

Chiropractic at the International Powerlifting Championships

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The 2002 International Powerlifting Championships started with a bang - or rather, a loud snap, when one of the first lifters fractured his femur. It was an ugly thing to witness, but you have to keep your wits about you in that kind of situation. Moments earlier, the room had been somewhat quiet, as everyone waited to see if the lifter would get his proper depth for the lift - and then suddenly, we all heard the loud snapping sound (like that of the Jeep falling through the trees in the movie "Jurassic Park"). Immediately, everyone looked the other way, mostly because no one wanted to deal with that type of mental picture.

This is what those of us in chiropractic sports medicine must train for, to act as the primary caregiver at this type of event. In general, there isn't much to do in such a situation except check the competitor's ABCs (airway, breathing and circulation), stabilize the injured area, call 911, and keep the patient from going into shock. At first, I thought it was an "unholy triad" (torn medial meniscus, medial collateral and anterior cruciate), but later radiographic studies showed a midshaft commuted spiral fracture of the femur. I visited the athlete in the hospital the next day. We laughed, and I told him to "suck it up." We both laughed again, and he thanked me repeatedly for being in control at the event. Everyone in the hospital and on the local squads knew a chiropractor had been there to attend to the situation, and even the ER docs called to keep me updated on the athlete's condition and to say, "good job" for how I handled the disaster.

In a weird way, this was a great moment for all chiropractors; it helps us so much when we act as health care providers and not just "back crackers," as so much of the world imagines us.

Dr. Zahir Sherazee (a 1999 Life graduate) also helped out throughout the weekend event. He attended to another serious knee blowout, and a possible cervical fracture. "Most of the lifters tell me that they have their best lift after I adjusted them," Dr. Sherazee said, "Adjusting these guys is exhausting work." With over 200 of the world's strongest athletes from North America and six other continents attending, there was a lot of sweat and straining - and that was just on the chiropractic side!

Adjusting a larger athlete (sometimes 300 pounds or more) is much easier if you modify your side-posture position and place the top leg straight down, instead of tucking the toe behind the knee. This position allows the patient's weight to remain forward and toward you, making the contact point and line-of-correction much easier to maintain.

This modification is necessary particularly when working on the guys who squat over 1,000 pounds, which is like ripping bark off a large tree. When dealing with any powerlifter, make sure to look for the sacral apex locked to either the right or left.

Most powerlifters do "box squats" with hundreds of pounds. This type of impact squatting places direct pressure on the coccyx and sacral areas, and thus the SI joints.

Several records were shattered during this year's sold-out event, held at the Holiday Inn in

Worthington, Ohio. Dr. Sherazee and I were proud to represent the chiropractic profession in an international setting.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming Arnold Classic at the end of February in Columbus, Ohio. (The International Chiropractors Association conducts a seminar in conjunction with this event.) The Classic attracts more than 14,000 athletes from all over the world, including top competitors from the International PowerLifting Association, the World's Strongest Man Competition and several other events. For more information, visit www.ArnoldClassic.com and the ICA Web site: www.chiropractic.org.

Editor's note: Palmer graduate David Ryan, DC, practices in Columbus, Ohio, at Columbus Chiropractic Centers. He is the medical chairman for the Arnold Fitness Weekend, and is licensed as a USA Boxing ringside physician by the Ohio Athletic Association.

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