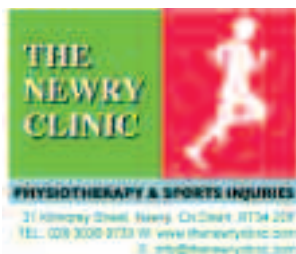


THE NEWRY CLINIC



The Newry Clinic has three partners - Stephen Brannigan, Frank Quinn and Kieran Murray - who are highly experienced Chartered Physiotherapists and have previously worked in the Premiership and Rugby League. They are the current Physios to the Down Senior Gaelic Football Team.

The Newry Clinic voices its fears that cutbacks may impact on player welfare.

Every winter when on-field activities are at their quietest in the GAA calendar, a topic related to off-field issues usually becomes the subject of mass debate.

Last year the topic was 'burn-out' and meetings from top level to grass roots were held around the country to ensure the latest batch of teenage sensations were going to be protected from this so-called epidemic.

The GAA formed a Medical and Player Welfare Committee to devise rules and regulations to protect the careers of the next generation.

Club Committees followed these rules through to grass roots level and so laid down the law to their own coaches to ensure player welfare was the number one priority of their future planning.

Now, if we fast forward only 12 months to the present day, the GAA (and rightly so) have latched onto the whole 'credit crunch' and 'current economic climate' issue.

As a playing and committee member at my own club, I am well aware of the running costs.

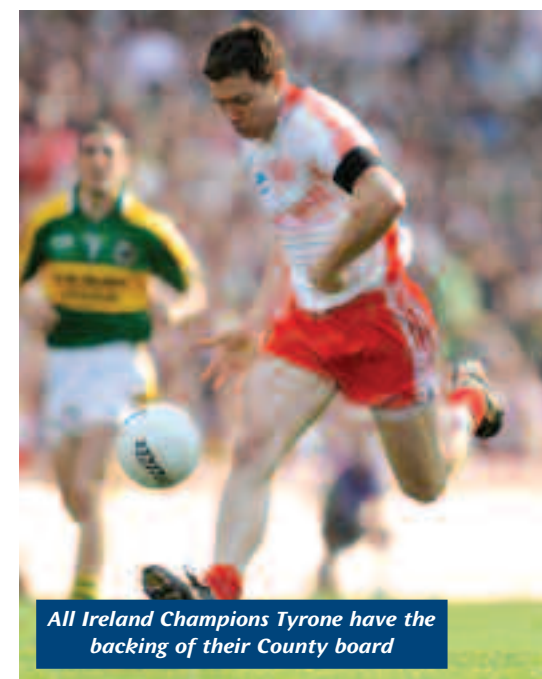


Not looking after players will result in an increased risk of injury

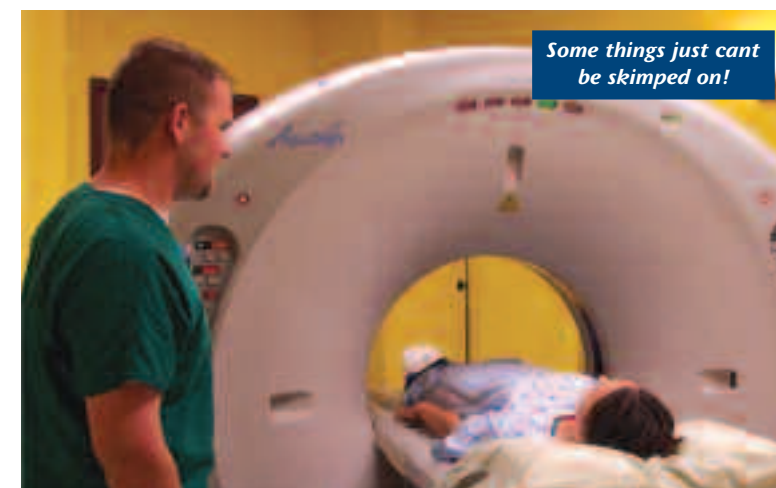
What worries me though is the danger that player welfare has now been put to the bottom of the priority list, only 12 months after it was right at the top.

Clubs and counties are now carrying out major cost cutting exercises at the expense of player health and welfare. What happened to the idea that in any club/county association, 'your players are your greatest asset'?

Committees are pricing around the country for physiotherapy in the same way they are pricing around for a tank of oil! The result of this is that (newly qualified) physiotherapists with no previous experience are being approached to take on the responsibilities for players' futures. Committees are shopping around for the cheapest options.



All Ireland Champions Tyrone have the backing of their County board



Some things just can't be skimmed on!

The massive atrocity of this is that this trend is not only unique to physiotherapy but consultant radiologists (for MRI scans etc.) and consultant orthopaedic surgeons are also being priced for the cheapest options.

Therefore should a player have the misfortune of needing surgery, committees are willing to take the chance on the cheapest option as opposed to the best option.

As a player, are you happy for a committee to make these decisions at the expense of your health? The responsibility for your health is being placed in the hands of people with a fraction of experience, for a fraction less off the price!

One bright ray of hope (for players in Tyrone) came in a recent daily newspaper where a representative from the Tyrone County Board stated that although they (the County Board) would be cutting costs, one aspect that would not be affected was medical welfare. So I'll finish off by asking you two questions:

Are your players the biggest asset to your club/county?

Who are the present All-Ireland senior and minor football champions?

**Contact the Newry Clinic:
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