

# SPORTS FEATURE

## Bobby Orr Clinic, one of country's finest

The recent health and fitness craze, has seen a sharp increase in the number of sports medicine clinics popping up throughout the city in order to treat these people. *Excalibur* Sports Editor James Hogggett talked to Peter Charbanou, Head Therapist at the Bobby Orr Sports Medicine Clinic, located on the York campus, about what sets it apart as one of the top sports medicine clinics in the country

By JAMES HOGGETT

The Bobby Orr Sports Medicine Clinic, located adjacent to the Metropolitan Toronto Track and Field Centre, was officially opened in May of 1984 and began full operation in the beginning of January. The clinic was named after the legendary hockey star as he was the main contributor to the clinic as he donated \$90,000.

"There seems to be a lot of misconception surrounding the clinic," says Peter Charbanou, head therapist at the clinic, "York really has nothing to do with the clinic itself."

The clinic is a privately run business that offers sports medicine and rehabilitation services. The clinic itself, leases the property from Metropolitan Toronto.

"For instance," Charbanou said, "Metro Toronto leased the land from York University and built a building (the track and field centre) and we in turn have leased space from Metro."

In the early years, when the clinic first opened, most of the case load was drawn from York University facility and students. However over the last three years the clinic has gained quite a bit of positive exposure in the community and is now starting to see a major change in the

ratio of community people and York athletes, students and faculty.

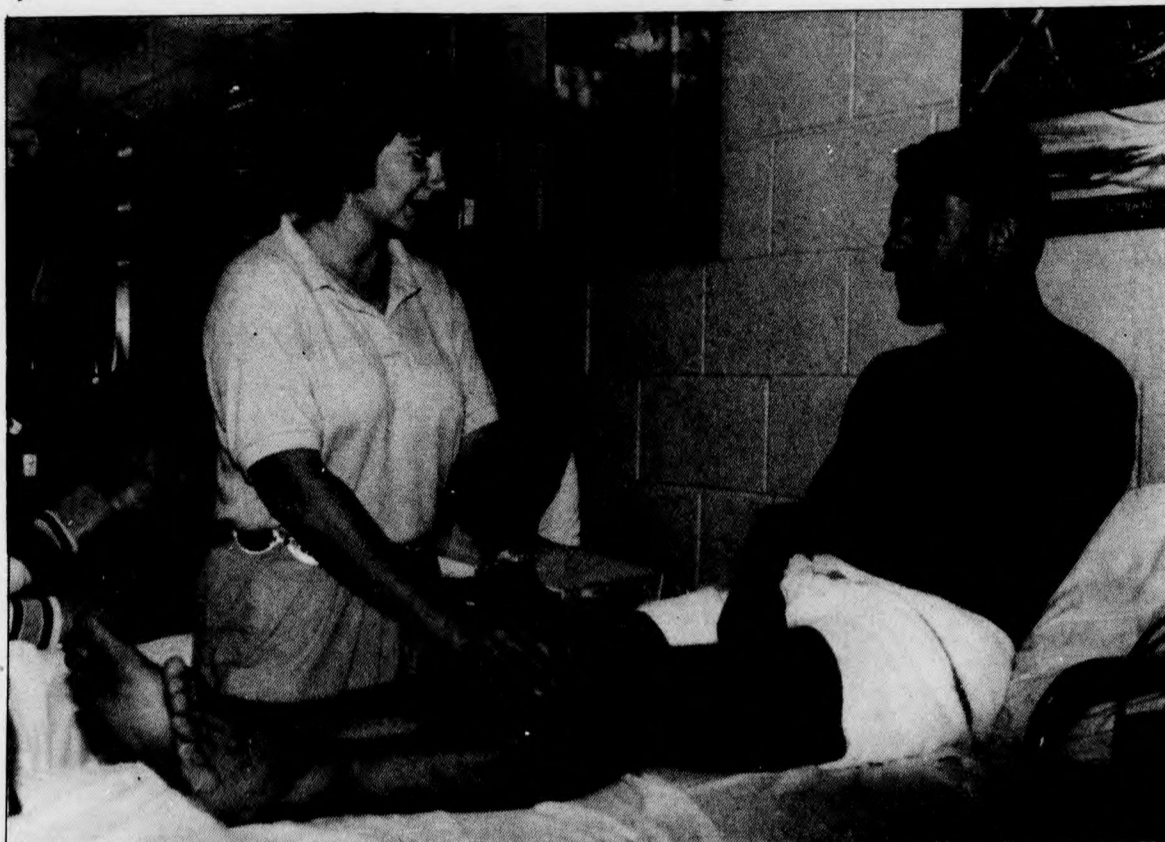
"Presently we find between mid-September to the beginning of April, we still see a good number of York people at the clinic," Charbanou said.

