

SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY & PERFORMANCE

Swinging for the Fences Again

As soon as he was able to walk,
Tyler Dymond was swinging a baseball bat.



Shown: Tyler Dymond, 16, is playing baseball again for the Middlesex High School Blue Jays varsity team, after painful back and knee injuries sidelined him. Tyler was treated at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center, where experts developed a custom treatment plan to promote healing and help prevent future injury.

SPORTS PHYSICAL THERAPY OUTPATIENT CENTERS

RWJ Somerset's Sports Physical Therapy offers convenient access to treatment with four outpatient centers located throughout Central New Jersey.

Experts provide advanced care for athletes with a wide range of sport-related injuries and orthopedic conditions.

Scheduling an initial evaluation is just a phone call away:

Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center
1 Patriots Park (TD Bank Ballpark)
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
908-203-5972

Flemington
295 State Highway 31/202
Flemington, NJ 08822
908-806-2000

Hillsborough
1 Jill Court
Building 16, Suite 20
Hillsborough, NJ 08844
908-359-8800

Princeton
743 Alexander Rd, Suite 2
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-419-0455

His passion for the game grew throughout Little League and he dreamed of one day playing for the Middlesex Blue Jays High School baseball team.

But back and knee pain nearly thwarted that goal. In the fall of 2014, just a few months before he planned to try out for the team, he began experiencing severe back pain.

"I played through the pain but it would hurt. Then around New Year's, it got to a point where I couldn't do anything without it bothering me," Tyler said.

"He couldn't even sit, he was in so much pain," said his mother, Gina.

Tyler went to see Robert Boretz, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJ) Somerset, who ordered an MRI. The results of the test showed Tyler's back pain was caused by degenerative disc disease. Dr. Boretz recommended physical therapy.

For two months, Tyler worked with Stacy Hujber, PT, DPT, SCS, a board-certified sports clinical specialist at RWJ Somerset's Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center. The facility's location at TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater – home of the Somerset Patriots minor league baseball team – was one of the reasons he chose to do his therapy there. RWJ is the official health care provider of the Somerset Patriots.

Ms. Hujber, who has competed in soccer, rugby, softball and track, works with injured athletes to help them safely return to play. She helped Tyler build up muscles around his back and taught him ways to move and swing the bat to avoid back pain.

"We worked on controlling his core muscles while pivoting on his legs to get the bat around and decreasing pressure and forces on the spine," she said.

Tyler tried out for the Middlesex High School baseball team in March 2015 and made the varsity team as a freshman.

"By the spring, he was good to go," said his baseball coach Justin Nastasi. "He ran the bases well without any pain, which was unbelievable. Swing-wise, he was rotating well." Tyler had a successful season playing third base and pitching, and competed in the state championship.

Then in November while playing in a fall baseball league, his knees started hurting after each game, with the pain getting progressively worse.

"I couldn't hit at all because my knees killed me," Tyler said.

Tyler was seen by Thomas Nordstrom, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at RWJ Somerset, who diagnosed him with chondromalacia patella, or damaged cartilage under the knee cap. He returned to the Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center for physical therapy with Ms. Hujber. Through therapy, he strengthened his hip and thigh muscles and learned to control his hip movements when swinging the bat to avoid putting pressure on his knees.

He completed the therapy in February and continues to do daily exercises at home. He once again played pain-free for the Middlesex High School Blue Jays varsity baseball team this spring.



Shown: Tyler Dymond was treated by Stacy Hujber, PT, DPT, SCS, a board-certified sports clinical specialist at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset's Sports Physical Therapy and Performance Center located at TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater.

"He's much stronger now," said Coach Nastasi. "He was one of the core guys on our team for us this year."

"I am so grateful to my RWJ sports physical therapist, for her investment in me and for taking the time to create a personalized treatment regime that resulted in me completely healing from both injuries, and at the same time strengthened and conditioned my muscles so I was best prepared to get back on the field and play the game that I love," Tyler said. "My hope for future seasons is to get back to the state championship and win."

Visit www.rwjrehab.com or call 1-888-MD-RWJUH.