

Park Ridge Herald-Advocate

McGinnis slowly gaining confidence again

BY ERIC VAN DRIL | Contributor | @VanDrilSports July 3, 2013 1:56PM

Updated: July 4, 2013 6:17AM

Sydney McGinnis blew out her right knee in December of 2011.

At a tournament in Florida for the Eclipse Select Soccer Club, McGinnis collided with another player during a game and tore her ACL, LCL, meniscus and her hamstring. She even suffered nerve damage.

Despite the extent of damage, the senior-to-be at Maine South recently committed to play soccer at Wisconsin.

"I was so stressed out because right when I (injured) it was the start of the recruiting process," said McGinnis, who also visited Marquette and Illinois. "The big schools that I was looking at, I was afraid that they wouldn't want me anymore."

McGinnis' knee injury required major reconstructive surgery and was performed by Dr. Brian Cole of Midwest Orthopedics, the same doctor who operated on Derrick Rose's most recent knee injury. It then took McGinnis about 17 months before she played in another competitive game.

"I probably do about 150 to 200 ACL (repairs) a year, and I'd say I probably do about three to five (with torn) LCLs," Cole said. "It's extraordinarily rare, relatively speaking."

"I don't think people realize how much of a mental (toll) an injury like that can have on a person," added McGinnis. "I thought I'd just wait it out and I'd get back into it and everything would be normal, but I found out that it was really hard to emotionally come back from an injury like that."

McGinnis experienced varying types of fear during her recovery. She said the injury, and the memory of the pain she suffered on that day in December, would replay over and over in her head. McGinnis said she would even dream of it happening again.

Another type of dread McGinnis — ranked the country's 31st-best prospect by topdrawersoccer.com for the Class of 2014 — had to overcome was how her knee injury would affect her recruitment.

"The reality is that a lot of top-tier programs, they wanted us to stay in touch, but they were absolutely going to wait until they knew that she came back solidly from her ACL," said Bob McGinnis, Sydney McGinnis' father. "I think that the programs that were in the Midwest that had seen her over the years had a lot of faith that she was going to come back to where she was and be the player she was before she went down. They didn't have the same sort of prerequisite. They said, 'We'll take her now. We won't wait.'"

Getting back to full strength has been a test of Sydney McGinnis' patience. Her return to competitive soccer was delayed when she developed tendinitis in her knee after she tried to start training after nine months had passed. Once the tendinitis was gone, Sydney McGinnis resumed her training in February 2013 and she played in her first game in May.

Sydney McGinnis said she is now playing about 40-60 minutes a game for Eclipse, yet she has continued to struggle with the thought of re-injuring her knee upon her return.

"I thought I would be confident coming back, but at the beginning of playing, I was not confident at all," Sydney McGinnis said. "I was afraid of the ball because I think I was just traumatized. I remember the first time that I got hit, I started crying because I was just so overwhelmed with remembering being hit and the pain that I had. You need to be mentally tough to get through an injury like that, and that's what I found out."

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