sport participation, because of their subcutaneous location.

All the athletes in this study resumed contact sport within one to 12 months. This time period is dependent on the location of the fracture and the type of implant used in fixation, and is also influenced by the recommendation of the supervising surgeon. Despite the heterogeneity of the sample, the time delay is less than if implant removal was advised before participating in contact sport. If elective implant removal is required, this can be planned for the off season, allowing three to four months for residual screw holes to heal.

Conclusion

The results from this preliminary series suggest that an early return to contact sport is feasible in selected cases. A larger prospective study may in the future provide more specific guidelines on which to base fracture management decisions for these athletes, and identify the

true risks. In the meantime, the results of this study should alert practitioners to the compatibility of certain fracture implants and contact sport. Avoiding the prolonged delay associated with implant removal minimises the disruption to competitive participation.

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Diabetes: going downhill fast!

My diabetes was diagnosed at a very difficult time in my life. I had just left school, was planning on joining the army, and was a fairly active youngster. My father was also a diabetic, however, so when told of my diagnosis, I just shrugged my shoulders. My father's life had not changed greatly and I saw no reason why mine should.

Within a few days the reality of a life of injections dawned. My mother would not let me have my breakfast until I had injected. On that morning I realised that injecting a needle into my leg would mean my skin being broken and that meant blood! It took me an hour and a half to summon up the strength to inject myself that morning. Breakfast never tasted so good! Since that morning I have had no trouble with injections.

With a career in the army derailed, my priority was to continue my ski racing career. Before my diagnosis I had finished fourth in the British Junior Ski Championships and I believed that my diabetes would not be a problem as long as I kept it in control. Although some doctors advised that it would be difficult to continue my ski racing, I decided to control my diabetes and not let it control me. With this in mind I set off to compete against the best of the world. My team mates were told that if I was looking ill I should eat a biscuit or chocolate—this soon became a reason for them to ask me for some chocolate for themselves!

With the improvement in my skiing, sugar control became more critical so I increased the frequency of blood tests. On one day,

with the race delayed because of the weather, I was sitting in the restaurant awaiting my turn. I could feel my sugars rising so brought out my testing kit and began to do a test. This caused consternation among those around me. When I explained that I was doing a drug test the table rapidly cleared (random drug tests were just becoming common!)

Crossing borders caused a few funny moments during my skiing days. Arriving late one night at the Austrian/German border, I was asked by a guard whether I had my passport, followed by Green Card, other documents, where I was driving from and to, and if I had any contraband. I explained I had a bottle of whisky and two hundred cigarettes. When asked if I had any drugs, I said yes. My friend who was travelling with me looked at me in panic. Two further guards appeared and I was hauled out of the car and asked to explain. I walked round to the back of the car, opened the boot and showed him my diabetic drugs! That drama ended with two relieved skiers but rather disappointed border guards.

Diabetes is a serious matter and of course good control is important. However, we diabetics are still humans and as such life is still there to be enjoyed. Luckily I enjoy sports and so use sport to keep my B-Ms under control. I believe firmly in the fact that diabetes has taught me how to live life more healthily (even if I do have the odd hunger pang for a chocolate digestive!) and still have as much fun.

NEIL MCQUOID