

JAKE

RECIPIENT OF: BONE AND CARTILAGE



THREE-SPORT ATHLETE GETS BACK IN THE GAME AFTER TISSUE TRANSPLANT

Jake's life was never without sport: as one season ended, another began. Soccer became basketball, basketball became track, and he enjoyed the athletic challenge of each sport. However, constant knee pain threatened to put Jake on the bench.



Jake's knee pain started three years ago and doctors suggested he try stretching and physical therapy to remedy the problem, but the pain persisted. When running or playing soccer, his knee would sometimes give out and it became clear to Jake and his parents that more medical attention was necessary.

"I didn't feel that I was able to compete to my full potential," said Jake. "I had an obvious limp when running, but I didn't know what was causing it."

After an MRI, Jake's doctor diagnosed him with Osteochondritis dissecans, a joint condition in which cartilage and bone in the knee become loose. Though he was in the midst of a basketball season and looking forward to track, Jake's diagnosis forced him to stop playing.

Jake and his family sought a second opinion after his diagnosis and they met Dr. John Polousky of HealthONE Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children in Denver. After weighing his options, Jake and his doctor moved forward with surgery. During the procedure, Dr. Polousky used bone and cartilage allografts to replace the damaged tissue and realigned the weight-bearing line in Jake's leg.

Jake understood prior to his surgery that a deceased tissue donor made the bone and cartilage allografts possible.

"My immediate reaction was sadness. Today I am very appreciative that the person chose to be a donor and wanted to help someone beyond their own life."

Part of Jake's recovery included the use of an external fixator with metal pins anchored into entry points in his leg.

"After the surgery I noticed all of the attention I received from strangers. I don't think they had ever seen an external fixator, and it did look strange," he said.



Jake (right), NASCAR driver Joey Gase (center) and Dr. John Polousky (left) during Joey's visit to HealthONE Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children



JAKE

RECIPIENT OF: BONE AND CARTILAGE

Jake recently had the external fixator removed and has started his exercise regimen again. He rides his bike 12 miles per day and does not have any pain.

Receiving donated tissue affirmed Jake's belief in donation. He registered as a donor when he got his driver's license and hopes that others will consider registering too.

"I have felt the impact of what it really means to receive something from someone you don't know. I would be interested in knowing about my donor's life because they are a part of me now. He or she made it possible for me to be healthy, so that I can do the things I like to do."
