



NEWS / PROFESSION

## Person of the Year: Dr. Thomas Hyde

Editorial Staff

As an Olympic year winds down and preparations begin for another in 2010, it is clear chiropractic has carved a permanent place in amateur and professional athletics. On the amateur side, four doctors of chiropractic served in an official capacity on the U.S. Olympic Committee medical staff in Beijing, and DCs treat amateur athletes and serve on the medical staffs of high school and college teams nationwide. On the professional side, chiropractors actively participate in the care of athletes in professional football, hockey, basketball, baseball and a variety of other sports with increasing frequency.

If you work with athletes, chances are you know or have at least heard of Thomas Hyde, DC, DACBSP. Before retiring from practice due to a hand/wrist injury, Dr. Hyde worked local, national and international athletic competitions for years. He lectures around the world and is regarded as one of the top sources of information and expertise regarding chiropractic care of athletes. His book, *Conservative Management of Sports Injuries*, co-authored by Dr. Marianne Gengenbach, is now in its second edition.



*Dynamic Chiropractic* established the Person of the Year Award years ago as a way to honor chiropractors who have contributed significantly to the growth of the profession within a particular calendar year or during their career. In an Olympic year and with chiropractic involved in the ongoing care of so many athletes, we could think of no better recipient of the 2008 award than Dr. Hyde. In this exclusive interview with *DC*, Dr. Hyde details his career involvement with elite-level athletes and discusses the challenges the opportunities sports chiropractors face in the 21st century.

What motivated you to get involved in sports chiropractic? Several factors caused me to migrate toward the chiropractic approach to sports medicine. While I was a student at Logan College in the mid '70s, I competed in powerlifting and had several classmates who were also involved in various sports. One of those classmates was John Danchik, who had been a professional baseball player. We became friends and had the opportunity while we were students to attend a presentation by Leroy Perry, DC. Dr. Perry brought Dwight Stones, an Olympian, to Logan. Dwight held the U.S. high jump record at that time. John and I were fortunate to have dinner with both Leroy and Dwight, and it became very clear to me at that moment that I wanted to treat athletes. Dr. Perry was the first chiropractor I recall having met who had a profound influence upon my chosen career path. Since graduation, Dr. John Danchik and I have remained friends. He is also my mentor and has provided support and guidance throughout my career.

Summarize your involvement with national and international athletics. After I had been in practice

a couple of years, a significant break in my career happened. I had joined a powerlifting club in North Miami Beach (NMB), Fla., and while working out in the local athletic facility, I met another lifter who worked in the recreation department for the city of NMB. One day he called to tell me that NMB was hosting the Junior World Powerlifting Championships, and that the orthopedic surgeon who headed all medical care for what was then the United States Powerlifting Federation (USPF) wanted to speak to me. He asked me if I had any interest in providing chiropractic services for that event. The orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Richard Herrick, had worked with a DC from New York by the name of Ken Leistner. Ken was unable to make the event, which provided the opportunity for me to attend. Ken was a great lifter himself and was well-respected around the world of powerlifting.

I developed a very good working relationship with Dr. Herrick, who then asked me to attend the Women's World Powerlifting Championships, followed by the Men's World Powerlifting Championships. Ultimately, Dr. Leistner decided he was no longer able to coordinate chiropractic coverage for the USPF and Dr. Herrick passed those duties along to me.

During the following 20 years, I coordinated efforts to provide chiropractors at powerlifting meets around the world. Then, in 1986, I applied to attend the two-week Sports Medicine Internship in Colorado Springs at the Olympic Training Center and was accepted. From there, I was also selected to be the official chiropractor for the 1987 Pan American Games. After that, the sports medicine world continued to present me with tremendous opportunities.

In your opinion, why is chiropractic so important to elite-level athletes, particularly in this day and age? In my opinion, there are several reasons for this. First, many of the chiropractors today are well-trained in biomechanics, mechanisms of injury, training techniques for all types of sports, as well as injury prevention. They attend seminars each year held by groups such as the American Chiropractic Association Council on Sports Injuries and Physical Fitness, the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians (ACBSP), the American College of Sports Medicine, the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) and more.

Second, sports DCs continue to take courses in active release technique, Graston Technique, active isolated stretching, Janda, McKenzie, McGill, kinesiotaping, and many others. Some DCs have become certified chiropractic sports physicians (CCSP) and diplomates of the ACBSP. Additionally, others have become certified by the NSCA and have master's degrees in exercise physiology, sports and other related specialties. Thus, with the varied levels of educational opportunities for chiropractors, athletes naturally gravitate toward forms of conservative care whenever possible. We are a natural fit.

What challenges have you faced in providing chiropractic services to athletes, and how have you been able to overcome them? When I received my first invitation to work with a high school football team, both the athletic trainer and the orthopedic surgeon told me that they did not want me to treat the players. But the head coach told them it was his team and he wanted me there. His players liked chiropractic care and responded very well to the care that I provided. That did not make it easy, but through perseverance, the other medical personnel began to warm toward me. From there, the high school coach eventually moved on to one of the local universities and asked me to treat some of his collegiate players.

