



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Benson Concussion Institute launches innovative sport concussion program

CALGARY, Alta. – World-leading sport concussion expert Dr. Brian Benson, the Benson Concussion Institute (BCI) and WinSport launched today a new sport concussion program which uses new, innovative techniques and technology to assess and treat sport and recreation participants suffering from concussions.

The creation of this sport concussion program, based at the WinSport Medicine Clinic, was the result of two decades of concussion research and clinical experience. This research clearly demonstrated an urgent need for timely assessment and management from a team of medical professionals experienced in concussion, more sensitive clinical tools to objectively measure neurologic impairment and recovery, and an understanding of athletes and the demands required for sport participation.

“I am extremely excited to launch our comprehensive, multi-disciplinary sport concussion program at WinSport to help serve the sporting community at large by providing timely access to the best possible care of the concussed athlete,” says Dr. Brian Benson, the Medical Director of the WinSport Medical Clinic and BCI. “Our subscription program utilizes a team of high-performance sport professionals experienced with concussion and innovative clinical assessment and management strategies to help ensure an efficient and safe return to sport. Our strong focus on cutting-edge clinical research, education and prevention will continuously improve the standard of care for the concussed athlete.”

The program, which is now open to the public, consists of three packages clients can choose from. All packages include baseline assessments, post-concussion clinical services, and a monitored return-to-play program.

The BCI program involves a comprehensive battery of baseline tests, where the clinical team compares a patient’s post-injury test results with baseline test results. Areas of impairment are then identified, which enables the clinical team – which consists of leading specialists from sport medicine, optometry, physiology, nutrition, psychology, athletic therapy, chiropractic and physiotherapy – to design the most effective treatment strategy possible for each individual athlete. Some of these impairments are accurately identified through the use of a cutting-edge robotic device called the KINARM (Kinesiologic Instrument for Normal and Altered Reaching Movements, BKIN Technologies Ltd.). Since it is robotic, it is more objective than human observation and may reveal additional subtle abnormalities that a clinical examination and cognitive assessment may not.

In addition, these robotic platforms can efficiently and precisely measure impairments associated with reaction time, coordination, and judgment, among others, which are all crucial to helping medical staff better understand the progress of recovery and what is needed for the patient to return to a daily training environment.

“More than 10,000 people visit emergency departments each year in Calgary with a head injury, with a large percentage of these sustained in sport and recreational activities,” says Dr. Benson.

“Many of these concussed athletes return to sport or recreational activity prematurely without medical follow-up or clearance only to re-visit the emergency department with a repeat injury. However, the KINARM is proving to be a promising technology that may help future athletes experiencing concussions receive the proper advice so they don't return to sport prematurely and can continue to lead healthy lives.”

Dr. Benson's research team has been assessing the reliability and clinical usefulness of the KINARM robotic device for assessment and management of sport concussion with support from Own the Podium (OTP), the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary (CSIC), and Hotchkiss Brain Institute (HBI). Over 1,200 healthy athletes and more than 100 concussion cases have been studied over the past five seasons. Preliminary results suggest the KINARM robot is a reliable and valid, objective tool for quantifying sensory, motor and neurocognitive impairment in concussed athletes.

Page Hanrahan, a retired varsity field hockey player, says the BCI concussion program will greatly benefit all recreational participants.

"As an elite athlete who has suffered from many concussions over the years, I am certain that having a comprehensive concussion program available will aid other athletes in their recovery," Hanrahan explains. "What is not always realized in concussions is their multi-factorial nature. It is not simply a blow to the head resulting in headaches. By having a multi-disciplinary team in place with the most cutting edge technology regarding concussions, athletes will be aided not only in their return-to-play, but be given back their proper quality of life."

For more information on the program, visit www.winsport.ca.

- 30 -

About WinSport

WinSport provides world-class sport facilities where Canadian athletes can discover, develop and excel. WinSport owns and operates Canada Olympic Park in Calgary, Alta., the Bill Warren Training Centre located at the Canmore Nordic Centre and the Beckie Scott High Performance Training Centre on Haig Glacier, Alta. A not-for-profit organization, WinSport supports national sport organizations, encourages educational opportunities and subsidizes the operation of unique training and recreational facilities used by the nation's top athletes and the general public. For more information on WinSport please visit www.winsport.ca.

For more information, please contact:

Dale Oviatt
Director of Communications
WinSport
T: 403-247-5601
C: 403-461-9074
E-mail: dale.oviatt@winsport.ca

Backgrounder

What is a Concussion?

Concussion is a brain injury that occurs when an athlete sustains a blow to the head, neck, or any other part of his/her body that transmits an impulsive force to the brain. It typically results in a wide range of symptoms that undesirably affects neurologic function. Symptoms typically occur immediately following the injury, but in some athletes' symptoms may be delayed and progress over several minutes to hours. Some of the most common symptoms experienced are headache, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, light sensitivity, and blurred vision. It is also not uncommon for concussed athletes to experience slowed reaction times, irritability, confusion or the sensation of being in a "fog". In some cases, an athlete may even lose consciousness or forget events that occurred before or after the injury.

Concussion Statistics:

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, sports and recreational activities were the third leading cause of traumatic brain injury admissions in Canadian hospitals in 2003-2004. In the United States, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1.6 to 3.8 million concussions occur in sports and recreational activities annually.

What is a Baseline Assessment?

Baseline (pre-injury) testing is conducted by a trained health care professional during the pre-season. Baseline tests are used to assess an athlete's brain function (including concussion-like symptoms, concentration, attention, memory, reaction time, balance, cognition, visual-spatial skills, coordination, reaction time, and judgment). Results from baseline tests are used if an athlete has a suspected concussion during the season. Comparing post-injury test results to baseline test results can assist health care professionals with identifying areas of impairment due to the concussion and help with individualizing management strategies and return to sport decisions.

Dr. Brian Benson Abbreviated Biography:

Brian W. Benson, MD, MSc, PhD, CCFP (SEM), Dip. Sport Med.

Dr. Brian Benson has a clinical consulting practice in Sport Medicine and is the Medical Director at the WinSport Medicine Clinic in Calgary, Alberta, with a special interest in sport concussion. He is an Adjunct Research Assistant Professor in the Department of Clinical Neurosciences, Cumming School of Medicine, Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology, and Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine, University of Calgary. Dr. Benson completed his MSc and PhD in Epidemiology from the Department of Community Health Sciences, University of Calgary, focusing on sport concussion prevention. He is the Chief Medical Officer and Director of Sport Medicine at the Canadian Sport Institute Calgary, and team physician of the Canadian national bobsleigh, skeleton, and luge teams. Dr. Benson has also been the team physician for several high performance sport teams including the University of Calgary Dinos Football team (2006-2013) and several Canadian national men's hockey teams representing Canada at the Under-18 world championships, world junior championships, Deutschland Cup, Spengler Cup, and men's world championships.

About the WinSport Medicine Clinic:

The WinSport Medicine Clinic, which is open to the public, consists of a team of medical professionals that take an integrated approach to treating injuries. The team includes physicians, orthopedic surgeons, physiotherapists, chiropractors, athletic therapists and massage therapists certified from the Canadian Academy of Exercise & Sport Medicine (CASEM). The clinic also offers a developmental optometrist, registered psychologist and registered dietitian. Patients are treated

using state-of-the-art equipment and specialized therapy techniques which include underwater and anti-gravity treadmills, shockwave therapy and real-time ultrasound.