

Chiropractic Contributes to State Olympic Festivals

Marianne S. Gengenbach, DC, CCCSP, FICC

Summer is the time when many states stage elaborate Olympic-style festivals. These sport festivals attract thousands of athletes competing over several days in 25-35 different sports. Competitors vary in age from 6-60, and in some cases, these events help to showcase the performances of future olympic athletes. For example, this year's Florida Sunshine State Games track and field event incorporated competitors from the Junior Nationals.

The Florida Sunshine State Games, the Connecticut Nutmeg Games, and New Jersey Garden State Games are but three examples of these types of multi-sports events. They all had something else in common: chiropractic care for the athletes. This article is a summary of those three games through the eyes of the sports chiropractors who coordinated care for the athletes, and, in some cases, acted as sole medical director.

Connecticut Nutmeg State Games
Team Approach for Sports Medicine
Richard Duenas, DC, CCSP

The Connecticut Nutmeg State Games, August 1-7, had 6,000 athletes competing and 25,000 spectators attending. This year's event marked the first time the Connecticut Chiropractic Association formally provided coverage and supervision of sports medicine personnel. Dr. Richard Duenas, chiropractic physician from West Hartford, coordinated chiropractic coverage of the event with the much needed assistance of regional directors: Drs. Michele Imossi, Kevin Bellows, Stephen O'Donnell, and Stephen Perle, sports medicine consultant from the University of Bridgeport's College of Chiropractic.

Coordinating coverage for the MDs was David Burstein, an orthopedist, and for athletic trainers and student trainers, Kevin Conklin, AT, MS. Also involved in the sports medicine team were Neal Zomback, DPM, and massage practitioners from the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy.

Over 40 DCs from the CCA, and chiropractic students from the University of Bridgeport, provided sports medicine coverage of the four regional tryouts and the week-long finals. Specific venue schedules were provided for each provider with appropriate sports medicine emergency supplies provided by donations from Aero-med, a medical supply company, Kennedy Professional supply, a chiropractic supply company, and the kind and thoughtful donations from the CCA membership. Typically, injuries would initially be assessed and, if necessary, treated by the trainer or on-field doctor. If further evaluation, not requiring emergency transport to the hospital, was required, the athlete would be transported to the medical tent for evaluation by the doctor present.

This year's games experienced 96 injuries with soccer, basketball, and field hockey taking the Gold, Silver, and Bronze for frequency of injuries. Judo took the Gold for injury severity.

All providers had first-hand experience in observing the expertise of their colleagues from other disciplines. Many enlightening conversations along with new friendships developed between the

providers. From this experience, the sports medicine committee of the CCA plans to network with sports medicine committees of other provider organizations to provide team coverage of sporting events throughout the state.

The weather was very good, the people fantastic, the athletes completely enthusiastic, and the 1994 Nutmeg State Games a success. The executive director of the event, William Mudano, who initiated the games six years ago, termed the sports medicine team coverage to be "among the finest provided by any sporting event anywhere."

Florida Sunshine State Games: Chiropractic Makes Another Strong Showing Marianne Gengenbach, DC, DACBSP

Sixteen Florida chiropractors helped provide on-site coverage for approximately 5000 athletes of all ages in 28 different sports at the 1994 Florida Sunshine State Games held in Tallahassee July 6-10. Working side by side with MDs, trainers and physical therapists, these volunteer doctors once again proved that interdisciplinary care for athletes is not only alive and well, but truly appreciated in Florida. Even heavy rains from tropical storm Alberto, which kept many athletes and families away from the games this year, did not dampen the spirit of the athletes, spectators and doctors attending.

"We all work together to assess and manage on-the-field injuries," said Marianne Gengenbach, DC, the chiropractic coordinator for the event. She added: "The chiropractors provide the addition of a unique mode of care that athletes at several venues have come to ask for specifically. It's a great team approach to caring for athletes."

Dr. Gengenbach, who also served as chiropractic coordinator last year, stated that the number of chiropractors working at the games doubled from last year. Despite this encouraging fact, she expressed some disappointment at the response from the Florida chiropractic community. "A mailing went out to over 300 chiropractors in the state, most of them north of Orlando, all CCSPs, and all members of the FCA Sports Council," Dr. Gengenbach explained. "Out of all those letters, I received 8-10 phone responses. Yet during the rest of the year I often field complaints from doctors about how there aren't any opportunities for them in sports. Granted, the Sunshine State Games do not pay their volunteers, and at many of the sports venues there isn't always a great deal of 'action.' But I feel that it is a shame to have such a huge opportunity for chiropractic year after year, and have so few doctors be willing to take advantage of that fact and serve such a great cause."

