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**Is my athlete REALLY
ready to return to sport
following injury? : the
role of psychological
readiness**



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FOUNDATION
Regional Talent Club

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Aim 1

Create a rationale for the consideration of psychological readiness when making return to sport decisions

Aim 2

Explain what psychological readiness to return to sport is, its importance, and its antecedents

Aim 3

Explain how the sports medicine team can monitor and make judgements over psychological readiness for optimal return to sport

Putting the evidence into context



Severe knee injuries (i.e., ACL)



Everything else (e.g., shoulder pathology)

The return to sport landscape

Return to the Preinjury Level of Competitive Sport After Anterior Cruciate Ligament Reconstruction Surgery
Two-thirds of Patients Have Not Returned by 12 Months After Surgery

Clare L. Ardern,⁺⁺ PT, Kate E. Webster,[†] PhD, Nicholas F. Taylor,⁺⁺ PhD, and Julian A. Feller,[†] FRACS

Injuries impair the chance of successful performance by sportspeople: a systematic review

Michael K Drew,^{1,2} Ben P Raysmith,¹ Paula C Charlton¹

European Journal of Sport Science, May 2012; 12(3): 274–282

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Sport injuries as the main cause of sport career termination among Finnish top-level athletes

LEENA RISTOLAINEN¹, JYRKI A. KETTUNEN², URHO M. KUJALA³, & ARI HEINONEN³

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group



Variable return to sport rates (68-90%,

Dickens et al., 2017; Harris et al., 2013; Shanley et al., 2019)

High rates of re-injury

(37-90%, Okahoro et al., 2018; Watson, Allen & Grant, 2016)

High levels of fear predominate upon return to sport (Olds et

al., 2019; Tjong et al., 2015)

Difficulty reaching pre-injury standards of performance (22-49.9%,

Harris et al., 2013; Klouche et al., 2016)

Returning athletes back to sport after injury: are we winning?



Original article
Time before return to play for the most common injuries in professional football: a 16-year follow-up of the UEFA Elite Club Injury Study
Jan Ekstrand,^{1,2} Werner Krutsch,³ Armin Spreco,⁴ Wart van Zoest,⁵ Craig Roberts,⁶ Tim Meyer,⁷ Håkan Bengtsson¹

Original article
Likelihood of ACL graft rupture: not meeting six clinical discharge criteria before return to sport is associated with a four times greater risk of rupture
Polyvios Kyritsis,¹ Roald Bahr,^{1,2} Philippe Landreau,¹ Riadh Miladi,¹ Erik Witvrouw^{1,3}

Systematic review
Which criteria are used to clear patients to return to sport after primary ACL reconstruction? A scoping review
Ciara R Burgi,¹ Scott Peters,² Clare L Ardern,^{3,4} John R Magill,¹ Christina D Gomez,⁵ Jonathan Sylvain,⁶ Michael P Reiman⁷



Consensus guidelines suggest athletes should be physically and psychologically ready to return to sport (Ardern et al., 2016)

Psychological factors associated with return to sport whereas clinical examination may occur

Sport medicine practitioners fell underprepared and overchallenged to address psychological aspects of return to sport
(Heaney et al., 2017)

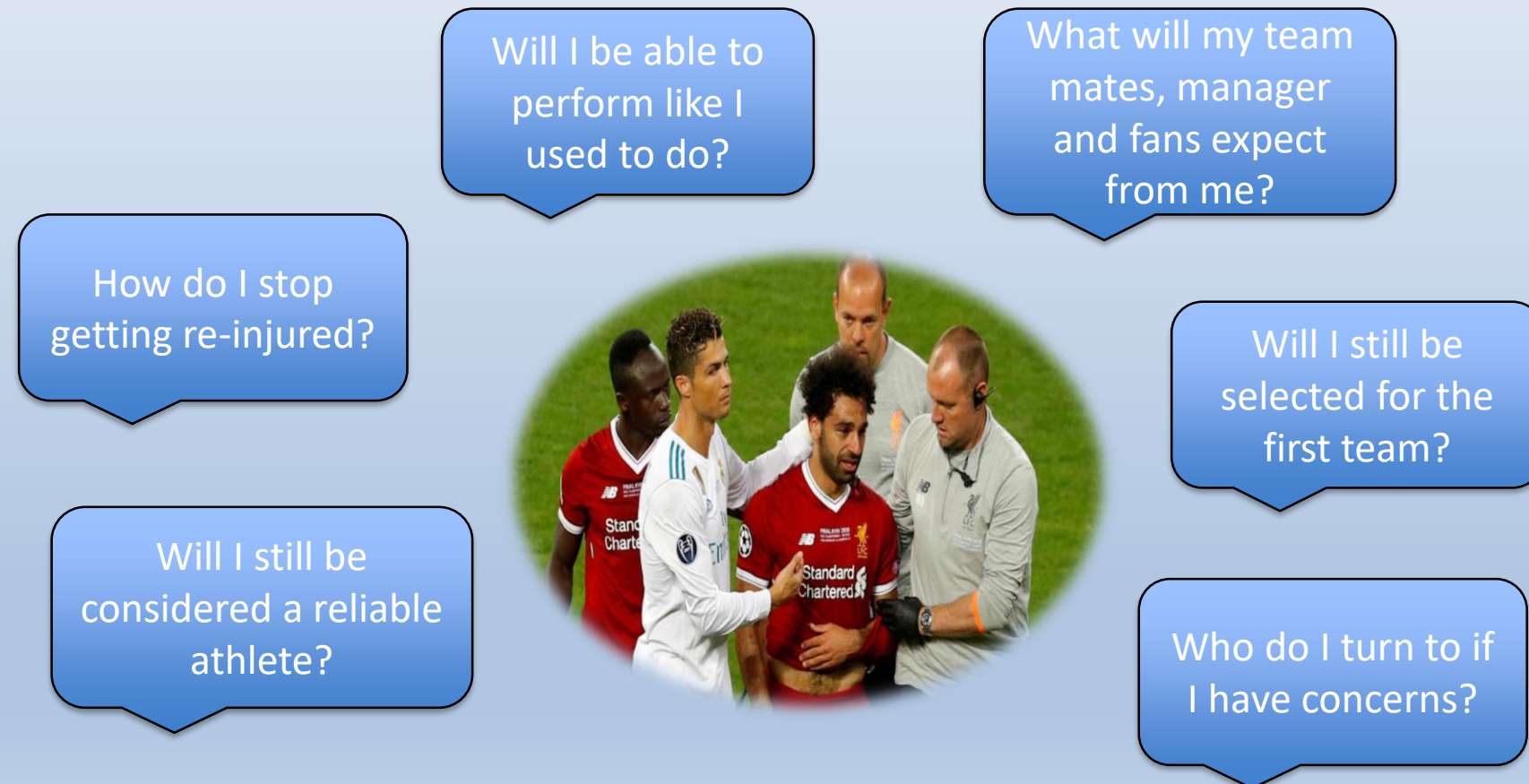
Physical factors associated with return to sport at different time points

