



Centers for
Orthopaedics
Experience in Motion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New hip pain option restores golf pro's swing

Surgery favored by top athletes boosts mobility without hip replacement

PORTLAND – Ron Bibeau first felt the pain in his groin last year. The pain made it difficult for him to swing a golf club – an alarming prospect since he's the head pro at Portland's Riverside Municipal Golf Course.

Bibeau thought he had a hernia. His primary care physician suspected nerve damage. Finally, Bibeau met with Dr. Benjamin H. Huffard, an orthopaedic surgeon at the state's premier orthopaedic practice, OA Centers for Orthopaedics in Portland. Huffard diagnosed Bibeau with a torn labrum, and identified him as a prime candidate for a new type of hip surgery.

The minimally-invasive surgery, known as hip arthroscopy, is fast becoming the treatment of choice for younger, active people suffering from chronic hip pain. Among those who have undergone the surgery recently are New York Yankee Alex Rodriguez and Mike Lowell of the Boston Red Sox.

Bibeau underwent surgery on Jan. 5, 2009. Today the 48-year-old South Portland resident is pain free and playing the best golf of his career. He won the first two out of three tournaments he played in this year and has consistently ranked among the top six in all his contests this summer.

In Maine a growing number of people are taking advantage of Dr. Huffard's skill in hip arthroscopy at OA Centers for Orthopaedics. Dr. Huffard studied the surgery with A-Rod's doctor, Marc Phillippon, at the Steadman Hawkins Clinic in Vail, Colo. He says the surgery offers hope to patients who historically had to live with the pain until they needed a hip replacement.

"For a long time there have been young people who have had hip pain, and the only thing we could do was wait until they were old enough to have their hip replaced," said Dr. Huffard, a 2001 graduate of Yale University School of Medicine. "Now there are good, effective treatments that make it so we can get people back to athletics."

The most common injuries are a torn labrum – the ring of cartilage that surrounds the rim of the hip socket and acts as a cushion – and hip impingement, a lack of room between the ball of the femur and the hip socket that causes painful friction.

Hip arthroscopy allows surgeons to diagnose and repair the injuries through tiny incisions in the hip instead of larger incisions like those needed for replacement. This less invasive approach usually means less pain and a quicker recovery for the patient.

The best candidate for the surgery is someone who is relatively young, with no arthritis in the hip, and wants to return to heavy activity. And it's more than just athletes who benefit: some people are bothered by sitting, or driving in a car. Sometimes the pain is so severe that simple things like climbing the stairs or bending to tie shoes are difficult.

Since joining OA Centers for Orthopaedics in 2007, Huffard has done about 120 hip arthroscopies and now averages 1-2 surgeries a week, the most in Maine. Hip arthroscopy was recently featured in an article in USA Today. The injuries to Lowell and Rodriguez have also focused attention on the surgery. "It seems like there are more patients every month," Huffard said.

Bibeau, for one, has no regrets. "The surgery was the best thing I ever did. I feel," he said. "I feel better now than I did when I was 25."

ABOUT OA CENTERS FOR ORTHOPAEDICS

Founded in 1982, OA Centers for Orthopaedics is the premier orthopaedic practice in Maine and one of the country's leading innovators in orthopaedics. OA's 23 physicians and surgeons are highly specialized in areas such as sports medicine; hand surgery; joint reconstruction of the hip, knee and shoulder; medical and surgical treatment of the spine; foot and ankle surgery; and complex fracture treatment. OA performs more orthopaedic procedures than any other practice in Maine, and some of the most sophisticated procedures in the nation. In 2007, US News & World Report ranked Maine Medical Center in the top 50 in the orthopaedics category. OA's very own Dr. George Babikian, Chairman of the Division of Orthopaedics, Dr. Raymond White, Chairman of Orthopaedic Trauma, and Dr. Brian McGrory, the Director of the MMC Joint Replacement Center, lead Maine Medical Center's capability in this category. OA is accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC).

Headquartered in Portland, Maine, OA has satellite offices in Windham and Saco. OA—Experience in motion. For more information, please visit www.orthoassociates.com.

###