Dr. Gengenbach and other participating DCs reported that the event went well and was a great experience for the doctors and athletes. Dr. Gengenbach also represented the FCA in accepting a plaque of appreciation for their continued generous sponsorship of the games. In addition, she served as the event coordinator for the first windsurfing event in the 15-year history of the state games.

"Next year's games are in Gainesville," she said, "I hope that chiropractic will expand its role once again at those games."

Garden State Games -- A Success Kathleen Baumgardner, DC, CCSP

The New Jersey Chiropractic Society, in conjunction with the Health South Rehabilitative Center, were appointed the official care providers for the event. The Garden State Games are for all New Jersey amateur athletes and designed for all ages and skill levels. The event is directly linked to the

U.S. Olympic Committee, and its programs are measured according to the highest principles of amateur sports.

The New Jersey Chiropractic Society Sports Council first became involved with the Garden State Games in 1992 as a major sponsor of the event, with 25 DCs participating. Beyond the customary media exposure, being a major sponsor enabled the doctors to observe on the field, work with the athletic trainers, and gain field experience. Many doctors had never had the opportunity to be in the situation of on-field emergency and triage evaluation, allowing them to use the information being presented in the CCSP and diplomate courses.

In 1993 the Council continued as a major sponsor, but only 10 DCs were able to participate (the diplomate written examination was being conducted concurrently).

This year, the NJCS Sports Council enlisted the help of 25 DCs, one at each venue, working together with an athletic trainer. Each doctor worked an event for three hours, and then rotated to another event. The doctor and trainer were responsible for observing the event, providing appropriate aid and referral, and insuring that water, ice and supplies were readily available to the participants. Injuries were minimal, ranging from sprains, strains, and lacerations to a fractured nose. The primary problem at the games resulted from sweltering heat that kept the temperatures between 100 and 105 degrees for the entire weekend. Temperatures on the synthetic turf were measured at 145 degrees.

Heat exhaustion was common, but there were no severe cases. The reduction in the severity of heat-related conditions can be attributed to an emphasis being placed on proper hydration. Water and ice were plentiful thanks to the support of the New Jersey National Guard. Without their support, many of the contests would most likely have been cancelled.

Injury coverage was thorough, providing excellent service to the New Jersey athletic community. The Garden State Games provided our doctors with the chance to work at a variety of sporting events and gain valuable field experience. More importantly, the games helped foster relationships with athletic trainers, which in turn helps our drive to make chiropractic an integral part of the interdisciplinary sports medicine team.

Marianne S. Gengenbach, DC, DACBSP

Dr. Gengenbach has over 11 years of experience in both private practice and teaching at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Her practice and teaching have specialized in athletic injuries and pediatrics, and she has lectured on numerous topics in sports chiropractic at the national and international levels. She has actively served the ACA Council on Sports Injuries since 1985, and is a former president of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians. Until recently, she served as advisor to the ACBSP, and is also a Fellow of the International College of Chiropractors. She currently keeps busy covering sports events in Florida.

Richard Duenas, DC, CCSP

Dr. Duenas is a 1985 graduate of NYCC, with a BS in physical education from Manhattan College. He is a diplomate of the American College of Chiropractic Neurology and a Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician. Dr. Duenas is involved in providing coverage at various athletic events throughout Connecticut and the New York Metropolitan area, and is a district director for the Connecticut Chiropractic Association. He practices in West Hartford, Connecticut.

Kathleen Baumgardner, DC, CCSP

Dr. Baumgardner maintains a private practice in Marlton, New Jersey. She serves as the chairperson of the NJCS Sports Council and was the Medical Director of the Garden State Games. Dr. Baumgardner has examination committee of the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians. Dr. Baumgardner has 10 years of athletic training field experience, and lectures for the NYCC CCSP and diplomate programs on the subject of athletic training and the female athlete.

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Clarification: The Chiropractic Sports Physician column appears every other issue. Dr. George Billauer's article on World Cup Soccer in the July 29, 1994 issue, front page, should have been credited to the Chiropractic Sports Physician column.

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