



Twickenham 2014

- the role of the physio

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At Tudor Physiotherapy we operate clinics at Tudor Medical Group in Stratford upon Avon and at The University of Warwick. In addition we run a satellite clinic at Warwick School, where we offer early morning appointments for the pupils and staff, where the main focus is keeping the rugby players fit for their training and fixtures. The 2013/14 season has been the most successful in the school's history, with it culminating in both the U15 and U18 squads reaching the Nat West Schools Cup final at Twickenham, the U15's winning the trophy for the second year in succession. Tudor Physiotherapy had the privilege of accompanying both teams at the finals and the following account will give an insight into our role on the day. Perhaps some of you or your sons/daughters may be considering a career in physiotherapy – this will give you an understanding of some of the work we do.

The preparation for the matches had started many weeks before and as physiotherapists we had been treating and rehabilitating several of the boys in the run up to the match. For some it was managing training related niggles with a combination of massage and exercises and for one player it was carefully supervising the recovery of a more serious knee ligament sprain and for another it was managing a hamstring muscle injury. These injuries required a combination of manual therapy and carefully selected exercises to facilitate recovery and then strengthen the body again to be ready for competitive rugby.

We travelled to London the day before the game, the focus of this day being relaxation and mental preparation for the day ahead. It started with a visit to the London Eye and then we travelled across London to Twickenham to allow the boys to familiarise themselves with the facilities and visit the rugby museum. The hotel was then a short drive away - we set up our physio couch and soon had a queue for some last minute treatment!

The big day arrived and this is where our work really started. At Twickenham we had two physiotherapists from Tudor Physiotherapy, in addition the RFU provided two physios, a doctor and paramedics. In the background was a fully staffed medical unit that included an accident and emergency consultant and x-ray facilities.

Before the match we were busy applying strappings - some of you may have spotted the blue tape on several of the player's legs! This works to give the muscles some support and can help if there has been a recent injury or if the player has previously experienced cramp. Otherwise our time before the game is spent stretching and massaging tight muscles and then preparing our pitch-side ice packs and first aid supplies.

During the U15's match we were kept busy and several times had to attend to players on the pitch. In this situation quick assessments have to be made about the fitness, safety and ability of the player to continue playing and perhaps apply a quick strapping. Half time allows a few extra minutes for more detailed assessment and some short treatment.

Fortunately there were no players who had to come off due to injury, although we did have to take advantage of the x-ray facilities after the game, where we discovered one player had a fracture to his thumb. This then required immobilisation, communication with parents and then ultimately a referral to hospital.

After final U15 checks and distribution of ice packs we started again with the U18's. The pre-match requirements were much the same; although this time we were in the luxurious surroundings of the England dressing room.

Again we were kept busy during the match, unfortunately our hamstring patient only lasted 20 minutes but our knee ligament patient had no relapse. Following the match we again took full advantage of the on-site x-ray - a couple of finger injuries were given the all clear.

This very busy and emotional day highlights the roll of a physiotherapist in sport and showcases many aspects of our work in all of our clinics at Tudor Physiotherapy:

- Assessment, treatment & rehabilitation following injury
- Preparation for performance, including massage and stretching
- Taping/Strapping
- Pitch-side first aid and acute injury assessment
- Injury prevention
- Referral to and communication with other medical practitioners
- Patient education and communication with coaches/patient family

For more details of our physiotherapy team and for therapist profiles refer to our website: www.tudorphysiotherapy.com

