

OSU Sports Physical Therapy Residency Program
USA Hockey Experience
By Andrew Naylor, PT, DPT

Experience, it is said, is the thing you often get just after you need it. As a sports physical therapy resident, I am fortunate to be a part of many new experiences involving people, sports, and rehabilitation. My most recent “experience” allowed me to travel to Lake Placid, NY to gain new skills as a sports physical therapist. One of my mentors, both a physical therapist and an athletic trainer, invited me to attend USA Women’s Hockey summer training camp.

While in Lake Placid, I had the unique opportunity to be a part of a team of physicians, athletic trainers, physical therapists, and massage therapists who work together to provide medical care for over 60 USA athletes training to achieve their Olympic potentials. This trip provided so many learning experiences both on and off the ice from a variety of sources. The busy pace of training camp offered unique challenges especially focused on time and patient management. The pre-practice/game and post-practice/game times in the training room allow little time for relaxation while attending to athlete’s injuries and rehabilitation programs. Even the down times were still productive where the medical staff had the opportunity to discuss treatment plans, reflect on past experiences, or share a meal.

Although I gained a great amount of knowledge about rehabilitation with athletes at the Olympic level, some of the most exciting learning experiences occurred off the ice. Simply talking to these athletes provided much information beyond that gained in a clinic setting. Many of the athletes were willing to share their thoughts on the rigors of competition at the elite level, the qualities they respect in a healthcare professional, as well as their fears on getting injured and what that may mean to their career.

All in all, the experience gained at the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid, NY is one that will certainly make me a better sports physical therapist, and is one I will not soon forget.