

Pain Free -- "It Was Almost Like a Miracle"

Steve Kelly, managing editor

The playoffs begin in May with 16 teams and end in early June with one team emerging as champions of the National Basketball Association (NBA). It's a brutal struggle among behemoths, where a man of 6'9" and 225 pounds is termed a "small forward"; where a little man of 6'1" can survive only by possessing the speed and nibleness of a water bug. The intensity of play is what makes the playoffs special for the fans. Where else can you see grown men diving to the floor after a basketball?

For New York Knicks' veteran forward Kiki Vandeweghe, competing in his 11th NBA season, the playoffs were short-lived. The Chicago Bulls and Michael Jordon swept the Knicks in three straight games.

Although the early exit from the playoffs was disappointing, Kiki Vandeweghe feels fortunate to be still playing basketball.

Five years ago while playing for the Portland Trailblazers, Kiki fell and hurt his back. He continued to play for a year and a half, missing very few games, but the injury progressively got worse. Then he fell and twisted his back; his back went into spasms for six months.

"No matter what I did, the muscle would be in constant spasms. Every time I started to play basketball again, my back would immediately go into spasms," Kiki said.

The back spasms kept Kiki on the side lines much of the 1987-88 season. The career of this prodigious scoring all-star forward with the deft outside shooting touch was in jeopardy.

An MRI revealed three bulging discs in the lumbar area, two of which were extremely bad. An operation was suggested but Kiki sought alternative treatment. In August of 1988, Kiki went to Christopher John, D.C., on the advise of a fellow basketball player who had gotten relief from a D.C. who used the directional non-force technique (DNFT).

Dr. John told Kiki, "Give me a week to two weeks and you'll be able to tell if this will help."

After the first treatment Kiki felt "better instantly." Getting up from the adjusting table Kiki said, "My back didn't have the tightness it usually has. It is usually pretty tight and it feels like I have a big knot in my back all the time. And that was gone for the first time."

After one week of treatment Kiki noticed a substantial difference. After the second week he said: "Well, I had been suffering for about two years, and after about two weeks, I could walk around basically pain free. I was able to sleep at nights, whereas before, for two years, I couldn't sleep hardly at all. To me, it was amazing. It was almost like a miracle."

Two weeks after the treatments Kiki went back to doing exercises, and shooting the ball. It took six weeks before he was able to return to the pounding and physical demands of the game without any

pain.

DNFT, according to Dr. John, is the original, directional non-force technique of chiropractic developed by Dr. Richard VanRumpt beginning in 1923. Dr. VanRumpt discovered that a very specific light force thrust was successful in accomplishing an osseous correction. DNFT relies on the testing procedure of challenge and leg check to allow the body to indicate the presence, location, and directions of misalignment of the involved structures, and a thumb thrust for correction. DNFT allows the body to be the indicator of subluxation.

Dr. VanRumpt arrived at a method of eliciting a leg reflex which proved to be qualitatively different from both static leg measuring and other distortional phenomenon. This leg reflex has become known as the VanRumpt leg check, the reactive leg reflex, or DNFT leg measuring.

Dr. Johns says DNFT has been considered radical because of its unorthodox approach, but that in philosophy and practice it is straightforward and basic chiropractic.

Kiki relates that the treatment has returned his body to a healthy state. To maintain his back health Kiki uses ice, stretching, and heat therapy, along with back strengthening exercises.

Kiki is today playing pain free but still sees a DNFT doctor in New York (Dr. Isis Medina) when the jarring play of the NBA results in his need of an adjustment. Kiki acknowledges that he still has a predisposition to back injury. "If I didn't see a DNFT doctor, I probably wouldn't be playing basketball at all."

Chiropractic continues to make inroads into professional athletics. Kiki, the son of an MD, says that professional teams are looking to chiropractors because "they can help in other ways that medical doctors can't. They (chiropractors) have a very effective place in sports medicine and it's becoming much more recognized now."

Finally, let's not forget the multitude of amateur athletes and "weekend warriors" who are a much larger contingent than the professional athlete and can benefit from chiropractic care.

Steve Kelly
Assistant Editor

Editor's Note: The Kiki Vandeweghe quotes are courtesy of Dana Cole, D.C., who interviewed Kiki during the "Magic Johnson Gold Tournament" at the Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, California.

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