

Patience is the Key with Hamstring Injuries, such as with Red Sox Star, Dustin Pedroia

Injured Boston Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia could be back in the lineup soon after suffering a hamstring injury.

But these types of injuries require patience according to Dr. Pat Casey of Concord Orthopaedics. Casey is a team physician with the New Hampshire Fisher Cats and though he has not examined Pedroia specifically, he is very familiar with hamstring concerns.

“We have players who have these injuries. A lot of times the fear is that it becomes more chronic in nature. If you don’t let this heal you can have persistent pain and weakness,” Casey said. “Basically, if you don’t give it time to rest and heal appropriately you can re-injure it and then it becomes a chronic issue and more of a longer problem. I think it’s better in this situation to let these tendons heal, get better and allow the player to get back to his normal level of activity.”

Dr. Casey explains that tendons such as the hamstring are responsible for explosive movements.

“The hamstring tendons are a series of several tendons that run from our pelvis to down below our knees. They cross two joints, both our hip joint and knee joint. They’re important in athletics because they help give us some of our explosive stretching, running, taking off,” Casey said. “It helps with that first few steps as well as persistent running. The hamstring tendon stretches a tendon that attaches to the bone and then becomes a muscle and then becomes a tendon again and attaches down to the tibia bone. A lot of time when people have a hamstring strain or an injury to that, where the tendon and the muscle meet, that area is prone to high levels of stress and you can have some micro-tearing in that area.”

That’s problematic for anyone, especially a high level athlete.

“A lot of times people will get a sharp pain in the back of their leg and they feel like they can’t push off or have that explosive maneuver. In Dustin Pedroia’s case, turning double plays and running to first (base) and things like that,” Casey said. “The good thing about hamstring injuries is that a lot of these will improve and get better over time. Unless you’ve torn the hamstring completely off the bone, which is very unusual and not something that sounds like has happened to him. It’s more of a soft tissue injury that with rest and stretching and time will improve itself and heal and get better.”

Unfortunately, some athletes are too eager to get back into action.

“(Pedroia’s) work ethic is spectacular and I’m sure every coach in the major leagues would want a player like him on their team to set the tone and work hard and do all that. The problem sometimes with players like that is that their personalities are so driven that they get restless and they can want to do too much before their body is ready,” Casey said. “It’s a challenge for minor league and major league athletes who really want to play to try to hold them down or tie them down a little bit.”

Casey said emphasizing letting the injury heal for one long time frame is better than having to take care of it multiple times.

“One of the challenges on our part is to really tell players let’s take care of this once, let’s take of this right and not let it come back,” Casey said. “That tends to sink in with them, but it’s still a challenge. With players like that and the personality (Pedroia) has, I’m sure the medical staff there is challenged to try to hold him down.”

Copy and paste this link into your browser for the radio interview with Dr. Casey:

<https://soundcloud.com/wkxl/concord-orthopaedics-analysis-by-dr-pat-casey>