The Trainer’s Corner: 11/1/2012

Ankle Taping vs. Ankle Bracing

Volumes of research exist when assessing the benefits and comparison of ankle support systems. Studies comparing comfort and pre and post participation control are the more common criteria noted. There is literature also referencing prophylactic ankle support systems as well as the associated resources and cost to apply both ankle taping and bracing.

The primary study referenced for my summarization is: “The role of ankle bracing and taping in the secondary prevention of ankle sprains in athletes”. This study was referenced in the International SportMed Journal, Vol.4 No.5, 2003.

Stated in the conclusion of this article: Biomechanical evidence strongly supports the mechanical superiority of semi-rigid orthoses (bracing) for restriction of ankle inversion and eversion after brief and prolonged periods of exercise. The conclusion goes on to state that taping or bracing are effective in reducing the incidence of secondary ankle sprains.

Considerations for the application of ankle support systems:

**Ankle taping:** An effective ankle tape support system requires an experienced applicator (athletic trainer) and supplies including at the very least pre-wrap and tape. It is virtually impossible for an athlete to effectively tape them self and an inexperienced tape applicator (quasi-trainer) might not provide additional support and could cause the taped athlete additional problems. An additional issue in consideration with taping is that the athlete might not always have a qualified trainer to assist them pre-practice or pre-game.

**Ankle bracing:** Is practical in cost and application. It will however be important that the fit of the brace be commensurate with the foot size and shoe type of the participating athlete. Not all ankle braces are created equal. We have found with our athletes wearing low molded cleats (soccer-football-baseball-lacrosse) that the ASO lace up brace is low bulk but supportive allowing both the requisite support and comfort. These braces must be fit according to the athlete’s foot size and are normally in stock at our FAU office location or can be purchased online at: http://www.asoankle.com.
In summary: Both taping and bracing provide support about the ankle if sized and applied properly. Bracing is the superior choice of most when considering effectiveness, efficacy, application, and cost.

Make inquiry with other questions specifically pertaining to your condition through our web address for questions: AskAPT@pbism.com.