The clinic primarily employs athletic therapist and physiotherapist currently on staff there are three physiotherapists and four athletic therapists, six of those employed on a full-time basis. To become a physiotherapist one must complete a four year university degree programme, covering the many aspects of rehabilitation, orthopedic and sports medicine, as well as respiratory and cardiac rehabilitation.

In the athletic therapy profession, a student can take anything from a two-year college degree programme to a four-year university programme be it in Canada or the US. This type of programme specifically deals with sports related medical problems and is a far narrower field, than the physiotherapist covers, but it offers more of an in-depth study of sports-related injuries.

"In my particular case," Charbanou said, "I did a four-year physical education degree first, at Brock University in St. Catherine's, and then I did my athletic therapy at Sheridan College in Oakville."

The Bobby Orr clinic was developed much like other private physiotherapy or sports medicine clinics in Toronto. What sets this particular clinic apart from the others is its ability to take in new patients in a short period of time, and minimizing the waiting which plagues many other facilities.



**NOW THIS WON'T HURT A BIT:** Former soccer Yeoman Anthony Robbins receives treatment from therapist Carla Delange from his torn medial collateral ligament. Delange, a therapist of 2½ years, enjoys working at the clinic because of its atmosphere.

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"In years past if someone went to a therapy clinic they quite often would have had a wait of three to four weeks, sometimes longer before

they could be treated," Charbanou said. "And we know that an injured athlete wants to get back to their sport as quickly as possible."

Seeing a patient right away cuts down the rehabilitation phase and dramatically reduces the amount of time the patient is inactive.

"That is what we're oriented toward," Charbanou said, "and I think we take a much more aggressive approach toward rehabilitation than some of the hospital clinics. And that's not to knock the hospitals in terms of their quality of care but our clientele is a little bit different than what the hospitals are seeing and therefore our approach to injuries has to reflex that."

The key, says Charbanou is to assess the injury and give the most appropriate and thorough treatment programme so that the athlete can return to normal activity as quickly as possible.

"Built into every therapy programme," Charbanou said, "are a number of things discussed and shown to the patient that will hopefully help the athlete prevent the injury from re-occurring."

"There is always a reason for it," Charbanou added, "we can't avoid direct blows in football [or] hockey but in the case of overuse-type injuries, where an athlete is doing too much running or too much swimming, we offer them advice which might help that injury from returning."

Treatment at the clinic is available to anyone but is basically for a person who has had an injury that is preventing them from returning to their regular recreation or sporting activity. "We like to concentrate on

active individuals," Charbanou said, "because our whole clinic is oriented around that type of treatment programme."

In order to receive therapy a person must first see one of the physicians on staff at the clinic and have a direct referral even if they had already seen their own family physician it is still necessary to see a physician on staff. The cost of the therapy is covered by OHIP under what is called a "G-Code" billing.

The busiest time for the clinic is during the school year because of the extra caseload from the University. On the average the clinic serves between 600 and 700 (sometimes as high as 750) patients in a five-day work week. This past September the clinic started a six-day per week operation to ease the heavy caseload.

"There are many clinics opening up, especially in the city of Toronto," Charbanou said, "but there are probably only three or four major sports medicine clinics, and this is probably in terms of numbers the busiest sports medicine clinic not only in the city, but in the country."

The staff on hand at the Bobby Orr clinic while maintaining a high level of proficiency and professionalism, try and maintain a relaxed atmosphere as many of the patients they are dealing with are frustrated by their injuries.

"We're never totally satisfied with what we have and what we're doing," Charbanou said, "That is why we're always looking for areas where we can improve and expand the service."

"Overall," says Charbanou "I think we've done a pretty good job."



**THERAPY STAFF**—Front row (L to R): Marlene Nobrega, Chris Broadhurst, Carla Delange. Back row: Pat Friday, Gus Kandilas, Tim Page, Peter Charbanou. In order to help patients through therapy, the friendly staff at the clinic tries to create a fairly relaxed atmosphere while maintaining a high level of proficiency and professionalism.

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