

Mom Knows Best When It Comes to Choosing a Doctor

Reconstructive surgery can be a nightmare for athletes. But the mom of this overseas lacrosse star found the right man for the right job, right at Jersey Shore University Medical Center.



Photo: Russ Seuffert

This Point Pleasant local, Annie Richards, is still playing with England's World Cup Lacrosse team thanks to the surgical techniques of Mark M. Seckler, M.D.

This Doctor Knows His Game

Dr. Seckler knows what injuries mean to an athlete. He's worked with the Philadelphia Eagles and the U.S. Olympic Team. has extensive experience working with collegiate and professional athletes. He's been working with sports and sports medicine for over 15 years. As an athlete and a medical professional, he has a perspective that gives his patients the confidence they need to commit to his care. "When you're an athlete, three things go through your head when you get hurt: 1. Will I need surgery? 2. Will I have to stop playing? 3. If so, how long will I be out? It's all about knowing when you're going to be back on your game," he says.

Prevention Is Always Best

Of course, the best way to bounce back from an injury is to avoid one in the first place. Dr. Seckler advises the best way to do this is through exercise and conditioning, to keep the muscles and joints limber. He also advocates the use of the proper equipment, to protect the areas of the body that need it most. Of course, Annie Richards heeds this advice whenever she takes the field. Not only because she's following doctor's orders, but because Mother knows best.

 Owen Evans

Mary Ann and Jim Richards are very proud of their 25-year-old daughter, Annie, who has won numerous awards for her achievements in sports. She has participated in local intramural leagues, high school teams, college teams, and even international world cup lacrosse. Even though Annie now lives in London, England, as the goalie coach for England's World Cup Women's Lacrosse team, she still keeps a room at her parents' home in Point Pleasant, adorned with soccer, basketball, and lacrosse trophies.

Mary Ann knows her daughter is capable of taking care of herself on and off the playing field. But when Annie recently suffered a career-threatening knee injury, Mary Ann made sure her daughter would not be sidelined.

Annie's injury was the result of a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). It's one of the most common and devastating injuries in sports today and it used to mean the end of a career. This was not an option for someone who had followed a dream so far. Following the advice of Mary

Ann's sister, Joyce Deane, R.N., the Richards enlisted the talents of Mark Seckler, M.D., a board certified orthopedic surgeon affiliated with Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

"Annie's had her fair share of twists and bruises," says Mary Ann, "but she's never needed surgery before." Because of the necessary reconstruction and its potential effects on their daughter's career, the Richards began looking at her daughter's surgical options here in America.

Dr. Seckler's reconstruction technique, known as *allograft reconstruction*, utilizes an Achilles tendon harvested from a cadaver to replace the damaged ACL tissue. This procedure eliminates the need to sacrifice the patient's normal tissue. It also eliminates the possibility of further injury. In fact, the entire procedure is performed through a 2-centimeter incision in the knee. In addition, the Achilles tendon is five times stronger than the ACL tissue. Best of all, Dr. Seckler was close to home and could easily relate to Annie's problem.

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