

The Recovery of a College Athlete

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Maty Wilke (11)

Recovery

Maty Wilke is a freshman at the University of Wisconsin and plays basketball for the women's team. Maty is in recovery from her ACL injury and has to go to PT everyday to work on strengthening the leg that had the injury. Maty works with AJ Whitehead (Associate Director of Olympic Strength and Conditioning) and Erin McQuillan (Athletic Trainer) on bringing the strength back in her leg. Maty does many squats and reps to build strength. With Maty or any player that has an ACL injury you want to work with the good leg as much as possible because

science shows that strengthening in one leg transfers to the other. Working with that good leg is really important with an ACL injury. It allows players to recover quickly and have a easier recovery after surgery.

Injuries during games

When players get injured on the court, the athletic trainers do a quick evaluation on the player and then can get an idea of what they need to do. They may need a physician if the player needs help getting off the court depending on the injury. The athletic trainers then take the player back to do a better evaluation and figure out what they need to do depending on what type of injury it is. They may not be able to get imaging until the next day and may use ice or a compression sleeve to help the injury until they can get imaging.

Road to recovery

Maty Wilke has had a really long road to recovery and she has had some hard days because she cannot do everything that she use to be able to do. Maty also told me that everything happens for a reason, she knows that if getting injured means she can comeback and know more about her team and coach she is okay with that. Maty has days where she struggles with self doubt, but again she knows that working with her trainers and coaches she can go back to the team knowing that she is healthy. Players with this type of injury spend a lot of time in the weight room to gain strength back. Maty works with the athletic trainer five to six times a week for an hour to try and regain strength in the leg. "Keeping players engaged in recovery is very important because they can get tired of doing the same things over and over so sometimes I switch it up for the player so that we can make rehab fun," says Erin. That's why when having a bad injury it is important to make it fun, as players may be more willing and excited to do rehab.

Staying positive

Having been able to talk with AJ, Maty, and Erin, I was able to learn how they keep players positive and Maty (as the player) how she keeps herself positive. I was told by Erin that sometimes players that have a more intense injury can struggle and get frustrated because they can't do the same things like they use to. Erin may switch up what they do for rehab to keep it fun and keep the player positive. Talking with AJ, she told me that trying to have good communication with the player is really important because some can struggle with the fact that they cannot do what they could do before. AJ knows that they have to trust their body so they can get more confident again and so they can try to stay positive. When talking to Maty she told me that not everyday is a positive one because she felt doubt in her abilities. Maty then told me that she is lucky to be able to get to know what the coach was like and how her teammates play. That was still hard on her because she saw what the others can do and she cannot do right now. A big way Maty stayed positive was hanging out with teammates and friends.