

Chicago Bears Get Adjusted Thanks to James Rosemeyer, D.C.

James A. Rosemeyer, DC

I would like to be able to say that it took a lot of extra hard work, dedication, the best chiropractic skill, and a wonderful personality to do what I did. It didn't. My relationship with the Bears organization, although not a chance one, could have been planned and brought about by any other chiropractor with the same opportunities. I hope that if I share what I did to establish a chiropractic relationship with the Bears that every chiropractor who reads this will realize that they too, can do what is necessary to establish a chiropractic relationship with a sports team whether it be professional, college, high school or other.

When I moved back to Platteville, Wisconsin, in 1986 the Bears had already been practicing here for a couple of years. After winning the 1985 Super Bowl, their popularity in Platteville was unsurpassed. Platteville, being a town of about 10,000, lent itself well for privacy for the Bears -- away from the Chicago limelight.

Mine was mainly a family practice with an emphasis on pediatrics. I had treated an occasional sports figure from the local college and high school but had not made a lot of contacts with the sports organization in town. I had no sports chiropractic continuing education and no additional education in orthopedics.

We sent a letter to Fred Caito, the head trainer of the Chicago Bears, in April of 1987. I obtained this contact from Steve Zielke of the University of Platteville, the person responsible for bringing the Bears to Platteville for their summer training. The letter introduced myself and explained that many chiropractic physicians were involved with other professional teams as well as Olympic teams. Essentially, the letter offered my chiropractic services to them while they were in the area. At the time, Platteville Hospital had an ongoing relationship with the Bears to provide radiological services as well as other diagnostic services. An orthopedic surgeon here served as one of their doctors on staff.

That summer during camp, Fred Caito sent between three to six players to see me. The players I saw the first summer were all veterans. Some of them had been to a chiropractor in the past and some had not.

After the 1987-88 season I sent another letter to Fred Caito expressing our appreciation to be of service and to remind him that in 1988 we would continue to be able to provide services for them while in camp. A similar letter was also sent in 1989. Over the course of those three training camps this office may have treated somewhere between eight to ten Chicago Bears for the three week period that they were in camp. Of course, other Bears may have been receiving care from other chiropractors in the community.

In July of 1990 I contacted Fred Caito on the phone to suggest a different arrangement. It had been a

good relationship but it was becoming increasingly difficult to see the players in my office because they were only able to be seen at certain times of the day which were usually my busiest. It was also a hassle for the players to get to my office since they were staying in the dorms and had limited transportation. I suggested to Mr. Caito that we set up a facility in their camp. He immediately thought that it was a good idea and we both went about the proper procedures to set the office up in their training camp, which consisted of making arrangements with the people in charge at the UW-Platteville.

Two organizations that I contacted were of great help to me. The Lloyds Table Company donated a high-low at the camp. Thuli Table Company also donated a table for adjusting, as well as for therapy that might be performed. Fred Caito was concerned about the cost of setting up an office in the training camp. These two companies literally kept our cost at zero dollars with their donations.

There was some question as to where we would set up. The actual training facility was located on the first floor of the stadium and had no additional room. We agreed on a site that was beneficial not only to me, but especially to the players. We set up our office in the recreational area of the basement of the dorm in which we were staying. This was ideal, since after lunch many of the players were back in their rooms resting and after meeting at night would go back to the dorm. I set office hours at 1 p.m. for an hour and at 9:30 p.m. until the last Bear was treated. This worked very well, especially at the beginning.

As time went on during the three weeks, the 1 p.m. time was not used as frequently since there were fewer players who needed to be seen twice a day. Of course, this location was simply ideal for the players due to accessibility and lack of distractions.

The only disadvantage of the location of the chiropractic services in camp was that we had very little contact with the medical staff or the training staff of the Chicago Bears. Periodically the trainers would come down and visit and watch the players being adjusted, but other than that there really weren't any inter-professional established.

The financial arrangements were fee-for-service. There was no contract for services rendered other than 100% payment from the Bear organization which is the normal procedure for health-related problems.

It was important to the players that the Bear organization provided chiropractic care. We concentrated on the normal chiropractic-related injury problems such as neck and back conditions, but also treated a variety of cases such as shoulder tendonitis, knee, and foot-related problems.

The use of chiropractic care in the Bear organization allowed more mobility on the players' part and speedier recovery from injuries. All in all, that winning combination should insure greater success for the Bears -- both on the field and off.

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