

Sport medicine a victory for U of A

by Lisa Hall

Chalk up a victory for University of Alberta sports. No, this triumph isn't in basketball or swimming or track. It is in sport medicine.

Sport medicine is concerned with the treatment and prevention of sport-related injuries. Edmonton has waited a long time for the development of a top-class clinic of this discipline. In May, construction will begin on the Glen Sather Sport Medicine Clinic, to be located on the U of A campus.

University students and athletes will obviously benefit. But the development of this clinic means a "triumph" for all area athletes, coaches, physicians and therapists.

The Glen Sather Clinic will house three major components of sport medicine.

The first component is the treatment provided for injured athletes. This service is not meant for only competitors on University athletic teams. Athletes of all sports and recreation and at any level, whether they attend the University or not, can receive treatment.

A Bears' linebacker, a math major who plays racquetball during his spares, or a business executive who week-end jogs can all be referred to the clinic for treatment of their injuries. U of A students will be referred to the clinic by University Health Service, and off-campus patients by their general practitioner.

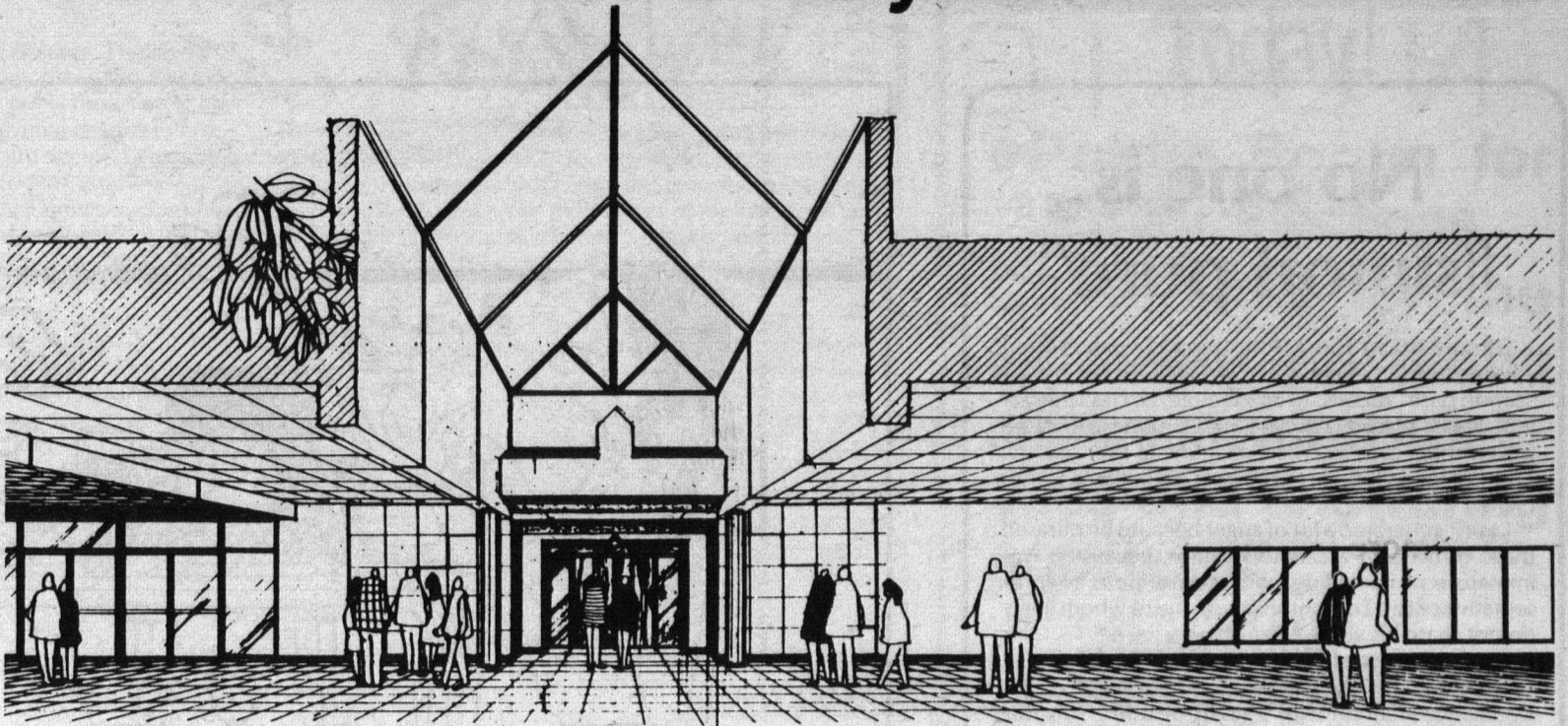
The centre will provide therapy to get the athlete back in action and advice to help him avoid repeated injuries.

