

GIVE IT A SHOT

By Dr. Anders Cohen

Appointment #4

The doctor is in...

First, in follow-up to my last article on concussions, we had quite a scare in the recent US open. Chris Chapman was in a first set dog fight with Rob Fahey. He had just failed to convert a setpoint against Rob. He was wrongfooted on the next point and crashed headfirst into the side wall near the last gallery. I was sitting in the dedans and the sound his head made against the wall made me cringe. We stopped the match and called for EMS to take Chris to the hospital. I was concerned that he had fractured his skull and possibly may have had a subdural hemorrhage. Fortunately, his imaging at the hospital was negative. That being said, he sustained a concussion and also had a very swollen left ear. The take-home message from this near miss scenario is to immediately stop and obtain an emergent medical consultation if this situation was to happen in any club match or professional play. It is always better to err on the side of safety. No match is THAT important that someone's health should be at risk when a head injury is that question. Chris took some time off and is now happily back on the court playing.

Next consult:

Several people have noticed that some of the tennis professionals have been wearing some compression accessories including on the knees and on the calf area. John Lumley has been sporting some fluorescent orange lately... The question is whether or not this helps and what is the rationale behind it.

Compression wear, specifically neoprene, has been popular for several years. It is commonly seen in other sports including football and basketball. Is most commonly worn to support joints but is occasionally seen on the thigh and calf region. The scientific rationale behind this is twofold. The first is to give some mild compression to reduce and prevent swelling at the area. The second is to insulate the area to increase the temperature which keeps it warmer and looser. There is also a psychological component in which the athlete feels more confident because he believes the areas being reinforced but there is much debate as to how much this actually is true. K Tape is another recent phenomenon that is grown in popularity and is also seen on the lawn tennis tour often. There is still much debate as to the actual science behind it but many players feel at this helps them with aches and pains in the upper and lower extremities.

Another question that has been asked to me is in regards to the type of off court

training that can augment one's court tennis performance. One specific question was the role of cardio training and how this can help in our sport.

Any training that improves one's physical capacity can only help in the court tennis arena. The unique demands of this sport do you raise questions as to what is the most efficient type of training or what combination can be most effective to getting maximum performance. In my discussions with some of the trainers and top players, one common theme that stands out is the emphasis on core training. Most agree that the abdominal and lower back muscles and in general the groups of muscles that are in the center of gravity region are the most important for peak performance. This is also expanded to include the thighs and hamstrings as getting lower to the ground and maintaining balance are paramount to success in the sport. In addition, complementary strength and endurance training also round out the optimal training for court tennis. Fortunately, most of us have access to a local pro or can approach one of the top players at any tournament to get their opinion as to what they think is most important in preparing their bodies for war.