Out of respect for the ATCs (certified athletic trainers) at the university, I kept them informed as to whom I was treating and what the treatment care plan was. I never infringed upon the role that the ATCs played. The big breakthrough came one evening at the Orange Bowl national championship game [college football], when I was paged from the stands to look at a defensive back who had suffered a back injury during warm-ups and was unable to run. When I started to examine him and

put him through a range of motion, the orthopedic surgeon told me, "You don't understand, you have 30 seconds." With that said, I placed the athlete on the sideline bench and gave him a lumbar roll to the right, then to the left and when he got up, he was able to run without pain. He had a great game because he was a great athlete, and the medical staff invited me to the locker room during halftime.

From that point forward, the ATCs would refer players to me for care. When the head coach left the university and went to the Dallas Cowboys, the head ATC went with him. The assistant head ATC was then hired by the Miami Dolphins. Because of his positive experiences with me, he asked if I would consider becoming the chiropractic consultant for the Dolphins. When I met with the head trainer, I asked him if I could bring another DC with me to help treat the players in case I was out of town or was unable to provide care for any reason. He agreed to this request, and one of the DCs who helped me at the Dolphins remains there today.

What challenges/limitations remain to be overcome? As difficult as it might be to believe, in 2008, prejudices remain. As Joe Keating, PhD, used to say, "We (chiropractors) lack cultural authority." When we continue to tout the subluxation to those who are trained in the medical model, this term is foreign to them, not rational and not understandable. Rather than referring to the "s" word, I would reference the lesion as spinal dysfunction or in terms that were understandable to them. I also discovered that the majority of people in sports injury management cared less about philosophy, but more about what it was that I could do to help their athlete achieve his or her maximum potential. The athletes have a unique mindset; they simply want to be well *now*!

My discovery early on was that the health care team must speak with a common language. To quote Dr. Keating, "We don't know if that lesion exists or doesn't exist." Therefore, until we do our homework and find answers to that question, why not speak in a language that is understandable to all?

The second problem we face rests in the arena of education. Like many others, I completed the CCSP and DACBSP courses and requirements. I finally realized that we as chiropractors are the only ones who know what these certifications mean. If I had the opportunity to pursue postgraduate education again, I would enroll in a master's level course. Everyone in the world understands the meaningfulness of a master's degree or a PhD, but they have no idea what these chiropractic designations mean. Our colleges and universities must explore providing quality programs and master's-level degrees, and move away from the current certification programs being offered. For those institutions that have already done so, they should be applauded. I feel confident that as our future unfolds, more and more chiropractic institutions will move in that same direction.

What does the future look like with regard to chiropractic's role in treating competitive athletes, on and off the playing field? I think the future looks very bright for our profession. In 1980, Dr. George Goodheart became the first chiropractor to be part of an Olympic event at Lake Placid, N.Y. In 1984, Dr. Eileen Haworth was invited to become the official chiropractor for the Olympic Games in Los Angeles. When I was a student, I felt chiropractors should be involved in the Olympics, and I thank Dr. Leroy Perry and others for helping to open those doors for the rest of us. Leroy was not an official appointee for the U.S. Olympians, but officially served the chiropractic needs of other countries.

At present, we can take pride that a DC is in charge of athlete care at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. That person is Dr. Mike Reed. Ira Shapiro became the first DC to be invited to attend both the Summer and Winter Games - Athens, Greece (2004) and Torino, Italy (2006), respectively. Ted Forcum became the first DC to be invited to the Pan American and the Olympic

Games, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2007), and Beijing (2008). In 2010, chiropractors will be officially a part of the Polyclinic (for the first time in its history) at the Winter Games in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

We not only have a presence at the Olympic Games, but also at the Pan American Games, World University Games, Para-Olympics Games, Para Pan American Games, (Jim Kurtz was the first DC to be officially invited by the U.S. to be involved with both the Para Pan Ams and Para-Olympics) and numerous other international athletic competitions. We work with major universities, professional teams, high schools, minor leagues, little leagues, and in virtually every sport you can name. We now have women more and more involved [as well as] our peers from countries around the world. If we as a profession continue to work together as a team, the sky is the limit. What an impressive array of accomplishments for this profession.

What advice do you have for DCs interested in getting involved in sports chiropractic? Learn everything you can from every legitimate source you can find. Volunteer in your community and truly become involved. Learn how to be a team player with not only other health care professionals, but your peers - and be willing to share. Read the literature available in periodicals and textbooks, attend seminars, learn from your peers and those outside your profession. Never stop learning. There are countless opportunities available to everyone. All you have to do is look for them.

Please allow me to express one concern I have. If a team already has a DC working with them, *please* do not approach someone within that organization about doing an end run on that DC in an attempt to pursue your own interests. There are abundant opportunities available without infringing on the rights of others. Be humble, listen, learn, share and, when in doubt, refer to others. None of us has all the answers, but collectively we make a tremendous team.

If you are a student, become involved. Most of our colleges and universities have sports councils. In my opinion, Palmer West has the top SC in the profession. Dr. Ed Feinberg has been the faculty advisor to their SC since the mid-1990s. He consistently turns out some of our best-trained young sports DCs. Some of the other schools are also doing a great job, and I encourage all schools to pursue the model Dr. Feinberg has created. The only way we will not continue to build upon our past successes is if we fail to work together for the benefit of the athletes we treat.

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