



Glancing Back, Striding Ahead: A History of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine—Part 1



On the occasion of their 50th anniversary, the AAPSM focuses on the first thirty years.

BY RICHARD T. BOUCHÉ, DPM AND ALEX KOR, DPM, MS

Authors' Note: 2020 is the 50th Anniversary of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine. This is the 1st of a two-part series that celebrates this golden anniversary. This article focuses on the 1st thirty years of AAPSM and is dedicated to the first AAPSM president and “father” of podiatric sports medicine, Robert M. Barnes, DPM, along with our 22nd President, William Olson, DPM. Their passion and dedication to the academy was significant and was an inspiration for this project.

The Beginnings

Prior to 1970, there is little recorded information related to the “early beginnings” of podiatric sports medicine. Nonetheless, Robert Barnes was able to provide us with a keen insight into its existence. In 1963, at the Russian-American Games in Palo Alto, CA, Dr. Barnes met several doctors who shared his passion for sports medicine. This meeting gave Dr. Barnes the initial idea and inspiration of establishing a separate sports medicine association for podiatrists. After this meeting, Drs. Barnes met with some of the first podiatrists involved with the American College of Sports Medicine. Their involvement with ACSM made

them realize the importance and potential of podiatric sports medicine. They were surprised by the medical profession’s lack of knowledge about lower extremity biomechanics and injuries involving the foot and ankle.

Of similar historical significance was George Sheehan’s initial contact with podiatric medicine. George Sheehan, a famous cardiologist, philosopher, and runner was the

ics and sports medicine and he therefore realized the importance and potential of podiatric sports medicine.

The 70’s: The Founding: Recognition and Momentum

In the fall of 1970, at the American Podiatry Association’s (APA) meeting in San Francisco, Bob Barnes organized a session for podiatrists interested in sports medicine. Forty

“St. George” (Dr Sheehan) was the Academy’s most outspoken advocate who constantly admonished sports podiatrists to be the best they could be.

AAPSM’s only non-podiatric founding father. “St. George” (as he was known to sports podiatrists) was the Academy’s most outspoken advocate who constantly admonished sports podiatrists to be the best they could be. In 1963, his interest in running was rekindled because of a hand injury he incurred playing tennis. Because of his injuries, he sought out and became a patient of Richard Schuster, a sports podiatrist from New York. This encounter sparked Dr. Sheehan’s interest in biomechan-

podiatrists attended and signified the official founding of the AAPSM. With the help of APA Past President Charles Turchin, the AAPSM was officially recognized and affiliated with the APA. For the next 5 years the Academy entered an educational period with members basically learning how to be sports podiatrists. Academy members shared this new information with each other, the public and other sports medicine organizations. Spreading the sports medicine

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“gospel” to podiatrists was primarily accomplished by: organizing the annual meeting in conjunction with the APA meeting in various cities nationwide, hosting an annual biomechanics meeting, co-sponsoring sports medicine meetings at each of the podiatric medical colleges, and establishing a podiatric sports medicine section in the *Journal of the American Podiatry Association*. This education process was fortuitous for sports podiatrists, as the mid-to-late seventies marked the onset of the “running boom.” One of the most important meetings was “The Athlete’s Dilemma: Overuse Syndromes of the Foot and Leg” held in San Francisco in April of 1973, and it might well be seen as the Academy’s “coming out” party.

In 1975, the Academy appointed officers and identified 14 individuals as the “founding fathers”—13 podiatrists and 1 cardiologist. Robert Barnes (who established the Golden Foot Award) was appointed first president and is thus considered the “Father” of podiatric sports medicine. By 1975, the foundation of the AAPSM had been established. Other founding fathers included Robert Brennan, David Conway, Joseph Doller, Richard Gilbert, Francis Lantz, Herbert Levin, Guido Laporta, John Pagliano, Richard Schuster, Joseph Seder, Thomas Sgarlato, George Sheehan, and Steve Subotnick .

