

Washington Sports Medicine Doctor Shares His Exceptional Views of "March Madness"

This time of year, thousands of fans get wrapped up in "March Madness," watching their favorite teams compete in college basketball tournaments. While most fans watch from the comfort of their homes or from the spectator seats at tournaments, Medical Director of Washington Sports Medicine, Russell Nord, MD, gets exceptional views of the action from a seat right behind the players' bench.

Since 2012, Dr. Nord has served as one of two conference physicians for the West Coast Conference (WCC) Basketball Tournament at the Orleans Arena in Las Vegas, covering games for both the men's and women's teams. The 2018 WCC Tournament marked Dr. Nord's seventh year of serving in that capacity.

"This year, I covered four games a day, three consecutive days, during the first part of the tournament," says Dr. Nord, an orthopedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist. "Of the 20 teams there, eight had team physicians while I was working, and about half of these were orthopedists. If a team didn't have a doctor, I assisted the team's athletic trainer when a player needed help. When a team did have a doctor, I still touched base with that doctor so that we could assist one another if needed.

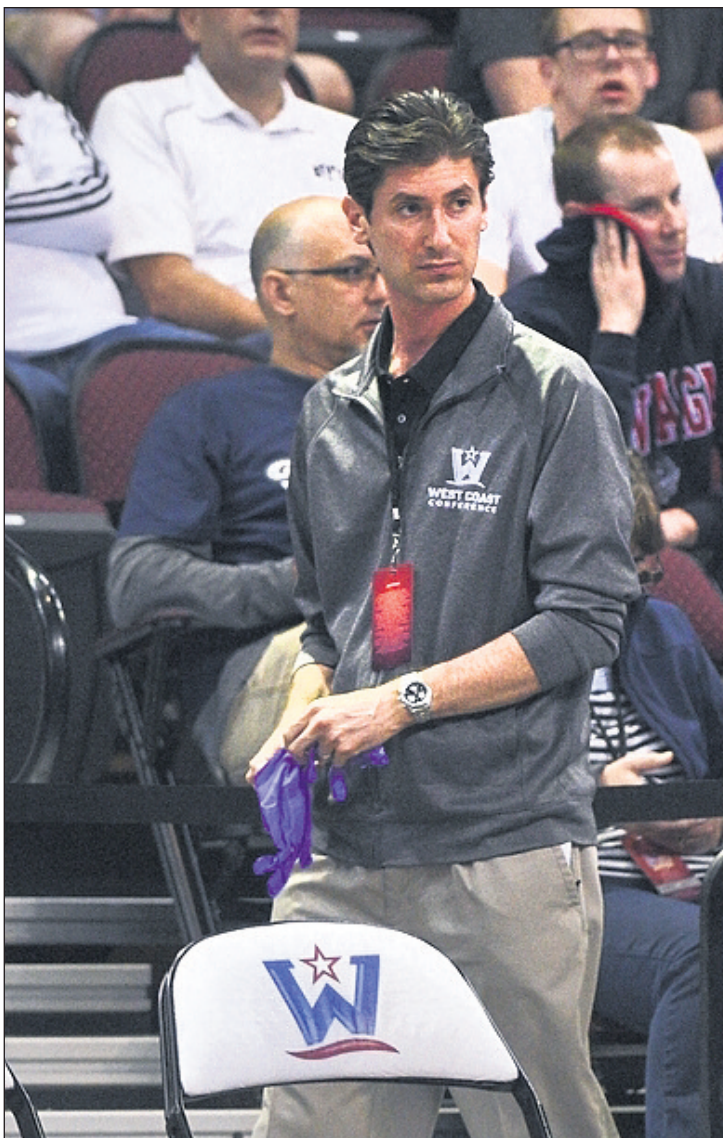
It's always better to have two sets of skilled hands available."

While Dr. Nord was at the tournament, there were no serious injuries to any players, cheerleaders, team mascots, referees or tournament staff. "One player injured her hand, but we determined there was no fracture," he says. "Another player had a knee injury that was treated on the sideline. One other player had some breathing problems that we resolved with the help of paramedics. The job isn't always about orthopedic care."

One of the interesting benefits Dr. Nord enjoys is his "back stage" view. "I get to observe team huddles and interactions among the players and coaches," he notes. "Watching these young athletes up close, I noticed how each team has its own 'personality' and culture. It was encouraging to see so many tight-knit teams with a supportive environment. My new insight for this year was to better appreciate this social side of sports. It's probably one of the best aspects of sports competition."

An avid sports fan who still plays recreational soccer, Dr. Nord appreciates the importance of teamwork.

"I participated in high school sports, including soccer and



Local orthopedic surgeon, Russell Nord, MD, serves as conference physician at West Coast Conference basketball tournament.

volleyball, so I learned to value teamwork," he says, "and I have seen similar camaraderie in my work as a team physician for several local high school football teams. But a basketball team is a smaller group, and college varsity sports are played at a much higher intensity, in both preparation and competition. Creating that strong sense of team spirit hinges on the institutional values of the schools and teams."

There also was a lot of teamwork among the staff at the WCC tournament, including medical care providers. "We had to make sure we had all the supplies and equipment

we needed," Dr. Nord explains. "We worked with the athletic trainers and physicians from various colleges and also worked with local paramedics to help the player with breathing problems. Thanks to today's technology, I even was able to view hand X-rays from a local urgent care facility on my cell phone to determine there were no fractures."

"I could draw some parallels with our physicians, athletic trainers and staff at our sports medicine program at Washington," he adds. "We value teamwork in caring for our patients, including in the operating room. These same

principles apply to all successful groups. It's actually a commentary on life. You do better work when you feel that you belong to a group that benefits other people – which is what we strive to do with all our patients."

Learn More

For more information about Washington Sports Medicine, visit www.whhs.com/services/sports

The WCC of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) includes three Bay Area schools: University of San Francisco, Saint Mary's College in Moraga, and Santa Clara University. Other WCC schools include: Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington; Brigham Young University (BYU) in Provo, Utah; Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles; University of the Pacific in Stockton; Pepperdine University in Malibu; University of Portland in Oregon; and the University of San Diego.

In the Men's WCC Tournament final on Tuesday, March 6, Gonzaga pounded BYU, by a decisive score of 74 to 54, to win its sixth consecutive conference championship and automatic entry to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament. Gonzaga also won the WCC Women's Tournament final, beating San Diego by 79 to 71, for the championship and a berth in the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament.

For more information about WCC sports, including this season's basketball tournaments, visit www.wccsports.com

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