Not just muscular and skeletal injuries will be dealt with, but other sports-related problems also. This includes nutritional problems, and proper diets suitable for specific sports and individual athletes. Most of the services provided will be covered by Health Care.

The second component will be the evolution of a teaching centre. Undergraduate and graduate students in Medicine, Rehabilitation Medicine and Physical Education will gain practical experience working at the clinic. Practicing physicians can also spend time at the clinic updating their knowledge of sports medicine, doing research or simply observing.

The clinic will also hold seminars for city coaches and athletes. The seminars will give information on common injury patterns in different sports, and how to avoid them.

The third component of the clinic involves sport medicine research. Investigation will be done into better methods of treatment



Artists conception of the clinic's exterior.

and prevention of a wide variety of injuries.

Increasingly frequent neck injuries in hockey, the high death rate on the squash court, the pros and cons of steroid use, and accurate fitness tests are a few specific areas the clinic is interested in researching. In addition, dental research will be done at the clinic for the treatment of mouth injuries, and in engineering for the development of protective equipment.

The story behind the development of the Glen Sather Clinic is a long one.

The concept of a sport medicine centre in Edmonton is about 20 years old, according to Dr. David Reid, Director of the Glen Sather Clinic.

"A group on campus from different faculties has been interested in sports science for a long time," said Reid. "We have always had a small but fine clinic to treat athletes. But over the years we thought about evolving a clinic in which all faculties could participate."

Also, many physicians and therapists trained at the U of A with concepts that originated here, have left Edmonton and started successful sport medicine practices in other places. There was no top-class clinic in Edmonton for them to work in and do research.

Finally, about three years ago, Reid said, the three major faculties of Medicine, Rehabilitation Medicine and Physical Education decided: "Let's cooperate 100 per cent and see what we can come up with."

The concept of a sport medicine facility on campus was supported by the University from the start.

Fundraising commenced and Peter Pocklington was one person approached. Pocklington agreed to donate \$60,000 per year for five years. This essentially was the first major step towards the development of the clinic. The provincial government then matched Pocklington's donation, but additional funding was still needed.

For the past three years fund raising continued, while plans and ideas for the clinic started.

Dick Johnston, then Minister of Advanced Education, and the U of A's Myer Horowitz, both helped make money available to the clinic. This, along with superb efforts of many people, Reid said, helped bring the clinic into the advanced stages of development it is in now.

With approval of the clinic past all the University committee structures, construction is set to start in May.

The clinic will be located in the east part of the Van Vliet Physical Education Centre, in the area now occupied by the wrestling gym, which will be moved to the second floor. If all goes as planned, the clinic will open in early fall.

Reid said the clinic is now in the process of recruiting physicians from across the city to work and do research. Additional funding is still being sought for needed equipment and to set up an endowment to ensure a stream of experienced people coming through the clinic.

One major difference between

this clinic and those in other cities, Reid pointed out, is that most are privately owned and are not working out of a university. With no private ownership, the clinic belongs to the city, and profits will primarily go back into the clinic.

"It is vitally important to stress that the facility is not only for the university, but for the community at large," said Reid.

Along with the immediate goal of providing the city with sport medicine services and research, the clinic also has a long term goal of developing into a sports science

centre. Sports science involves a wider field into the investigation of physical performance, of which sport medicine is just a part.

The immediate goal, however, could not have been reached if it wasn't for Peter Pocklington setting the wheels in motion. To thank Pocklington for his generosity, it was suggested that the clinic be named after Pocklington's colleague, Glen Sather. Most cities' sport medicine centres are named after prominent and successful sports figures.

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