

A LEG UP ON KNEE INJURIES

SURGERY AND REHAB GET YOUNG FEMALE ATHLETES BACK IN THE GAME.

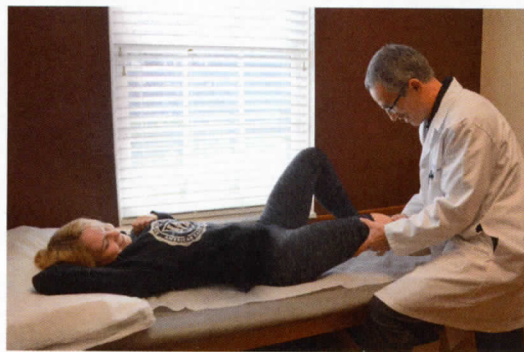


KALLI WIERWILLE PLAYS JUST ABOUT any sport she can. The Cincinnati teen has played soccer, volleyball and basketball for school and club teams, making her one of a growing number of girls involved in competitive athletics. Unfortunately, she also represents another aspect of girls in sports. She suffered a serious knee injury that needed corrective surgery at the Tri-Health Orthopedic Sports Institute (TOSI).

Kalli, now 15, is the daughter of Karen Wierwille, 42, a bankruptcy court administrator, and Kurt Wierwille, 44, a registered nurse. She has two siblings, Karli, 13, and Keegan, 9. She first injured her right knee two years ago while trying out for the basketball team. The injury was diagnosed as a slight tear of her anterior cruciate ligament, or ACL, which connects the femur to the tibia. Then in January 2015, while playing soccer, she tore it completely.

The Wierwilles turned to David E. Taylor, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon with TOSI. "Kalli had a volleyball injury to her hand in 2013, and her coach sent her to Dr. Taylor," says mom Karen. "When she had her knee injury we automatically took her back to him. We love him."

Dr. Taylor performed reconstructive knee surgery on Jan. 29, 2015. He



Dr. David E. Taylor, an orthopedic surgeon, helped teen athlete Kalli Wierwille with various knee issues that were once considered career-ending injuries.

took two tendons from her hamstring muscle and made a new ACL ligament, which he grafted to the tibia and femur at the site of the original ACL. Knee surgeries such as this have become "epidemic" for girls and young women, Dr. Taylor says, for a couple of reasons. One is anatomy: The shape of girls' knees and the size and angle of the legs and hips put more stress on a female knee than a male knee receives. Also, more girls are playing sports than ever before, and they often play the same sport all year long. "The competition is higher, and they play on multiple teams, so there are more chances to get injured," he says.

Kalli's surgery and physical therapy for rehabilitation went well, and she is back on the fields and courts. "She's doing great and can play anything she wants," Karen says. Kalli has even added competing on the track team to her hoops, volleyball and soccer teams. "She keeps me busy," Karen says with a laugh.

Injuries are the new normal for female athletes, but so are these results. "These were once career-ending injuries," says Dr. Taylor. "You can't *guarantee* a full return to function, but with modern care and rehab it is common to get them back to doing whatever they did before."