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ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY | SPORTS MEDICINE

Rehabilitation Protocol:
Elbow Arthroscopy with Microfracture

Phase I:
0-1 weeks

- Brace: splint at 90 degrees & neutral rotation x3 days, then remove splint and begin light elbow ROM
- ROM:
-- Days 0-3: No elbow ROM; okay for gentle shoulder, wrist, digit ROM
-- Days 3-7: begin gentle elbow ROM at home in bulky dressing, sling when resting
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening: None

Phase II:
1-4 weeks

- Brace: Hinged elbow brace. Wear at all times including for exercise. Okay to remove for hygiene
- ROM: 0-90 of elbow
> Continue wrist and shoulder ROM
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening: none of elbow
- Exercises:
> Gentle joint mobilization, focus on re-gaining extension
> Emphasis on frequent motion of the elbow
> Gripping exercises with putty
> Isometrics, wrist extension-flexion exercises and stretches
> After week 2, initial shoulder cuff and deltoid isometrics;
> Initiate light wrist strengthening with 1 lb weight (curls, reverse curls, pronation/supination)

Phase III:
4-8 weeks

- Brace: None
- ROM: progress to full; frequent mobility exercises of elbow
> Continue wrist and shoulder ROM
- Weightbearing: Non-weightbearing
- Strengthening:
- Exercises:
> Initiate light dumbbell program for wrist flexors, extensors, supinators, pronators, biceps, triceps
> Low load long duration stretching for extension
> May begin running
> Thrower's 10 program once ROM full with very light loading; no push-ups

Phase IV:
8-12 weeks

- Brace: none
- ROM: full and pain free ROM
- Weightbearing: limited
- Strengthening: begin biceps isometrics; then begin active flexion and extension against gravity; resistive strengthening for deltoid/rotator cuff
- Exercises:

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> Core strengthening
> Light resistance for biceps and triceps

Phase V: 12 weeks-5 months

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: gradually increase slowly
- Strengthening:
> Shoulder program
> Core program
> Progress elbow strengthening but protect against excessive joint loading for 5 months (eg, no weight bearing exercises, bench press, etc.)

Phase VI: 5+ months

- Brace: none
- ROM: full
- Weightbearing: as tolerated
- Activity: goal to return to full activity
> Initiate light plyometrics and tossing
> Initiate interval throwing program phase I at 6 months
> Start light machine bench press and push-ups after 6 months
> Initiate interval throwing program phase II off mound after 7 months
> Progress functional activities and sport-specific demands
- Return to sport after clearance by MD (typically minimum 6 months or more depending on sport)

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