Femoroacetabular Impingement in Professional Baseball Players: Return to Play Following Hip Arthroscopy

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**Background/Purpose**

- Hip arthroscopy is a highly effective treatment for symptomatic femoroacetabular impingement (FAI)
- Professional athletes have been able to return to their professional sport following arthroscopic hip surgical intervention to treat FAI
- There is limited information in the literature related to professional baseball players’ ability to return to sport following hip injury as a result of FAI

The purpose of this study was to determine the rate of return to play and length of career in professional baseball players following hip arthroscopy for FAI

**Methods**

- 44 professional baseball players (51 hips) underwent hip arthroscopy for FAI between 2000 and 2015 by a single surgeon
- Return to play was defined as a player competing in a pre-season or regular reason minor or major league baseball game following surgery
- Data was obtained for each player from MLB.com, MiLB.com, baseballreference.com and individual team websites

**Demographics**

- 44 players (51 hips) were included in the study
- Average age 26.6 years (range 18-38, s.d 4.8)
- 24 pitchers (3 bilateral)
- 27 position players
  - 12 infielders (1 bilateral)
  - 10 outfielders (1 bilateral)
  - 5 catchers (2 bilateral)

**Outcome Measures**

- Return to play
- Career length

**Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pitchers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infielders</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outfielders</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catchers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Involved Leg

- In hitters, 74% (20/27) of the procedures involved the lead leg of their batting stance
- In pitchers, 71% (17/24) of the procedures involved the lead leg of their pitching stance
- Average career length prior to surgery 6.2 years (range 1-20, s.d 5.1)

Return to Sport

- 96% (49/51) returned to professional baseball following each hip arthroscopy
- Those who returned to play played for an average of 3.6 seasons (range 1-14, s.d 2.9)
- Average career length was 10 seasons (range 1-21, s.d 5)
- No difference in years played following hip arthroscopy by position
- Pitchers average 3.3 years (s.d .25)
- Position players average 3.9 years (s.d 3.2)

**Conclusion**

- Professional baseball players who underwent hip arthroscopy for FAI were able to return to sport at the same high level of competition following surgery
- Pitchers were more likely than position players to undergo hip arthroscopy
- Hip arthroscopy seems to be a successful minimally invasive surgical intervention for the treatment of FAI that allows professional baseball players to return to professional competition following full recovery
- As hip arthroscopy continues to evolve, future interventions may improve post-operative return to play in baseball – lengthening playing career and level of play
- At this time, hip arthroscopy is an effective surgical intervention that allows professional baseball players to return to their previous level of play

**References**