Orthopaedic Connection

A Common Athletic Injury To The Foot

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

During the football season there is a term that comes up frequently that most people don’t understand. They have heard it, but that’s about it. Unless of course you are a player and then you have experienced it.

Turf Toe

It sounds sort of simple and benign doesn’t it? But it can wreck your season and it is very painful. It is a sprain of the big toe joint nearest the ball of the foot. Everybody in athletics calls it “Turf Toe”. It is more common on artificial turf fields than grass it seems. But it can occur on a hard court, as in tennis or basketball.

Mechanism

If the player rolls with force onto the toes so that the joint bends beyond normal, the ligaments of the big toe stretch and tear. Double ouch! You have “Turf Toe” as a result.

Sports

It is most common in football and soccer. Turf Toe is occasionally seen in baseball, tennis and basketball. Swimmers don’t need to worry about it!!

Symptoms

It is super painful in the big toe almost immediately. You can barely walk on the outside of the foot. Swelling follows soon after. The big toe joint is tender and movement is limited. Bruising is present the next day. Normal walking is impossible. Running is unthinkable.

Treatment

You have to give up and keep it elevated for 2 days. Ice for 20 minutes 3 times per day works. When I see Turf Toe I always need to have x-rays taken to rule out a fracture, which can occur with ligament damage.
- Aircast walking brace (mid leg version) to protect the foot for 1 – 2 weeks
- One crutch to keep some weight off
- Pain medication
- May not be able to run for 4 – 6 weeks (or more)

What Else?

The time out of your sport and length of treatment depends on the severity of the injury. Coaches usually don’t understand why it takes “so long” to get back. A trainer might be able to tape or immobilize the toe to get the player back a little sooner. Other than giving up your sport there is nothing you can do to prevent it. Conservative treatment works 99% of the time.
My patients put their trust in me and what I do improves the quality of their lives.

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It gives access to 1) All Website articles, 2) Your Orthopaedic Connection, 3) Every GCH article from most recent to the first - full text! It covers everything I do in the office and hospital.
Good Health. Good Life. All the Best to you.

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