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# NEWS RELEASE

## American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine

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### **Elbow Ligament Reconstruction Appears Not to Effect Future Professional Advancement in Baseball Athletes who have UCL reconstruction prior to being drafted perform at similar level as those without reconstruction**

**LAS VEGAS, NV** – New research presented at the 2009 American Orthopaedic Society of Sports Medicine Specialty Day in Las Vegas suggests that elbow ulnar collateral ligament (UCL) reconstruction prior to selection in the Major League Baseball (MLB) draft does not increase the risk of future injury or affect the rate of professional advancement.

“Our study showed no statistical difference between athletes who had undergone UCL reconstruction prior to the draft and a matched control group in terms of advancement in professional baseball” said Gregory F. Carolan, MD, lead author and Director of Orthopaedic Sports Medicine at St. Luke’s Hospital in Bethlehem, PA. Dr. Carolan is a former fellow at the San Diego Arthroscopy & Sports Medicine Program and The Scripps Clinic, San Diego, CA where the research was conducted in conjunction with the San Diego Padres Baseball Club.

The researchers reviewed the medical records of all players selected during the five MLB drafts held from 1999 through 2003 and identified 30 players (all but 3 were pitchers) who had undergone UCL reconstruction (RUCL) prior to entering the draft. The data analyzed included the highest level of professional advancement, the number of times players were placed on the disabled list (DL), the type of injury responsible for placement on the DL and game statistics for those players that advanced to the Major Leagues. There was no statistically significant difference in any of these areas between the RUCL group and the control group.

“Our data shows that UCL reconstruction prior to selection in the MLB draft does not appear to increase the chances of a future injury to the throwing arm or impact a player’s professional prospects when compared to a matched control group. Our analysis is sufficiently powered to detect large differences between the two groups; however our ongoing research will continue to add confidence that we are not missing more subtle differences. As more athletes undergo the procedure and enter the MLB draft, we hope to be able to accomplish this goal. With the increase in UCL reconstructions being performed, it is heartening to see that the procedure can be successful in allowing future professional athletes to reach the highest level of competition on par with their peers,” said Carolan.

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The American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) is a world leader in sports medicine education, research, communication and fellowship, and includes national and international orthopaedic sports medicine leaders. The Society works closely with many other sports medicine specialists, including athletic trainers, physical therapists, family physicians, and others to improve the identification, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of sports injuries.

For more information, please contact AOSSM Director of Communications, Lisa Weisenberger, at 847/292-4900 or e-mail her at [lisa@aossm.org](mailto:lisa@aossm.org). Additional information and press releases can be viewed in the newsroom on AOSSM’s Web site at [www.sportsmed.org](http://www.sportsmed.org)