

Shoulder Injury

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Interesting Case History – S/C Joint ‘Dislocation’ Part 2

I wrote some time ago about ‘Matt’, who at the time was a 16 year old rugby league player. You will recall he had suffered a posterior sterno-clavicular fracture-dislocation at the physal plate. I have an update on his further progress. Matt was initially seen by a shoulder specialist with no previous experience in sternoclavicular injuries, who had suggested a conservative approach to management. However soon after, that specialist sought further advice from Dr David Duckworth. Dr Duckworth had seen 3 previous cases of SC dislocation.

After examining Matt with his CT scan, it was decided to perform an open reduction and stabilization of the SC joint. This was carried out 5 weeks after the initial injury. At operation the clavicle was locked in a posteriorly dislocated position, and had to be released and placed back in an anatomical position. The clavicle was then sutured to the physis and sternum with Ethibond sutures. Matt was placed in a sling for 4 weeks and returned to see me at 6 weeks.

Treatment commenced with thoracic and A/C joint mobilisation, scapular retraction exercises, passive and active assisted low level range of motion, and isometric strength in neutral. Range of motion and strength was gradually progressed in range. He had full range of motion within one further month, and close to normal strength on dynamometry testing at 4 months, with normal strength at 6 months. He

Fig 1: Pre-op. I have outlined the clavicles to show the differences side to side. Note that the left medial clavicle appears elevated, but the posterior deviation is not obvious.



Fig 2: Post op Anterior view. Note surgical scar, and some persistent ‘deformity’. The left medial clavicle is somewhat superiorly placed, and the clavicle is more horizontally aligned.



Fig 3: Pre-op posterior view. Note significant shortening & protraction of left shoulder



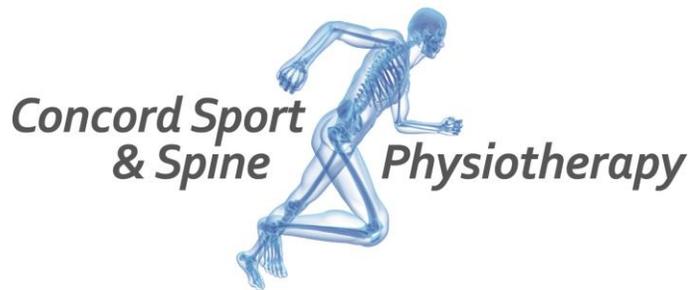
Fig 4: Six months post-op. Note excellent recovery of shoulder posture.

returned to sport after 3 months post-op. He still had a mild degree of scapular protraction and winging. It is now 18 months since his surgery, and Matt has continued to play full contact Rugby League, and has no further problems with the shoulder.

For a detailed overview of sternoclavicular injuries see my literature review: <http://www.cssphysio.com.au/pdfs/1-Literature-Review-.pdf>

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