



# The Birth of Podiatric Sports Medicine: The Academy and Now Board Certification

A number of important figures present and past have made possible the new podiatric sports medicine certification.

BY KENNETH B. REHM, DPM

The long-awaited board certification in podiatric sports medicine is now available to all doctors who want a valuable credential allowing them to declare that they are a qualified podiatric specialist in sports medicine. It has been a long and interesting journey involving two unique organizations and a host of talented individuals. Here is the full story... highlighting those whose contributions made it possible.

The 1970's brought about the birth of podiatric sports medicine. The impetus for most of the interest in sports medicine by podiatrists back then arose out of the running boom and the development of the American Association of Podiatric Sports Medicine. Doctors George Sheehan, Robert Barnes, George Pagliano, Richard Gilbert and Steven Subotnik brought the role of the podiatrist in sports medicine to national attention.

The momentum they created has not stopped; and now the field is in full bloom where physicians such as Dr. Jeff Ross merges his expertise in diabetic foot medicine and surgery with biomechanics and sports medicine, culminating in an efficacious bridging of podiatry with collegiate and high-school sports. Dr. Ross served as team podiatric physician for the Baylor Uni-



Figure 1: Richard Gilbert, DPM, The Father of Podiatric Sports Medicine

versity football team and is a consultant for the University of Houston track team, while also playing an active role in high school sports. Adding to his credentials and fueled by his intense love for skiing, his in-depth research defined its biomechanics. His incredible passion

## The Trailblazers

was a driving force that propelled podiatric sports medicine to the pinnacle of recognition and the establishment of the highly anticipated board certification by the American Board of Multiple Specialties in Podiatry (ABMSP). The idea of a board certification in podiatric sports medicine was initially seeded by the esteemed Dr. Richard Gilbert (Figure 1), pioneer in the development of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine (AAPSM) and podiatrist to the San Diego Chargers. His powerful motivation was to unite the various avenues of podiatric medicine and surgery through an amalgamation of talents vital to forming a complete spectrum of podiatric sports medicine expertise, where

**Dr. Richard Gilbert, podiatrist to the San Diego Chargers, was a pioneer in the development of the AAPSM.**

trained DPMs could interchange ideas and knowledge with seasoned professionals. Arguably, the first podiatric sports medicine celebrity was Dr. Steve Subotnik, an athlete himself who was featured in *Runner's World*

*Continued on page 104*



## Sports Medicine (from page 103)

Magazine and author of *The Running Foot Doctor* (Figure 2). Because of his groundbreaking work in surgery, biomechanics and sports medicine, Dr. Subotnik was possibly the single most influential force in putting podiatry on the map. He cut his “sports medicine teeth” as a professor at the California College of Podiatric Medicine where he taught surgery and biomechanics. This period of his 50-plus year career was especially gratifying to him, particularly when established doctors, who were students of his in those fledgling years, came up to him at meetings and told him what an impact he had on their career.

Dr Subotnik’s sports medicine career rocketed when he became a marathon runner, and his intense involvement and resulting contributions brought the podiatry profession new recognition and acceptance. His notable cabal included health-related celebrities such as Dr. George Sheehan, a cardiologist who became the legendary philosopher of the recreational running movement in the 1970’s and 1980’s.

For years, Dr.Subotnik, one of

chanics we can make a real difference.” He goes on to say, “Once you’re an athlete who sustains a foot injury, and being active is part of your life, you will seek the help of a sports medicine podiatrist at any cost, regardless of any bureaucratic or insurance limitations.”

His driving philosophy summarizes the importance of the foot and its biomechanics: “Controlling the feet controls the rest of the body”, which is philosophically apropos coming from this champion podiatric sports physician.

### The Protégés

From these trailblazers came their protégés who turned out to be the innovative architects of modern podiatric sports medicine. A key figure is Dr. Tim Dutra, who has advanced the traditional teachings as well as integrated this established doctrine with up-to-date sophisticated computerized gait and motion lab analysis of the athlete. His

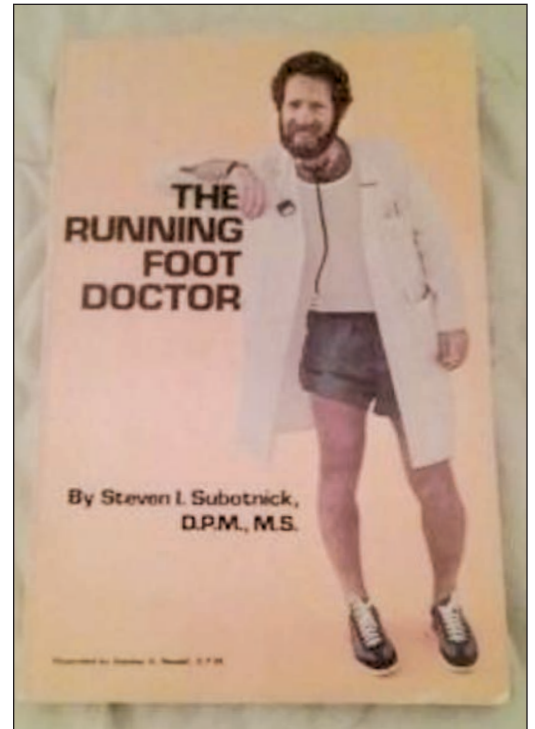


Figure 2: What started it all: Dr. Steve Subotnik and *The Running Foot Doctor*

Dr. Dutra brings to sports medicine is merging the podiatry profession with the community; to memorialize the podiatrist’s vast training, knowledge and experience and to encourage the sporting community to take advantage of this valuable resource.

