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**Return to basketball and soccer after anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction in competitive school-aged athletes. Shelbourne KD, Sullivan AN, Bohard K, Gray T, Urch SE. *Sports Health* 2009;1:236 – 241.**

**Background:** Little is known about the return to specific sports after anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction and whether sex differences exist regarding the level and timing at which athletes return.

**Hypotheses:** Hypothesis #1 - School-aged boys return to full sports earlier and at a higher frequency than girls after surgery.  
Hypothesis #2 - Athletes who return to sports earlier will have a higher incidence of subsequent injury to either knee after surgery.

**Study Design:** Cohort study.

**Methods:** The patient population comprised 413 consecutive school-aged athletes who were injured while competing in basketball or soccer. Patients were enrolled prospectively and activity levels were obtained through follow-up visits, surveys, phone calls, and emails.

**Results:** Follow-up was obtained for 402 patients (basketball, 58 boys, 242 girls; soccer, 25 boys, 77 girls). For basketball, 87 percent of both girls and boys returned to high school basketball after surgery: the mean time to return to full participation in basketball was  $5.2 \pm 2.1$  months for girls and  $5.3 \pm 2.2$  months for boys ( $P=0.92$ ). For soccer, 93 percent of girls and 80 percent of boys returned to compete in high school soccer after surgery ( $P=0.13$ ): the mean time to return to full participation in soccer was  $5.1 \pm 1.9$  months for girls and  $5.1 \pm 2.0$  for boys ( $P=1.0$ ). About 20 percent of athletes went on to compete in their sport in college. The time of return to sports was not a statistically significant factor for the incidence of subsequent anterior cruciate ligament injury.

**Conclusions:** Of 402 athletes competing in basketball and soccer, women and men returned at the same rate and same level of sport after surgery. Athletes who returned to sports at earlier times after surgery did not have a higher incidence of subsequent anterior cruciate ligament injury than patients who returned at later times.