In the mid to late 70’s, as the running boom hit full force, many AAPSM members took advantage of the opportunity by writing articles, columns and books on lower extremity biomechanics and sports injuries. Two sports podiatrists who led the charge were Steve Subotnick and Harry Hlavac. In addition, Subotnick became a medical editor (along with George Sheehan, MD) for *Runner’s World*. Exposure from these publications delivered podiatric sports medicine to other podiatrists, health professionals and the public, all of whom were desperate for information on the prevention and treatment of sports injuries. The public and the medical community (with the help of George Sheehan) realized the poten-

tial of podiatric sports medicine and podiatrists were now recognized as the lower extremity experts.

Richard Gilbert, the 2nd AAPSM president, was the first to establish and define the role of “team podiatrist” with a professional sports team, the San Diego Chargers. In 1995, as a member of the Chargers’ medical staff, he experienced Super Bowl XXIX first-hand.

The decade of the 70’s ended with John Pagliano becoming the 3rd AAPSM president. Although Dr.

tions (American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance; American College of Sports Medicine; American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine; National Athletic Trainers Association; President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports; and United States Olympic Committee) that became leaders on a national level. In the late 70’s, these organizations began to meet in private, non-publicized meetings on an annual basis to share ideas and discuss issues of common concern.

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Pagliano did not succeed in making the 1968 U.S. Marathon team at the US Olympic trials in Alamosa, Colorado as an athlete, the experience motivated him to secure positions for sports podiatrists on the US Olympic Medical Team. Through personal and professional contacts, Dr. Pagliano spearheaded efforts for the AAPSM to achieve this goal. Though ultimately he was unsuccessful, the AAPSM received substantial exposure and his efforts educated and influenced many individuals associated with the US Olympic Medical Team.

The 80’s: Riding the Wave

Sports Medicine Perspective

As the Academy entered the 80’s, the first running boom was still going strong. This boom was ignited by the successes of Frank Shorter, Bill Rodgers, and Joan Benoit.

As a respite from running, new activities became popular under the umbrella of “cross training.” High and low impact aerobics, water and step aerobics, triathlon participation, in-line skating, and dance (Jazzercise) all resulted in new lower extremity injuries that were being presented to podiatrists.

In the late 70’s and through the 80’s, the general field of sports medicine was still emerging and there were six principal organiza-

During this time, in the United States there was an explosion of sports medicine special interest groups with over 100 different organizations being recognized. Included in this group was The American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine.

Although at the time the AAPSM was not considered a mainstream sports medicine organization nationally, we made significant in-roads with many of these organizations including the ACSM and NATA. In addition, strong contacts were made with the American Medical Jogger’s Association (AMJA), the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the Running and Fitness Association. On a national scale, George Sheehan continued to spread the word about podiatric sports medicine to athletes, the general public and to the allopathic medical community. As a result, sports podiatrists were being sought out by patients who were injured and anxious to get healthy with non-surgical alternatives.

The AAPSM Perspective

The early 80’s continued to be challenging as the organization was overwhelmed with podiatrists wanting to be part of this new adventure. It was during this tumultuous time that the AAPSM became more structured and emphasized on credentials. During this time, a fellow exam pro-

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tolcol was formally established. Education of its members became a high priority. Monies were budgeted for an AAPSM-sponsored fellow program aimed at increasing educational opportunities. In 1983, the first AAPSM student chapter was established at the California College of Podiatric Medicines with other colleges following. As membership continued to grow into the 80's, stand-alone meetings were well-attended and financially positive. One of the most popular AAPSM meetings was held in Disneyland in 1981. It featured the best sports medicine speakers in the country and attracted 275 attendees. Many members referred to this meeting as a "dream come true." By 1983, the AAPSM board had expanded. John Bennett was the first executive director and briefly served (less than 1 year) until late 1982. In 1983, Larry Shane became the 2nd executive director, beginning his long successful career with the Academy.

