

High Level Sports Programs Embrace Chiropractors

by Eric Plasker, D.C.

HIGH LEVEL ATHLETES IN NEARLY EVERY SPORT HAVE CHOSEN to make chiropractic care a part of their training and a part of their lifestyle. Dr. Jeff Spencer was the team chiropractor for the USA Cycling Team that won 7 Tour de France victories, an unprecedented run in one of the world's most grueling sports. Dr. Greg Kempf from Cleveland, Ohio, has been providing chiropractic care for the Cleveland Browns since 1999 and the Cleveland Cavaliers for the past five seasons. He regularly travels with the Browns and occasionally with the Cavs. On game day, it is not uncommon for Dr. Kempf to adjust 35 of the 55 members of the team prior to the game. Many of their highest profile players receive regular chiropractic care as a part of their training and their lifestyles. These top athletes get their endurance and strength training on the practice field and in the weight room, respectively, and their chiropractic adjustments keep their structure, spines and nervous systems healthy, which helps them perform at their highest level.

Some of the top athletes in the world have publicly praised their chiropractors as both their saviors in times of injury, as well as keys to their reaching their full athletic potential. Dr. Spencer, for example, was featured in an article in *Esquire Magazine* adjusting Lance Armstrong and he was also mentioned in one of Lance's books. When Emmitt Smith retired as the NFL's all time leading rusher, he graciously thanked God, his family and his chiropractor, Dr. Greg Parker, for supporting him in his stellar career.

The three time world champion and 1996 Olympic gold medalist in the Decathlon, Dan O'Brien, during his time considered the world's greatest athlete, has been quoted to say that, if it wasn't for chiropractic, he would not have won the gold medal. Organized sports have come a long way in embracing the chiropractic profession.

By the time Dr. Terry Schroeder was coaching in 2008, coaching the Olympic water polo team to its first medal since he was a player in 1988, the chiropractic movement in amateur sports had exploded. I recently interviewed Dr. Schroeder for *The 100 Year Lifestyle Workout*, due in bookstores in December, to discuss the evolution of chiropractic in high level sports programs. His response was, "The trend toward chiropractic care caught on widely at the Olympics. The amateur athletic world seemed to embrace the need for this type of care because of the demanding nature of their training, as well as their understanding of the mind/body connection, and its relationship to their structural alignment. It was in 1984 that, for the first time, a chiropractor was officially credentialed by the U.S. Olympic Committee with access to the athletes like any other part of the medical



The year 2008 marked the first time since 1988, when Dr. Schroeder was a player, that the US Water Polo team had won an Olympic medal. With Dr. Schroeder as their head coach and their team chiropractor, they are on target for a gold medal in 2012.

community. In fact, there were lines to have the adjustments with chiropractors. Athletes became more and more aware of the edge others were receiving and they flocked to chiropractors so as not to lose out on any natural advantage. Dr. Jan Corwin provided care for the athletes; he was the only chiropractor credentialed at the time and he worked long hours." Today, a chiropractor is in charge of the entire medical unit.

The trickle down to youth sports programs is very exciting, as more and more high level athletes of all ages are embracing chiropractic care. My son, Cory, plays soccer for Ambush Elite in Alpharetta, Georgia. His team is a local affiliate of West Ham United of the English Premier League, which is one of the premier soccer development programs in the world. His under 17 soccer team is currently ranked eighth in the nation. At one time they were ranked second. The entire team gets chiropractic care and take their Intramax prior to the games. Their coach, David Eristavi, who is one of the most respected youth soccer coaches in the country, believes that all young athletes should make all three elements of the ESS, endurance, strength and structure, a part of their training, which includes chiropractic care.

Chiropractic gives athletes the competitive advantage that



Team chiropractor Eric Plasker with Ambush Elite, a local affiliate of West Ham United of the English Premier League which is one of the premier soccer development programs in the world. His under 17 soccer team is currently ranked 8th in the nation. At one time they were ranked second. The entire team gets chiropractic care before almost every game. To the left: Cory, Dr.Plasker's son in action

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by one of your patients that you do not provide.

3. **Become an expert communicator.** Speaking positively and authoritatively with the right words at the right time will help you educate your athletes and gain their trust.
4. **Provide ongoing information.** Athletes like to understand their bodies and enjoy information that gives them the competitive edge.
5. **Educate the parents.** When you are working with young athletes, bring information for the parents to understand what you are doing.

6. **Be consistent.** Just like an athlete's training is better for them when they are consistent, so is their care. Keep showing up.

Because of the incredible results we are getting with our patients, and the safety of chiropractic care, our profession is gaining tremendous momentum in communities around the country. When I first started delivering the care to my son's soccer team, we would travel to tournaments and I would set my adjusting table up on the field and, as I was adjusting our players, the parents and the opposing players would stop and stare, making comments such as, "Will you do this for me? Will you check me? Can I be next?" I have noticed recently that many more teams are bringing their chiropractors onto the field. You should be one of these chiropractors.

Please use this article as a way to help your office become the official chiropractor for a sports program in your area. You will find that, as your athletes get results, their entire families will want to be under care. We have prepared a newsletter for you to use to help you attract more athletes to your practice, and you can download it for free at www.thefamilypractice.net. The athletes in your community need you and so do their families. The season is ripe and the athletes are ready. Take this information and go to work!

*Dr. Eric Plasker is the founder of The Family Practice, a marketing and training company for chiropractors, and the author of the international best selling book, The 100 Year Lifestyle, and the creator of The 100 Year Lifestyle Certification Program. He can be reached at 1-866-532-3327 or drplasker@thefamilypractice.net. For a free audio download to help you build your practice, visit www.thefamilypractice.net. **TAC***

