no difference in injury risk once an athlete has returned. Too often rehabilitation of an athlete focuses on the injury and impairment rather than the opportunity it provides to recondition and/or improve an athlete's physical capacity and athletic qualities. A key focus of this presentation is to address the current evidence based accelerated rehabilitation strategies for soft tissue muscle injuries and the management of tendinopathy, highlighting strength interventions, reconditioning strategies and training load prescription.

Unfortunately, injury and rehabilitation is often more complex than simply returning an athlete to competition, the psychological, emotional and social factors surrounding the injury and the individual can have a significant impact on whether a rehabilitation is successful or not. Understanding how an individual's personality and belief system may impact their rehabilitation is an important skill for the coach and practitioner to possess, it will assist in building autonomy and ownership of the rehabilitation plan. The athlete centred model focuses on synergy, autonomy and ownership between different stakeholders to limit the influence of biopsychosocial factors on an athletes return to performance, a number of practical examples will be given on the success of the athlete centred model during the presentation.