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Scapular Fracture in a Collegiate Football Player: A Case Report

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OBJECTIVE

To present a case of nonsurgical treatment and rehabilitation of a scapular fracture in a National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I football athlete.

BACKGROUND

While running the football in a game, the athlete was being tackled by a defensive player and then hit on both sides by two other defensive players. On-the-field evaluation was not performed, with a sideline evaluation revealing significant shoulder weakness. Post-injury imaging reported a scapular fracture.

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSIS

scapular fracture, posterior labral tear of the shoulder.

TREATMENT

The sports medicine team discussed surgical and nonsurgical options. A nonsurgical approach was used with immobilization and rehabilitation.

UNIQUENESS

Scapular fractures account for a less than 1% of all fractures and rarely occur in athletic events.^{1,2} Scapular fractures often occur in high trauma, blunt force injuries such as motor vehicle accidents or falling from significant heights.¹⁻⁵

CONCLUSIONS

Proper non-surgical treatment of nondisplaced scapular fractures can result in good outcomes with no functional limitations. Athletes are able to return to play without compromising their health, safety, or performance.

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KEY WORDS: *conservative treatment, upper extremity injuries, scapular fracture*