The Presidents

Steve Subotnick and Harry Hlavac were the 4th ('81-'82) and 5th ('82-'83) AAPSM presidents respectively and they completed the "California Connection" (the first 5 presidents all hailed from California). Drs Subotnick and Hlavac served as consultants to running shoe companies, editors for popular running magazines and personally participated in various sports events. Unarguably, Dr. Subotnick was the most recognized sports podiatrist in the country and he became a role model for many young aspiring sports podiatrists. He set the bar high for future sports podiatrists by attaining additional degrees in chiropractic and naturopathic medicine, which increased his ability to serve his athletic patients.

Being from Texas, Edward "Woody" Kent became the first non-Californian to assume the role of AAPSM president ('83-'84). This appointment began a trend toward nationalizing the Academy. Dr. Kent also organized the first podiatric sports medicine track at the national APMA meeting in Dallas. His first charge as President was to hire a new executive director after John

Bennett stepped down. Larry Shane was hired as executive director, a vital position for this young organization. Larry's forte was media and marketing, and his talents served the Academy well for many years.

Ray Stidd from Indianapolis, Indiana was the 7th AAPSM president ('84-'85) and the first from the Mid-

west. During his term, the Academy board traveled together to the 1984 Pre-Olympic Scientific Conference in Eugene, Oregon, then on to the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, CA. Dr. Stidd forged many relationships and lectured with many sports medicine luminaries at the time.

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Gary Gordon from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania became the 8th AAPSM president ('85-'86) and the first from the East Coast. Dr. Gordon established the first AAPSM-sponsored podiatric sports medicine one-year fellowship program and again attempted to make inroads with the USOC overseeing the board's first visit to the Olympic Training Center.

Jeffrey Yale from Ansonia, Connecticut followed as the 9th AAPSM president ('86-'87). Dr. Yale was instrumental in setting up the credentialing and testing of members who wanted to attain "fellow status." His focus was to assure academic excellence for members. Consistent with the theme of education, Dr. Yale coordinated the sports medicine brochure program, which covered diverse topics pertinent to podiatric sports medicine. These brochures continue to be popular with members.

Michael Heaslet from Monterey, California became the 10th AAPSM president ('87-'88) and has many fond memories of his tenure with the Academy. His emphasis during his presidency was marketing and media relations and he oversaw the publication of two AAPSM brochures, *The Complete Runner's Guide* and *The Running Shoe-Fitting Guide*. Dr. Heaslet also served as co-editor of our *Podiatric Sports Medicine*. He also worked closely with

former AAPSM President John Pagliano on co-chairing the successful 1981 AAPSM meeting in Disneyland.

Paul Taylor from Washington, D.C., was the 11th AAPSM president; ('88-'89). Dr. Taylor went on to become the team podiatrist for multiple professional teams including the NBA's Washington Wizards (previously known as the Baltimore Bullets, then Washington Bullets), a position he cherished for over 30 years. In the early 90's he went on to serve as president of The Running and Fitness Association.

William Van Pelt from Houston, Texas was the 12th AAPSM president; ('89-'90). Dr. Van Pelt immersed himself in sports both personally and professionally. He became the "running foot doctor of Houston" completing over 30 marathons in his career. He also originated the AAPSM Dive Seminar, which spanned a period of 3 decades and thanks to his efforts it is still going strong today.

The 90's: Change & Reorganization

The 80's had marked the peak in popularity for the Academy. For the board members it was a time for growth, opportunity, networking, learning, and teaching and a time for "dreams come true."

Sports Perspective: As the Academy entered the 90's, exercise walking was the number one recreational sports activity. Running was still popular but its rate of popularity leveled out before the onset of the "second running boom", which began in earnest in the mid-90's. During this "second running boom," the typical runner trained less miles, average running times were longer and runners were more interested in just finishing the race and enjoying the social aspects of the sport (regardless of the distance).

