Two were obviously unstable in the early rehabilitation phase. Both came to surgery, one for postero-lateral instability and the other for antero-lateral instability.

DISCUSSION

Within the context of increasing sport today, injuries consequent upon sporting activities are increasingly common.

On the whole they fall into two groups, namely the result of contact or non-contact injury.

I think that I have delineated a sub group of the second problem in which the non-contact injury, as in most cases, is a consequence of failure of co-ordination but in this case that failure is a previous non-disabling injury.

The ligaments themselves particularly around the knee joint fail at loads significantly less than those imposed upon the knee doing every day activities. The reason that they do not normally give way during those activities is the protection offered by the strength and co-ordination of the muscles that control the movements of the knee joint either by contraction or paying out.

If that activity is altered the risk of injury is increased. It is well recognised in failure of training, failure of warm up or failure of co-ordination on a heavy pitch. I report a situation in which failure of co-ordination is a consequence to previous injury.

I think we are all aware of the "macho" image of a man with a "dead leg" who continues to play hobbling on the wing or someone who has severely injured their shoulder but continues to jump for the ball with the other arm.

I think there is now clear evidence that such an injury causes in-co-ordination and renders the injured limb more susceptible to major second injury which may require surgery in a significant proportion of cases.

CONCLUSION

Any athlete sustaining a major peripheral injury leaving him with muscle dis-co-ordination (dead leg, "burner" in American football) should be recognised as someone more susceptible to injury and it becomes incumbent upon the referee, coach or trainer to bring them off the pitch to stop the risk of further injury.

It is acknowledged that this is always a difficult thing to do and this letter is presented in the hope that it may strengthen the arm of such officials and perhaps lengthen the playing career of the participants concerned.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN KING, FRCS, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

BOOK REVIEW

Title: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RESEARCH PAPERS ON PHYSIQUE, SOMATOTYPING AND BODY COMPOSITION RELATED TO SPORTS PERFORMANCE
Author: Peter Bale
Publisher: Brighton Polytechnic, Chelsea School of Human Movement
Price: £1.50 31 pages Soft cover

The author has collected some 270 references in the English language, from books, published articles and published proceedings of conferences, listed under separate sports. As many of the references quoted involve several sports, there is a certain amount of reduplication; but this does not detract from the value. Entries are arranged in alphabetical order of first authors, in each of the seventeen sports covered, and in the two general lists concerning nutrition and densitometry. The price asked barely covers the cost of the paper used for the photocopies and postage, and well worth the money even for an impecunious student with an interest in sports anthropometry. Available from Dr. Peter Bale, PhD, Chelsea School of Human Movement, Brighton Polytechnic, Milnethorpe Court, 57 Meads Road, EASTBOURNE BN20 7QD.

H. E. Robson