

New techniques may end crippling injuries

by Boris Gomez
The Charlton

There's one uniquely breathtaking event in downhill skiing a skier will probably always remember — painfully. Hurling down the mountain at a furious speed, the skier senses in a split-second that something is wrong. First his nerves go, then his balance, and then the crash.

Many skiers have frozen images somewhere in our memories of ski spills — a skier rolling, slamming the hard snow, sailing recklessly through the air, arms, poles, legs and skis flailing wildly. Then the skier lies on the ground motionless.

For many skiers, it is the excruciating knee pain that they feel most.

The names of Podborski and Brooker, among others, have experienced the crash. Their spirit is battered, confidence shaken and their knees are wrecked.

Sport orthopedists are surgically replacing damaged ligaments in the knee by using much stronger synthetic ligaments. It's the most recent development in the treatment of serious knee injuries and orthopedists say it's one of the more promising advances in the last few years.

"Basically, we're happy with the technique — it gives the patient options." — Dr. John Halperin

"We're still studying the post-surgical results, but (so far) they are very encouraging," says Dr. John Halperin of the sports medicine clinic at Carleton University.

Synthetic transplants have been replacing the ligaments of the inner knee. These particular "muscles" are called anterior and posterior cruciate ligaments. The cruciates help to keep the femur (thigh bone) and the tibia (shin bone) stable and prevent the knee from buckling backwards and forwards.

"We can't replace these ligaments with normal tendon tissue from most other parts in the body because of the unique structure and job of the cruciates," says Dr. Bernie Lalonde, who works at the clinic at Carleton and at the spinal injury clinic in Ottawa West Hospital.

Tendon tissue from the thigh muscle is normally used to replace damaged ligaments, says Lalonde, "because the tendon tissue here is structured laterally and this makes

it easy to replace ligaments that run laterally along the sides of the knee."

When the cruciate ligaments are completely torn, however, orthopedics often consider the option of using synthetic replacements.

"Usually we decide to perform the (synthetic) procedure if other procedures have been done and they've failed," Lalonde says.

The synthetic materials used resemble the material used in rainwear. Gore-tex is the most popular synthetic, but there are others, some which resemble teflon.

The surgery to implant synthetics in the knee is rather complicated but only takes a few hours to complete.

"A normal Gore-tex transplant will cost anywhere between \$2,000 and \$5,000" — Dr. Bernie Lalonde

After the knee is pre-surgically prepared, the surgeon makes an incision in the area directly under the kneecap or on the side of the knee. When the knee is open to view, an assistant moves the kneecap tendon to the side. A hole is then drilled through one side of the tibia and continued upwards at a slant until it's through the bone. Still working upwards, the surgeon drills another hole near the bottom of the femur until he leaves the bone.

A channel from the tibia to the femur has now been created. The surgeon then strings a synthetic through the channel. The synthetic lets the synthetics run out the ends of the channel. The ends are then fastened to the bone with screws made of a metallic alloy.

Following the surgery, the patient undergoes rehabilitation that is almost as important as the surgery. The rehabilitation is sped up be-



cause of the use of a machine called the CPN machine.

"What it does is it helps to reduce post-surgical stiffness in the joint and speeds up recovery," says Lalonde. "Without the CPN, the patient would have the joint almost frozen, and he'd be in a cast for months."

Halperin has performed several synthetic surgeries at the Carleton clinic. He says the medical community is in favour of the operations. "Basically we're happy with the technique — it gives the patient options. And with the technique we can now treat a wider range of possibilities and serious injuries," he says.

But Halperin says it has yet to be determined whether the synthetic will be successful in the long-run. "In the short term, things look

there stiffness or infection? How does the body deal with this foreign substance?" Lalonde also worries whether the synthetic will remain compatible with the human body while in the knee.

Like most new types of surgery, there is also the problem of high costs. "A normal Gore-tex transplant will cost anywhere between \$2,000 to \$5,000," Lalonde says. However, he believes the cost of the procedure will go down if it becomes more common.

Bigons capture women's title

by Benjamin Rawley of The Meliorist and Alan Small of The Gateway

LETHBRIDGE — The University of Manitoba Bigons won the Bronze Baby, the trophy for the top CIAU women's basketball team in the land when they upset the University of Calgary Dinosaurs 61-55 at the CIAU tournament in Lethbridge.

By halftime, Calgary was leading by a margin of nine points. Canada West first team all-star Veronica Vander Schree dominated the scoring in the first half, scoring 15 of her twenty points for the Dinosaurs.

"We had to shut down Vander Schree," Bison coach Coleen Dufresne said after the game. "At half time we assigned a person with only one job: to keep Vander Schree from scoring."

The strategy paid off in bronze for the Bigons as the Bigons erased the first half deficit, and with a minute remaining, were leading by three points. They then coasted to the six point victory.

For the Bigons, it was the second upset in as many days, as the day before, they defeated the University of Victoria, the number one seeded team at the tournament 60-59 to advance to the final.

BIGONS — P21

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES: NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

The Executive Committee of General Faculties Council has approved a request from the Students' Union that classes be cancelled from 12 noon to 1 p.m. on **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16** and not on Wednesday, February 12. Classes are cancelled so that students can attend the Students' Union Election Forum.

PTL Sex Scandal

The entire student community was shocked yesterday by the confession of SU election candidate Billy Graham-Wafer who said she engaged in "unspecified sins" with both Rick Stedman, current VP Internal and Tim Boston, current SU president. Said Miss Graham-Wafer, "I have sinned, but now I need your votes more than ever." This is only the latest in a series of scandals involving members of the PTL State. Stedman was involved with noted PTL supporter Jessica Psalm until their breakup only a few weeks ago. When questioned at the time Stedman replied, "the beaver wasn't smiling." It is thought that Psalm became involved with Stedman after her much publicized affair with PTL presidential candidate Jim Fakar. When questioned about her seemingly promiscuous activity Psalm replied, "I am not a bimbo."

This has been a paid political announcement

ADVANCE ELECTION POLL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16th 9:00 - 21:00
SUB MAIN FLOOR EAST END