Sports Medicine Perspective: The involvement of members of AAPSM with other sports medicine organizations (The Joint Commission on Sports Medicine and the American College of Sports Medicine) occurred during this time. The Joint Commission on Sports Medicine and Science officially reconvened in February of 1993 in Colorado Springs, Colorado and fortunately the AAPSM was one of the 32 organizations invited to attend. The JCSMS recognized these organizations as having the greatest potential impact on the sports medicine profession.

On a national level, the most significant association at this time was with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). Informal contacts were established with this organization and during the 90's, steps were taken to build a more formal relationship. This relationship was nurtured by mutual involvement and networking through contacts with the JCSMS.

The AAPSM Perspective: Although podiatric sports medicine remained popular in the 90's, the stand-alone meetings faced more competition. The Academy focused on more frequent regional meetings to reach out to our membership. The AAPSM coordinated regional Biomechanics Skills Seminars and nationally organized Days of Sports Medicine for students at the various podiatric colleges, significantly increasing the number of student

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chapters. The AAPSM also continued to offer various fellowship programs.

After the Academy's 25th anniversary meeting held at Disney World in 1995, the next 5 years resulted in major reorganization changes including: becoming computerized to enhance marketing efforts and allow efficient communication with membership and public; completing major revision and updating of Academy bylaws; updating mission statement, establishing annual joint meeting agreement with APMA (1998); change in Executive Director and hiring Ron Johnson as a consultant to contribute to future Academy planning and development efforts

At the end of the tumultuous 90's the AAPSM had changed with the times and established a strong infrastructure in preparation for the new millennium.

(1999). These efforts assured a strong infrastructure for moving forward into the new millennium.

In 1996, the Summer Olympics were held in Atlanta, Georgia and podiatric sports medicine was well represented as our own Perry Julien headed up a team of sports medicine podiatrists to treat Olympic athletes. In 1997, the Academy organized their last stand-alone annual meeting held in Seattle, Washington and based on attendee evaluations, it rivaled the 1981 Disneyland meeting as AAPSM's best. This meeting was followed by the first joint annual AAPSM/APMA meeting held in Boston, MA in 1998. This joint relationship has continued to thrive up to the present time.

In 1999, Larry Shane, our long time Executive Director, retired after serving our Academy since 1983. Rita Yates, his assistant of many years, was hired as only the 3rd person to serve in this position. Rita continues to serve our Academy and she was recently inducted into the *Podiatry Management Hall of Fame* for her hard work and contributions to the AAPSM over the last 37 years.

At the end of this tumultuous decade the AAPSM had changed with the times and established a strong infrastructure in preparation for the new millennium. The board had one big question—Where do we go from here? We needed a plan, a road map for the future.

The Presidents: Lloyd Smith from Newton, Massachusetts was 13th AAPSM president ('90-'91). Dr. Smith quickly realized the need for fiscal constraint and continued improvement and expansion of the Academy would be predicated on non-dues income and careful budgeting. He established the concept of corporate sponsorship as a necessity for economic survival. Dr. Smith also became intimately involved with the APMA, subsequently serving as chair of their Health Policy Committee and later serving as president.

Gary Ripberger from Libertyville, Illinois served as 14th AAPSM president ('91-'92). He attributes his professional success to his mentor and initial business partner Gordon Falknor who influenced him greatly. Dr. Ripberger continued the policy of fiscal responsibility and conducted Academy business successfully on a shoestring budget as corporate sponsorship was slow to get traction.

Richard Blake from San Francisco, California served as 15th AAPSM president ('92-'93). He works at the St. Francis SM Clinic in downtown SF, one of the first clinics in the nation to offer comprehensive multidisciplinary sports medicine, which fortuitously included podiatric medicine/surgery. During this time, Dr. Blake was instrumental in developing and nurturing the written and oral fellow examination. He developed many new concepts involving orthoses fabrication, though his most notable contribution was the "inverted orthosis," which gained national and international recognition in the sports medicine/biomechanics arena.