Athletes may not be ready to return to sport (Phelan et al., 2019; Takuya et al., 2019)

recovered months after return to sport (Phelan et al., 2019; Takuya et al., 2019)

What concerns do athletes tend to have when they return to sport?

(Forsdyke et al., 2016; Podlog, Dimmock & Miller, 2011; Tjong et al., 2015)



What is psychological readiness to return to sport?

(Forsdyke et al., 2016; Gerometta et al., 2018; Webster et al., 2008)

Anxiety

(re-injury & performance)

Confidence

(remaining injury free & performance)



How is psychological readiness to return to sport developed?

(Chester et al., 2018; Forsdyke et al., 2016; Meierbachtol et al., 2018; Podlog et al., 2015; Tjong et al., 2015; Webster et al., 2018)

Trust in the sports medicine team

Quality and availability of social support

Feeling wanted

Expectation management

Subjective symptoms and function

Achieving goals and specific criterion



What happens if an athlete is not psychologically ready to return to sport?

Increased risk of
re-injury
(McPherson et al.,
2019)

Less likely to
return to their
pre-injury sport
(Ardern et al., 2014)



Less likely to
return to pre-
injury sport
performance
(Kitaguchi et al., 2019)

Reduced
functional task
performance
(Zarzycki et al., 2019)

How can I monitor & evaluate psychological readiness to return to sport?

ACL-RSI (Webster et al., 2008)

ACL-RSI (SF) (Webster et al., 2018)

SIRSI (Geromotta et al., 2018)

I-PRRS scale (Glazer, 2009)

**Psychological
readiness**

TSK (Miller, Kori & Todd, 1991)

RIAI (Walker, Thatcher & Lavallee, 2010)

**Anxiety/ fear/
kinesiophobia**

Psychological readiness to return to sport: three key elements to help the practitioner decide whether the athlete is REALLY ready?

Dale Forsdyke,¹ Adam Gledhill,² Clare Ardern^{3,4,5}

Box 2 Examples of tools (questionnaires and inventories) that may be used by practitioners to monitor psychological readiness to RTS (formatted versions of the tools are available as on-line resources)

► Re-injury Anxiety Inventory (RIAI):
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1466852X00000006>

Characteristics of an athlete who is psychologically ready to RTS are multifaceted and include, among others: realistic expectations, high levels of self-efficacy and low levels of anxiety (in context of performance and re-injury)

#1 Use tools to monitor injured athletes

#2 Use your working knowledge of the athlete

#3 The need for athlete-centred & interdisciplinary shared decision-making

A return to sport 'quadrant of doom'

Physical readiness to return to sport



Psychological readiness to return to sport

So in summary.....

- **Currently, data suggests that returning athletes to back to sport after an injury in an optimal way is challenging**
- **Ideally, athletes should only return to sport when they are physically and psychologically ready to do so**
- **Psychological readiness to return to sport appears important and therefore should form part of the return to sport decision making process.**

Key further readings and resources

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- Forsdyke, D., Gledhill, A., & Ardern, C. (2017). Psychological readiness to return to sport: three key elements to help the practitioner decide whether the athlete is REALLY ready? *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51, 555-556.
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- Zarzycki, R., Failla, M., Capin, J., & Snyder-Mackler, L. (2018). Psychological Readiness to Return to Sport Is Associated With Knee Kinematic Asymmetry During Gait Following ACL Reconstruction. *Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy*, 27, 1-21, DOI: 10.2519/jospt.2018.8084.

Any questions?

