

An Anime inspired ACL injury

I don't know how many of you out there watch anime. But those who do would have definitely heard Kuroko no Basuke. In this anime, a couple of Japanese High Schoolers pull out some insane above NBA level basketball moves. I tried to perfect copy one of the player's tricks that involved me shooting for the hoops from behind the board (Side Note: I play point guard & shooting guard positions). I don't remember now if it was a faulty jump or a bad landing, but it felt as if my femur had come out of the joint. The pain was terrible. The whole knee region got swollen up. My friends took me to a nearby Hospital, but the doctor there seemed oblivious to the symptoms of the swelling & tear. Even I as a non-medic knew that there was a fluid leak & it had to be drained.



Link: [https://myanimelist.net/anime/11771/Kuroko no Basket](https://myanimelist.net/anime/11771/Kuroko_no_Basket)

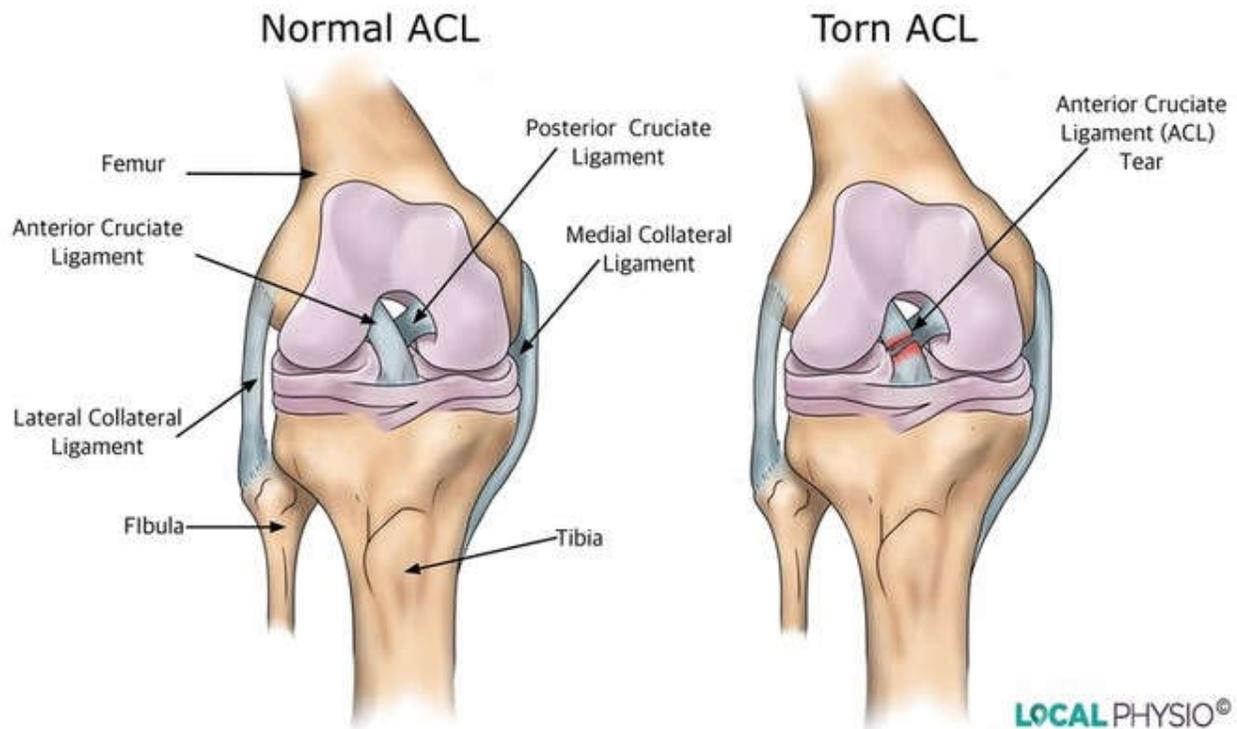
Somehow I managed to reach my parents' place the next day. There was a lot of instability in my movements. The doctor over there drained the joint fluid (It filled six syringes) & put my knee in a cast & recommended a rest period of two weeks. But the instability continued to show up in my knee movements. So the doctor referred me to Dr. Rajkumar Amaravati (St. John's Hospital, Bangalore) as he mainly deals with Orthopedic & Sports Surgeries. The Doctor explained with the MRI results that there was a complete tear of the ACL coupled with a partial Meniscus Tear and a Surgery needed to be done as soon as possible. The same was also confirmed via Lachman Test & Anterior Drawer Tests.

