

College athlete back on track after ACL surgery

WHEN he hurt his knee during a touch football game last March, Dan Pulvino feared that his track career was in jeopardy.

"I knew it was bad right away," says Pulvino, a sophomore sprinter on the University of Illinois at Chicago track team. "I jumped up to catch the ball and my foot got stuck. All of my weight came down on my knee and I heard a pop."

Pulvino had suffered a serious knee injury—a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).

Thanks to an ACL procedure performed by Harpreet Basran, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon on staff at Centegra Health System, Pulvino has been able to resume running.

"Dr. Basran was great right from the start," Pulvino says. "He replaced the ACL in my knee last May. My recovery has gone really well. I've been working out and I should be able to compete again in the spring."

A COMMON INJURY

The ACL is one of four primary ligaments in the knee. It connects the front top part of the shin bone to the back bottom part of the thigh bone. The ACL prevents the shin bone from sliding forward.

"ACL tears are very common injuries," says Dr. Basran. "They are especially common in contact sports, such as football, basketball and soccer."

The treatment for a torn ACL varies from person to person. Some patients may need surgery, while others may not.

"The ACL is critical for any type of



Harpreet Basran, MD

cutting or pivoting and preventing damage to other structures of the knee," Dr. Basran says. "For patients whose normal activities don't include turning quickly or pivoting, surgery may not be required."

ACL surgery generally involves replacing the damaged ligament with other tendons taken from around the knee or with a tendon from an organ donor.

"The ACL procedure has come a long way," Dr. Basran says. "It used to be career-ending. Now the patient can go home the same day they have surgery and after proper rehabilitation, resume normal activities—including sports."

Recovery from ACL surgery—which involves physical therapy and wearing a knee brace—usually takes anywhere from 6 to 12 months.

ACL SPECIALISTS

At Centegra Health System, a team of highly skilled professionals take pride in helping patients with ACL tears make a full recovery.

"Besides being general surgeons, we specialize in treating sports injuries," Dr. Basran says. "We focus on getting the athlete back to where he or she was before the injury."

Dr. Basran points to Pulvino as a prime example of successful ACL treatment. "Dan is an elite athlete. He's done well from day one," Dr. Basran says. "He regained his strength almost

immediately. He should be able to compete at full speed this spring."

Pulvino says his recovery from ACL surgery has been easier than he expected.

"The recovery period has been great. I thought it would be a lot worse than it was," Pulvino says. "I'm very happy with the results. I would recommend this procedure to anyone." ♦

Additional source: American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine