

A Question of *Balance*

Every child has a right to symmetrical development

BY BOB ROWBOTHAM, CEO, BFS

Photo by Nathan Bootz



Jared Evers, #14

The skill sets needed to punt a football or block it rely on balance and timing. To read more about the Ithaca High School football team, see page 10.

On March 13 of this year we had a special visitor at BFS headquarters in Salt Lake City. Dr. Peter Gorman, president of Microgate USA, came by to tell us about his progress in spreading the idea that every child has a right to symmetrical development.



Dr. Peter Gorman
President of Microgate USA

It's the job of all of us to help ensure this right. At BFS we consider it our privilege to assist in this cause.

Dr. Gorman talked to us about the relationship he has fostered with the Hudson Valley Cerebral Palsy Association in Brewster, New York. This association is one of 22 designated

facilities of its kind in the New York state area. This facility plans to showcase the helpful features of OptoJump locally and eventually disseminate the information to the other 1,200 facilities throughout America. Says Gorman, “With well-trained therapists, every child now has the opportunity to be recognized for their ability, and with proper conditioning can be helped to reach their maximum potential.”

Gorman explains that all children

International organization. This very large organization provides prosthetic devices throughout the world. Knowing the ability of the OptoJump system to provide precise gait data, Gorman is hopeful that by associating with these types of organizations many people will be able to be helped throughout the world.

While working with these health care organizations, Dr. Gorman also has been very active with high-performance

Federation of State High School Associations, there is a trend of parents pulling their kids out of football because of a fear of concussions. In fact, football participation at the high school level in Maryland dropped 3.5 percent (about 500 kids) from the previous year!

To help sort through the many theories on concussion, Dr. Gorman decided to invite experts to speak in a special symposium in September on this topic. One of these speakers is



Canadian strength coach and Posturologist Paul Gagné performs a gait test with the OptoJump and then sees the results instantly.

are athletes of varying abilities. “By understanding the full spectrum of human performance, each and every individual can be helped to reach their maximum potential,” says Gorman.

Through his relationship with the Cerebral Palsy Association Gorman was made aware of the Handicap

athletes in sports such as football.

The dangers of concussion in football have been receiving considerable exposure recently in the media. Coaches, health professionals and parents are rightly concerned. According to John Gillis, associate director for publications and communications at the National

Dr. William Brechue, PhD, a professor at the Department of Physical Education at West Point. Dr. Brechue, who has done extensive research on returning to play and returning to duty after injury, will give an opening statement defining concussion and discussing the broad spectrum of concussion.

Photos by Becky Miller.



Among the other speakers who will be on hand at the symposium are PhD researchers who work extensively in the fields of cognitive testing, dynamic balance control, heart rate interpretation and vestibular understanding. Gorman says, “All these approaches are good and offer valuable information; even so, every approach lacks something. No one approach is a panacea. The more total approach, the better; but of course we have to address the most critical concerns first. OptoJump is part of this process for its precise appraisal of movement. This enables us to address problem areas long before they turn into injuries. And when made part of a complete evaluation system, OptoJump provides objective data on an athlete’s preparedness to return to play after injury, including concussion. By having precise, objective data, an athlete can have a more effective and efficient program on the road to optimal performance, and also a more effective and efficient program on the road back to play following an injury.”

Dr. Gorman believes that the US leads the field in understanding concussion, but we still need much more collaboration among our PhD researchers to help give all of us a better understanding. “We’re sponsoring the seminar and opening it to all professions to give ourselves a true understanding of concussion. What is it, how do you recognize it, how do you evaluate it, how do you treat it, and how do you decide when to return to play and return to learn? We are determined to know the best way to get athletes back into competition and back into the classroom.” **BF**

Symmetrical development is reflected in elite athletic performance, as demonstrated here by professional runner Heather Kampf. Read her story on page 44.