

# Carl Britto



**Carl:** Whilst training as a triple jumper in the UK, I had the misfortune of a hamstring injury. The sports medical team were swift to begin rehab measures and very evidenced based with their approach. The right kind of customised intervention and the keen supervision of physiotherapists during the recovery process made sure that my recovery time was minimal and I was injury free for the rest of the season. As a medical doctor I understand the reasons and pathology of injury which helps me make important decisions with regard to choosing my treating team and executing the rehabilitation plan appropriately. The co-ordination between members of the treating team was impeccable and allowed me, along with my coach to plan for the rest of the season with confidence. The constant pace at which sports medicine is evolving allows for athletes to constantly push boundaries and strive to newer heights. A huge focus revolves around injury mitigation and rigorous rehabilitation techniques to enable athletes to stay injury free.

The important message here from both our anecdotes is the value of a sports medicine “team” as opposed to a single member, and how it is imperative to work together. Although timely medical/ surgical intervention forms the corner stone of treatment, appropriate rehabilitation and physiotherapy are just as important.

Treating Sports injuries successfully requires a team effort and an expertise to understand both the injury and the sport. A surgical expertise with latest minimally invasive techniques to cut down recovery time by accelerating the healing process. It also requires the Operating surgeon to communicate with the Physiotherapist, who would look into getting the athlete back in shape with specific rehab / strengthening protocols of the injured part. Retraining the nervous and musculoskeletal system to get back functional and proprioceptive aspects. A mental coach/ therapist to get the athlete back stronger from the setback and to deal with life stressors and performance stressors in limited time. A nutritionist who would in consultation with the Doctor and Physiotherapist make a nutrition plan to help the athlete cope with the stressors and have the right nutrition to recover from the injury. Finally, the coach is advised about the do's and don'ts with specific timelines so that a coach doesn't prematurely push the athletes body before it is ready to handle that kind of stress. This team based approach is required for comprehensive management of a Sports Injury.

We have been competitive athletes for over 10 years now, right from our teenage years and it is encouraging to see how much progress has been made with regard to accessibility of sports medicine teams in India. The skill and accumen of arthroscopic surgeons has also greatly improved allowing for careers to be salvaged and devastating injuries to be averted. No doubt, we are still have a long way to go but it is gratifying to see change in the right direction.