

## Doctor Is Pro-Soccer Team Chiropractor

Editorial Staff

Dr. Rick Speizer, a Norcross, Georgia chiropractor and 1987 graduate of Life College School of Chiropractic, is playing a leading role in keeping one of pro-soccer's best teams healthy and on the playing field. He has been named team chiropractor for the Atlanta Attack, a member of the American Indoor Soccer Association (ASIA).

Indoor soccer is a sport which, like its better known outdoor version, is rapidly gaining in popularity in America.

The Attack played their first season during 1989-90 as the newest entry in the (ASIA) and quickly asserted themselves as a power to be reckoned with. They ended the regular season with five straight wins, and the second best record in the league (23-17).

It was a spectacular season for an expansion team which was counted out early as a contender in a tough league. But skillful coaching, players with heart and determination, and chiropractic turned what could have been just an average season for a new team into a great one.

Experienced defensive veteran Gregg Blasingame -- the fastest man in soccer -- and rookie forward sensation Brian Haynes -- 1990's Rookie of the Year -- were two players who had leading roles, not only in the team's on the field success, but also in bringing chiropractic to the forefront of health care for the Attack athletes.

Soccer, particularly indoor soccer, is one of the roughest of the "non-contact" sports. Injury is a fact of life for these professional players; recovering from injuries, or better still avoiding them, is vital to their careers. There's where Dr. Speizer was able to help by providing chiropractic care for the team.

As an athlete himself who played on Life's soccer team, he has "had a lot of the same injuries as the players, so I can better relate to them and how they get the injuries and how they feel."

As a practicing chiropractor in the suburban Atlanta community of Norcross, Rick avidly followed what little news of soccer he could find and was excited to learn early in 1989 that a professional team was coming to Atlanta.

"I read and clipped all the articles so when months later they came to Atlanta I knew who all the players were," said Speizer.

He attended an autograph-signing party at a popular local tavern and while there introduced himself to Brian Haynes who was in his first year with Attack, following a successful college career. They talked about soccer and the players they both knew.

Dr. Speizer gave Haynes a card for a free exam at his office. That was the beginning of a very successful relationship with the Attack.

As an athlete Haynes was deeply concerned about taking care of his body and avoiding injuries, and he liked the results he got from his first adjustment.

"Chiropractic helps to prevent injuries and speeds up the recovery time when you are injured," says the soccer star. Haynes now comes in faithfully for an adjustment before games and after particularly rough practices.

Veteran player Gregg Blasingame was quick to join Haynes in coming to Dr. Speizer for chiropractic care. His own discovery of the profession had come a good deal earlier when he was first adjusted eight years ago as a rookie.

The success that Haynes and Blasingame have had with chiropractic has attracted the other members of the Atlanta Attack to become patients of Dr. Speizer -- more than 80 percent of the team are adjusted regularly. He became the team's "unofficial" chiropractor even before being recognized by the front office.

The fact that Rick was already treating so many of the players made his application to be team chiropractor more compelling and caused him to stand out from the many other doctors applying for the job.

As the team's chiropractor, Rick devotes a great deal of time to treating the injuries that are particular to soccer players. He explained that, for example, soccer players are often tackled low rather than high like football players, so they often suffer many leg injuries. They may get pushed into the plexiglass walls or boards which separate the fans from the players on the field.

In addition, players use their heads to strike the ball thousands of times during practices and games which puts a tremendous stress on the neck.

Athletes like Haynes and Blasingame are attracted to this healing art because it is a natural approach to health care that doesn't subject their bodies to the side effects of drugs.

Because athletes and soccer players in particular are the focus of his work, Dr. Speizer is quick to assert that it is vital that he or any sports chiropractor keep up with the latest literature on sports injuries.

He stays abreast of the latest developments in the field through membership in the American Chiropractic Association's Council on Sports Injuries and Physical Fitness; Atlanta Sports Council; Federation Internationale Chiropracique Sportive; the International Chiropractors Association; and the Atlanta Organizing Committee for the 1996 Olympics. He is also working with the committee that is attempting to bring the World Cup of soccer to Atlanta in 1994.

Everyone connected with the Atlanta Attack is eager to start the new season in November. It will be a time when this young and aggressive team will be seeking to claw their way to the top of a rough and highly competitive sport, and Rick Speizer will be there to help them along the way.

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