Roy Corbin from Bangor, Maine served as 16th AAPSM president ('93-'94). He was instrumental in continuing the Days of Sports Medicine, a popular student outreach program targeting all podiatric medical schools. Dr. Corbin also developed a strong interest in serving the needs of athletes with disabilities. He presented lectures

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on this topic and completed an educational brochure to raise awareness of athletes with special needs.

Mark Julsrud, originally from San Antonio then LaCrosse, Wisconsin, served as 17th AAPSM president ('94-'95). Dr. Julsrud was heavily involved with ACSM. He became the first podiatrist to become a fellow in ACSM and this helped pave the way for future collaboration between our two organizations.

Jeffrey Ross from Houston, Texas was the 18th AAPSM president ('95-'96). Dr. Ross also had a strong affiliation with ACSM, and he too became a fellow. To this day, Dr. Ross maintains a strong presence within the ACSM. Dr. Ross followed his dreams and went back to school and received his MD degree. He is a firm believer in the dual degree for podiatrists and he certainly "walks the walk."

Michael Lowe was the 19th AAPSM president ('96-'97) from Salt Lake City, Utah. Despite some opposition, Mike delivered the Academy to the world wide web (WWW), setting up email access and designing and activating our first website. Times were changing and Dr. Lowe helped greatly to mitigate our conversion to internet technology (IT). Until his retirement, Dr. Lowe continued his role as team podiatrist for the Utah Jazz, a position he held since the beginning when the Jazz moved

from New Orleans to Utah in 1979. Dr. Lowe also worked at the polyclinic (main medical clinic) with 4 other Academy fellows at the Winter Olympics and Para-Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2002.

Phyllis Ragley from Lawrence, Kansas was the 20th AAPSM president ('97-'98) and first female president. Acting as our legal eagle, she reviewed and updated the Academy bylaws. In addition, she jumpstarted the Days of Sports Medicine at the various podiatric colleges. She also added a popular addition to the website called Coaches Corner, which became a source for short practical clinical pearls for the membership.

Thomas Shonka from Boulder, Colorado was the 21st AAPSM president ('98-'99). Dr. Shonka completed the Academy's infrastructure rebuild by performing a financial audit and setting up an accounting system, assuring fiscal transparency to our membership. He also spearheaded the search for our current Executive Director, Rita Yates.

The 90's period was closed out by William Olson. Dr. Olson was our 22nd AAPSM president, from San Francisco, California. After the infrastructure rebuild, Dr. Olson focused on two areas of great importance at the time: our nemesis, corporate sponsorship, and membership education. He established a formal corporate sponsorship program called Project 2000 that allowed increased corporate underwriting of many membership services. In the education arena, he initiated the regional concept of the Biomechanics Skills Seminars with the first (of five) held in San Francisco in 1996. In addition, he established the shoe evaluation committee and coordinated the peer journal review segment for our newsletter. Dr. Olson also developed an Educational Meeting Czar position to oversee all educational programs and assure educational integrity. He created an invaluable document providing step-by-step guidelines for prospective meeting chairs. **PM**

References

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Richard T. Bouché, DPM is a 1980 Graduate of the Illinois College of Podiatric Medicine. WA. Later he joined the Virginia Mason Medical Center in Seattle and practiced there for 20 years in the Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine Departments. He recently retired from The Sports Medicine Clinic in North Seattle, where he worked for 16 years. Dr. Bouché served as Special Editor (Sports Medicine) for the *Journal of Foot & Ankle Surgery* until 2019. He is board certified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgery and is a Fellow in



the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons. He is also a Fellow & Past President of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine.



Originally from Terre Haute, IN, **Dr. Alex Kor** is a past president of the AAPSM who is a practicing podiatrist with Witham Health Associates in Lebanon, IN. He has served as the team podiatrist at the NCAA Division I, II and III levels during his 30-year career.