



SIMON
THAN

BEFORE

A HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETE COMES
BACK FROM ACL TEAR

Jack Dieffenderfer was racing down the soccer field at Lewisburg Area High School when he tried to abruptly change direction, caught his cleat in the turf, and heard an unfamiliar crunching sound come from his knee.

The 16-year-old striker came out of the game, unable to put any weight on his leg. Though he had never broken a bone or torn a muscle in his athletic career, both his parents had torn their anterior cruciate ligaments (ACLs)—his mother only one month earlier—and he feared the worst.

“I knew something in my knee wasn’t right, but I didn’t want my mind to go to the ACL because that’s the worst part of the body to get hurt,” Dieffenderfer recalled.

He sought treatment from Thomas Martin, MD, at SUN Orthopaedics of Evangelical, who confirmed Dieffenderfer had torn his ACL. Dr. Martin has seen a variety of injuries that many people associate with sports, but which can happen to anyone doing everyday activities or even on the job.

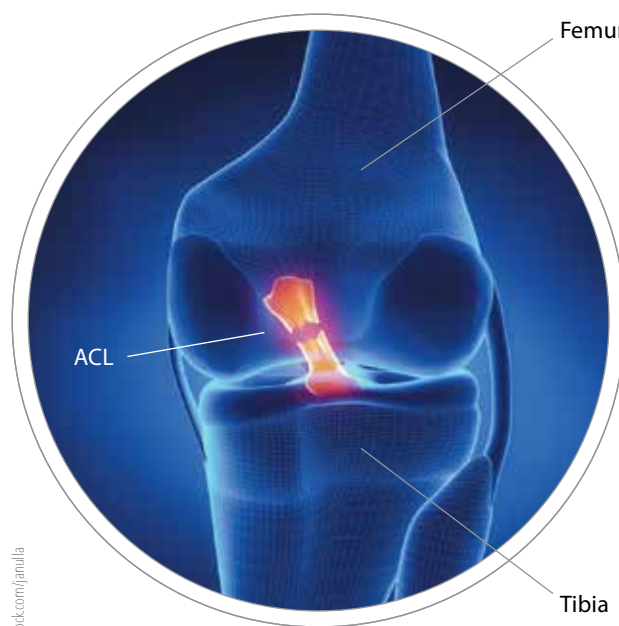
ROAD TO RECOVERY

“Sports medicine frequently deals with ligament or tendon injuries,” Dr. Martin said. “We treat more people doing everyday activities than we do athletes. Rotator cuff problems, for example, are very common and most often not related to sports activity but the normal wear and tear of age or with a sudden injury like a fall.”

ACL tears are fairly common and becoming more frequent in young athletes, Dr. Martin said. While tendon and ligament injuries can be treated with a variety of noninvasive methods, such as rest, ice, compression, and physical therapy, for those patients like Dieffenderfer,

who want to resume competitive athletics or a high degree of activity, surgery may be the best treatment.

Dieffenderfer had surgery approximately one month after his injury and then underwent physical therapy at the Miller Center for Recreation and Wellness twice a week, a crucial part of his recovery that was sometimes more a test of patience than physical ability.

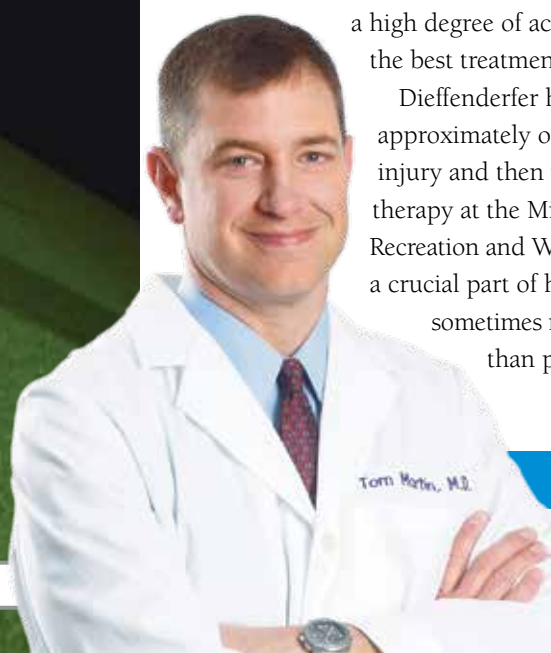


The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) connects the femur to the tibia. A tear or sprain in the ligament usually occurs after a sudden change in direction against a locked knee.

“I remember the first time I went to physical therapy, I had to make a muscle with my quad, and I couldn’t do it,” Dieffenderfer said. “It upset me because I thought I wasn’t going to be able to come back, but the physical therapists were very positive with me. I always wanted to go past what they were telling me to do, but it would have made it worse.”

SWEET VICTORY

Finally, after 10 months, Dieffenderfer was cleared to return to sports in time to play his senior high school season, during which his team went 22-0 and won the state championship. Dieffenderfer said he felt stronger after his injury than before, a feat he credits to Dr. Martin’s expertise and all the strengthening and conditioning he did in recovery with physical therapy.



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Contact our Sports Medicine team at **1-800-598-5096**.