

CASE REPORT

REHABILITATION OF AN ELITE OLYMPIC CLASS
SAILOR WITH MCL INJURYShawn E. Hunt, PT, SCS, ATC^aChris Herrera, PT, DPT^bStephanie Cicerale, PT, DPT^aKevin Moses, PT, DPT^aPhilip Smiley, PT, DPT^a

ABSTRACT

Background. A paucity of literature exists related to the care of sailing athletes with knee injuries. Hiking has been examined to describe its demands, but comprehensive sources for rehabilitation recommendations based upon evidence are non-existent. Guidance and understanding of human motion are key to success in the face of limited evidence.

Objectives. Impairments and functional restrictions were identified in a Finn Sailor with MCL (medial collateral ligament) injury. A regimen of strengthening, conditioning, and functional benchmarks was devised to progress a sailing athlete from non-functional to sailing specific training and the athlete's competitive goal. Coordination with a strength/conditioning professional was key to maintaining the athlete's competitive level.

Case description. The patient is a 21 year old Finn class sailor with an acute MCL knee injury eight weeks prior to a world class and national ranking event. Following evaluation, treatment with sailing-specific functional testing coincided with training/conditioning. Common-sense functional tasks were used to replicate demands of hiking and balancing to evaluate readiness for sailing/training.

Outcomes. Return to sailing with protection occurred in 12 days, unrestricted training and competition were achieved prior to the ranking event at 8 weeks.

Discussion. Mobility, stability, control, strength, and endurance are not only crucial to performance in the boat, but sailors need to avoid pitfalls in the boatyard while safely transitioning from land to water. Competitive calendars may not allow for textbook protocol, therefore, all goals should be strongly correlated with functional ability, athlete confidence, and performance needs.

Key Words. medial collateral ligament, sailing, hiking

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