Dr. Jeff Ross, president of the Texas Podiatric Medical Association and an associate professor of surgery in the division of vascular surgery and endovascular therapy, as well as a clinical associate professor in the department of medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, brings to sports medicine a whole new perspective. He not only served as president of the AAPSM but also co-chaired the Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness, served for 12 years as a member of the Texas Department of State Health Services Council and was an esteemed member of the Texas Diabetes Council. His credentials sanction him as a national and international expert in sports medicine, biomechanics, wound healing and limb preservation. Dr. Ross’s unique contribution, therefore, is being able to fuse the disciplines and surgical principles of diabetic foot medicine with

*Continued on page 106*

## Arguably, the first podiatric sports medicine celebrity was Dr. Steve Subotnik, an athlete himself.

the founding fathers of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, felt that board certification in podiatric sports medicine would take this specialty to the next level, as it separates the spectators from the players. His commitment to board certification was key to the formation of the new certification by The ABMSP. Dr. Subotnik states:

“Sports medicine helps define modern podiatry because biomechanics is the defining factor in podiatry and is also an integral part of sports medicine. The podiatric practice of sports medicine is so important, now more than ever, because it will continue to keep podiatry on the map; because through biome-

position as an assistant professor and clinical investigator at Samuel Merritt University allows him to parlay his knowledge of biomechanics and sports medicine into skillfully watermarked ideas and principles commendably driven into his students’ psyche. His uncompromising enthusiasm for improving the podiatric health of athletes is demonstrated through his tireless engagement in the Special Olympics, consulting for the Golden State Warriors basketball team as well as working with the University of California, Berkeley as a consultant for inter-collegiate sports. He has been active with the AAPSM since he started the student chapter while at the California College of Podiatric Medicine. What



## Sports Medicine (from page 104)

sports medicine, as there are pathways common to both that are brought to light through his extensive lecturing and vast publications. Dr. Ross, inspiring to all, is a valued and motivated partner in the creation of the new certification.

### AAPSM and ABMSP

This new board certification could not have happened without the genius of Stephen B. Permison, M.D., who serves as president of Standards Based Programs, Inc. (SBP Inc.), director of the ABMSP Standards Development Organization ([www.abmsp-sdo.com](http://www.abmsp-sdo.com)) and a voting member of multiple professional boards. SBP Inc. has developed and is currently developing standards, credentialing and certification programs for private industry, medical professional boards and the U.S. Government. Professional credentials, such as the ABMSP certification in sports medicine for podiatrists, assures the public that certified professionals have the proper skills to practice their designated professions with consistent medical outcomes.



Figure 3: Earl Horowitz DPM, A True Visionary, President of American Board of Multiple Specialties in Podiatry

Dr. Earl Horowitz (Figure 3) is the president of the ABMSP and most recently became one of the first podiatrists in the United States to become board certified in Geriatric Podiatry. Dr. Horowitz is a true visionary with a passion for the health of the senior population. Preventing the geriatric patient from developing unnecessary muscle weakness, inactivity and immobility, through sports, exercise and precaution is what fuels Dr. Horowitz's zeal for the field of podiatric sports medicine. "Maintaining foot health, balance and strength as we age are essential considerations in preventing such things as falls,

which often starts a downhill spiral that can even lead to death in an elderly person. This can all be prevented by seriously addressing this part of our practice." His focus on the geriatric patient contributed powerfully to the unique quality of this new board certification.

Visit [www.abmsp.org](http://www.abmsp.org) for further information.

Rita Yates, executive director of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine worked hand in hand with the Executive Director of the American Board of Multiple Specialties in Podiatry, Joan Campbell, to formulate a meaningful advancement from Fellow of AAPSM to Board Certification by ABMSP. This was done in collaboration with the formative team which, in addition to those already discussed, also included the following doctors whose contributions were invaluable: David Jenkins, D.P.M.; Diane Mitchell-Prey, D.P.M.; Doug Taylor, D.P.M.; Richard Blake, D.P.M.; and Steven Tager, D.P.M.

To summarize, world-class talent representing a wide range of expertise, each having intense passion for their individual niche, brought this board certification to fruition. The intended and expected outcome is to support the highest level of practice in sports medicine for the modern podiatrist; and to secure the optimum level of care for their patients. This bright light will undoubtedly ensure a brilliant future for the unabridged formidable field of podiatric medicine and surgery.

In conclusion, podiatric sports medicine defines the future of podiatry because it's an area where *committed* athletes are *committed* to staying in the game no matter what; and there is no better place to get help for those with ..... sports-related problems of the lower extremity than a podiatric physician and surgeon who is board certified in podiatric sports medicine. **PM**



**Dr. Rehman** is Medical Director, The Diabetic Foot & Wound Treatment Centers San Marcos, California. He is board certified by the American Board of Multiple Specialties in Podiatry.

## Dr. Earl Horowitz's focus on the geriatric patient contributed powerfully to the unique quality of this new board certification.

These intensely scrutinized policies bestow a hand of trust, allowing the public to expect quality and consistency in both in the practice of podiatric sports medicine and any products or devices that support this discipline. Dr. Permison states that "the definition of *professional* is quality, consistency and integrity", exactly what his expertise imprinted into the structure of the new board certification.

Dr. Victor Quijano is Chief of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Portland, Oregon. His Ph.D. and his knowledge of molecular endocrinology boosts his pursuit of comprehensiveness in the practice of podiatric sports medicine beyond the treatment of the traditional athlete. He calls for more academic and clinical inclusiveness in the discipline of podiatric sports medicine to embrace those challenges that deal with diabetes and other metabolic disorders, as well as those conditions that affect our country's veterans. His was a needed voice in the development of this quality certification.