Is Predicting Athletic Injuries The Final Frontier?

In the aim of preventing injuries many teams are now giving serious attention to the ability to predict injuries. They consider this to be the last frontier in terms of what can be done to analyze player performance. However, is this ability to predict injuries really the last frontier?

I believe the ability to predict injury is just another step toward understanding what the athlete does in execution of the skills of his sport. With this understanding teams can take appropriate measures to improve the athlete's skills through more effective technique. This is a great way to prevent injury.

To make skill technique execution even more effective teams will have to make better use of specialized strength exercises that duplicate what occurs in execution of the skill in game play. Understand that technique and the related physical abilities are the two main factors that determine whether the athlete will get an injury.

In addition, how well the athlete executes the skill (technique) and how well developed are his physical abilities, such as strength, speed and explosive power that are related to his technique, are the two key factors that determine how well the athlete performs on the field. Exploring in greater depth these two factors will go a long way to the prevention and prediction of injuries.

I have done considerable work in these areas for the past forty years beginning when I was teaching biomechanics and kinesiology on the university level. The more analyses that I did of different athletes in various sports the clearer the relationship between technique and the related physical abilities became.

It appears that in the 1970s and 80s there was more attention focused on technique of skill execution. There were quite a few books written on the biomechanics of sports technique including many basic technique analyses of various sports. It was a hot topic in many universities. Today, however, it is rare to find such attention being given to technique.

By understanding exactly what takes place in execution of the various skills it is possible to predict if the athlete is prone to injury or if his technique is as effective as it could be in order to be resistant to injury. With this understanding and technique analysis I have been

able to predict multiple injuries to professional and nonprofessional athletes with considerable accuracy.

If you examine some of the past articles I have written you will see some of the predictions that I have made that have come to pass. These predictions were based on only limited data available from pictures in newspapers and watching them play. But with some of the technology presently available teams can easily predict possible injury but only if they have qualified personnel.

However there are a few people with such abilities mainly because technique and the related physical qualities are for the most part not studied on the University or coaching levels. Because of this we are not developing coaches who are capable of understanding what takes place in execution of the different skills and how they can be made more effective and productive.

Because of this, most teams are not getting the latest and most beneficial information. Instead they rely on statistics which have proven to be very ineffective in truly preventing injuries. Merely limiting how much playing the athlete does or checking on his fatigue levels may be somewhat effective for preventing overuse injuries but it is a very poor method for prevention of most injuries.