

# Therapist Provides Clues To Concussions

## Local Rehab Office Has Machine To Measure Balance

by Vincent Pensabene

As each day passes the sports world becomes more aware of head concussions and yet there is still much that isn't known about them.

Luckily, a local registered physical therapist has a machine that could be able to help people determine such an injury.

Joel Knickerbocker, co-owner of Pasco Rehabilitation, has technology that can determine if a person is suffering from a concussion and whether a player is fit to return to the field.

Concussions are defined as "a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal function of the brain. It occurs when the brain is rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body."

With current concussion tests mainly dealing with physical conditions, the Clinical Test of Sensory Interaction and Balance (CTSIB) takes it a step further by measuring balance.

"Balance issues are a symptom of a concussion," Knickerbocker said. "I always knew there was more than just the cognitive side of it."

The therapist has more than 30 years of experience in his field and has been volunteering with the Pasco Pirates football team for more than 20 of them since his mentor, and then team physician, Dr. Don McBath, asked him to help out. He even keeps a picture of McBath next

to the CTSIB machine to remind himself who helped him along the years.

This is his first year with the concussion program and Knickerbocker is looking to become certified in the field. The machine's purpose was first used to help his senior citizen patients who were at risk of falling and injuring themselves. However, the functions of the machine also help those who may be suffering from a traumatic head injury.

The CTSIB process consists of four 30-second trials which measure the amount of sway your body has in that time frame. The first two trials are on the machine, first with eyes open and then with eyes closed. Next, the patient stands on top of a foam surface on the machine and repeats the first two trials. The test results are printed out and show where they rank compared to the mean for the person's age.

The test takes about five minutes and the information is stored onto Knickerbocker's computer for a year, he said.

The primary machine stays in the office and Knickerbocker has a portable machine, too, which he intends to bring to Pirates' games at the high school.

He is also attempting to help other schools in the area and hopes to coordinate with their trainers.

"The kids are the most important. I've seen kids get



A machine once used to help senior citizens is now being used to test young athletes for brain injuries.

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hurt and get no medical release before going back into the game, I'd feel lost without being able to help those kids."

It is important to note this test must be done prior to an injury to have a measurement in the computer with which to compare.

Knickerbocker has set his price for the test at \$20, where similar tests can cost upwards of \$100. He is contemplating raising the price to \$30 and donating

some of the money to programs at the schools.

"With the natural progression of technology that I have, why wouldn't I want to give back? . . . It's always good to give back," he said.

If you are interested in taking this test, contact Knickerbocker at (352) 521-0002. Pasco Rehabilitation is located at 37104 Clinton Ave. He also has an open-door policy if an injury occurs.