What is an ACL Tear?

The ACL or Anterior Cruciate Ligament is one of the pair of major ligaments in the knee that crosses from the underside of the femur to the top of the tibia. They assist in controlling excessive motion by limiting the mobility of the knee joint. They are basically prone to tear when any kind of excessive rotation (like pivoting & then jumping in basketball) causes the femur & tibia to move in the opposite direction thus causing a tear.

ACL Tear is considered to be a common sports injury especially in games like Basketball which involves a combination of pivoting, sudden stopping & irregular jumps that puts immense stress on the muscles & ligaments in the joint area.

The degree of tear can be analyzed from MRI scans but the common symptoms involve—a feeling of instability (giving-away) in the knee movements, Severe pain in the joint, rapid swelling (caused by the Joint fluid leak). In my case, all these symptoms added up.



Arthroscopic Reconstructive Surgery

In my case, it was an autograft Reconstructive surgery (supported by Arthroscopic video feeds) in which the torn ACL is completely removed & is replaced by a piece of tissue extracted from my Hamstrings. The Meniscus had to be tied as well (In my case this was experimental & I had to fill up surveys for a case study on the same).

Before the surgery, the Doctor had asked me to read up on the procedure & come up with some questions. The internet has some scary stuff when you try to look upon health-related problems. There was stuff like if the fluid was not drained in time than it might lead to cancer & so on (Nowadays anything you search in the net ultimately routes you to cancer). I just stuck to the physiology reports from then on.

I wasn't a tiny bit scared about the surgery, it was the post-surgery pain that I dreaded. I checked in to the OT at 12:30 & came out at 4:00. I don't remember much about the surgery as I was sedated (Before the surgery I actually wanted to see the surgery in the monitor while it was being performed). Then the next few days were the most physically uncomfortable days of my life. There was excruciating pain & stiffness in the whole leg. For the first few hours, I felt nothing, but when the effectiveness of the anesthetics ran out then the pain started erupting out of nowhere. I couldn't scratch it & I couldn't move it. The ice packs helped a bit. But I couldn't sleep for three whole days. I only felt better when the Physiotherapy started and I could do some minor movements with my legs.

Physiotherapy & Recovery

Physiotherapy is as important as the surgery for complete & Successful recovery. The exercises lasted for almost a year. They come in various levels & the progress is periodically tested.

These exercises were essential to get the leg muscles back into shape & strengthen the ligaments. The one set of exercises I clearly remember involved the use of these colored bands (Each color indicated a certain tension of the bend). The exercise basically involved a set of alternative straightening & bending of the knee. They evaluated the angle of the bends weekly to check my progress. During this period I walked with the support of knee braces.

After a few months once the stitches were removed I started Swimming. It was suggested that swimming would help with a faster recovery. Slowly within a period of eighteen months, I got back to playing basketball & began performing activities at a regular pace.

Post-Recovery Performance

I am able to do my daily Activities with absolutely no loss of performance whatsoever. But with Basketball & knee intense games I probably perform up to 97% of my original levels. One more thing besides physical recovery is the mental one. For a period of time, I was afraid of playing thinking that the tear might happen again. This is one feeling that we have to nip in the buds.

Two years later I had a sensation of deja vu with my other leg (Partial Tear Not so severe). But this is another story by itself.