

CHIROPRACTIC AT THE OLYMPICS *by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC*

For many years, athletes have consulted with, and been treated by chiropractors. The sports chiropractor is familiar with the type of injuries athletes encounter as a result of their endeavors, as well as the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of these conditions. Sports, as well as any type of fitness activity (including walking) involves movement—chiropractic deals with problems related to joint mobility, muscle imbalances and muscle weaknesses. After examining an athlete, a chiropractor will decide on a diagnosis and best approach to treatment, as well as what exercises or modifications to training are needed to have the athlete back to the top of his or her game.

Currently, in Canada there is a group which represents the five (5) health care professions which look after our athletes at major sporting events such as the Pan American Games and Olympics (Winter and Summer). These professions include Medicine, Physiotherapy, Athletic Therapy, Massage Therapy and of course Chiropractic.

Sports Chiropractic is one (1) of the five (5) chiropractic specialties in Canada recognized by the Canadian Federation of Chiropractic Regulatory Boards. The CFCRB is the national organization made up of provincial chiropractic licensing bodies in Canada. For instance, in Nova Scotia, the Chair of the Board of the Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors, is a representative to the CFCRB.

Specialists in Sports Chiropractic have achieved their Fellowship as a result of an academic program which has been developed by the College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada). These chiropractors are identified by the designation FCCSS(C). Achieving Fellowship status is one of the requirements necessary for a chiropractor to be considered for selection as a member of the health care team which accompanies our athletes to major sporting events.

For athletes, there is no greater honour than representing their country. As a chiropractor, there is no greater honour than being asked to represent your profession. For the sports chiropractor, the proudest moment is not only to represent your profession, but also your country at a sporting event such as the Pan American Games or Olympics. I have had the honour of being a member of Host Medical Services for the 1988 Winter Olympics which were held in Calgary as well as being a member of Canada's Health Care Team at the last Pan American Games (Winnipeg, 1999) and for the Winter Olympics (Salt Lake City, February 8-24, 2002).

In Salt Lake City, Canada will be sending 155 athletes plus Mission Staff totaling approximately 340 people. The Mission Staff, are the individuals who over see a variety of activities and work "behind the scenes". Within the SLC Mission Staff, there are five (5) Maritimers; four from New Brunswick and myself from Nova Scotia.

As Maritimers, we should be very proud that Sally Rehorick, from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, was named as the Chef du Mission for our Olympic Team. As part of her "personal mission", Sally is trying out all of the sports at the Winter Olympics! The other New Brunswickers on the Olympic Mission Staff are Betty Dermer-Norris (Director of Operations in Athletes Village), Bill MacGillvary (Canada Olympic House) and Stephane Hachey (Transportation Officer). We are all Maritimers, and very proud to represent Canada at such an event.

Included within the mission staff is the Health Care Team (previously referred to as the Medical Team). The Health Care Team consists of a clinic manager (Antoine Attalah from Montreal) as well as 25 health care professionals. This includes:

- nine (9) physicians (including 2 orthopedic surgeons)
- eleven (11) therapist (athletic therapists and physiotherapists)
- three (3) massage therapists
- two (2) chiropractors

The other chiropractor on the Health Care Team is a colleague from Calgary, Dr. Greg Uchacz. Dr. Uchacz is the team doctor for the Canadian Bobsled and Skeleton Teams.

The Chief Medical Officer for the Health Care Team is Dr. Bob Foxford. Dr. Foxford is an emergency room physician in Montreal. Our Chief Therapist is Cindy Hughes who is an athletic therapist with York University in Toronto. Bob and Cindy over see the medical team along with Antoine, who has the task of arranging for mass unit equipment to be compiled and shipped to Salt Lake City and ensuring everything runs smoothly.

Within the Health Care Team there is literally representation from coast to coast; British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Being a member of Canada's Health Care Team requires each health care professional to be a team player. It is also a great experience. There is seldom a day go by that there is not an exchange of great ideas and information which in turn can benefit the athletes. Chiropractors, as are all the members of the Health Care Team, are relied upon by the athletes, coaches and other mission staff to provide quality care during the Olympics. As an example, as a member of the Health Care Team at the Pan American Games in 1999, athletes from 21 different sports, were seen for treatment over a period of 3 weeks.

If you have any questions about your exercise program or fitness endeavors, do not hesitate to contact your chiropractor. Chiropractors have considerable experience in evaluating what type of exercise would be appropriate which in turn can enhance your overall health.

I am certain you will join me in wishing all the best to our Canadian athletes as they compete in Salt Lake City. They are a great group of individuals and their efforts are a direct reflection of the considerable dedication which they have shown over the years.