

THE MIGHTY DOCS MEDICINE: Four O.C. doctors call the shots when it comes to the Anaheim hockey team's health.; [MORNING Edition]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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COLOR PHOTO; MEDICAL TEAM: The Mighty Ducks retain four doctors for home games - from left, Jeffrey Pulver, Craig Milhouse, Steven Schmidt and Ronald Glousman. // ARMS AND THE MAN: Orthopedist Glousman examines a Ducks player. In addition to spot treatment at games, he performs surgery.; Credit: DAVE YODER

Full Text (953 words)

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Head coach Ron Wilson calls the four Orange County-based team doctors the Mighty Quacks.

"But we've proved him wrong," said Dr. Ronald Glousman, one of the four team physicians who sit in the stands behind the bench during home games for the NHL's Mighty Ducks of Anaheim.

Team doctors include Glousman, an orthopedic surgeon, and Dr. Craig Milhouse, an internist, who practice at the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic in Anaheim; oral surgeon Dr. Jeffrey Pulver of Orange; and ophthalmologist Dr. Steven Schmidt of Anaheim.

Schmidt, who is new to the roster of team doctors this season, will be on hand to treat the occasional serious eye injury.

During games, these doctors jump to their feet when a player is injured and watch for a signal from the coaches to head to the locker room.

And there - in a treatment room not far from screaming fans at Arrowhead Pond of Anaheim - they examine, stitch or patch injuries and get players back out on the ice as quickly as possible.

Pulver, who stitches many of the facial cuts, says he's working against the clock in the locker room.

"Doctors are used to working at their own pace in controlled environments," Pulver said. "But working with the players means we have to patch them up fast and get them back out there."

Wilson's remarks and taunting duck calls aimed at these doctors are all in jest, he said recently on the first day of training camp, when players were given physical examinations.

"It's vital to the success of any sports team to have quality physicians you trust - as we do," Wilson said.

"The doctors are very important because in a contact physical sport like hockey there's going to be injuries almost on a daily basis.

"And with the type of injuries you see in hockey, surgery is inevitable over a season, and they provide those services as well."

Amid stacks of boxes holding purple and teal hockey pants and gear, Glousman had players stretch out on a table as he examined their bones and joints.

"Been stretching - getting ready for the new season?" he asked each player.

Such conditioning can help prevent certain strains and sprains, Glousman said. Last season, though injuries were few, he performed a handful of surgeries.

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As players stepped into each exam station, the doctors checked the status of previous injuries.

New defenseman Tom Kurvers, 32, has played professional hockey for 10 years. "Everybody comes with a little bit of baggage," he said.

Kurvers' carry-on items include an eye injury after being hit by a puck. He's one of the few Ducks who wear a clear plastic face shield.

Right wing Todd Ewen, 28, said nine years in the league have left him with knee, shoulder and back injuries and seven surgeries.

Ducks enforcer Stu Grimson says his injuries generally have involved his face and hands. And last season team doctors closed gashes on those areas of the 6-foot-5, 227-pound left wing during several games.

Grimson, 29, says he doesn't worry about any particular career-ending injury the way a football player may worry about a knee injury.

"I don't think that at any one position we're any more prone to certain injuries than another," he said.

In addition to treatment of his relatively minor cuts and bruises, Grimson sought help from Milhouse for his spring allergies.

As an internist, Milhouse dips into his black bag to prescribe medications that won't affect players' performance.

"This year we want to give flu shots," Milhouse said. "They play during the flu season and we want to take measures to get on top of these illnesses."

When defenseman Don McSween contracted chicken pox last year, Milhouse quickly had to get health histories on the rest of the players to try to prevent the disease's spread.

"These are basically young, healthy guys," Milhouse said.

But with pucks that travel up to 100 mph, Milhouse worries most about head and neck injuries.

"We had a few concussions last year that required (brain) scans," Milhouse said.

Goaltender Guy Hebert recalled being hit in the head during a game against the Los Angeles Kings at the Forum last season - which he compared to being whacked in the head with a baseball bat.

"I got hit in the top portion of my head with a slap shot by Jari Kurri," Hebert said. "I didn't really think too much about it; I just shook it off and kept playing.

"That night I didn't sleep well; I had bad headaches. The next day my vision was like looking down a tunnel and all blurry."

Hebert was diagnosed with a concussion, which healed quickly without lasting effects. Team doctors suggested he take a few days off from practice.

"That's the great thing about playing (for the Ducks); they recognize when it might be better for you to be off the ice," he said.

"I've been in situations where they didn't care, they just wanted you out on the ice. So this is a comfortable position to be in."

[Illustration]

COLOR PHOTO; Caption: MEDICAL TEAM: The Mighty Ducks retain four doctors for home games - from left, Jeffrey Pulver, Craig Milhouse, Steven Schmidt and Ronald Glousman. // ARMS AND THE MAN: Orthopedist Glousman examines a Ducks player. In addition to spot treatment at games, he performs surgery.; Credit: DAVE YODER