

Sports



Tyler Olsen/TIMES

Husker Adam Leggott is stretched by Jenn Turner of Optimum Sport Performance & Health Centre.

An Optimum partnership

BY TYLER OLSEN

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Lying down on his side on a medical bench, Adam Leggott grimaces as Jenn Turner grabs his leg torques it over his body and down towards the ground.

"I remember this one," said Leggott, with trepidation. This is the Chilliwack Huskers receiver's fourth visit to Optimum Sport Performance & Health Centre since the football team began teaming with the clinic in early August and Leggott has gotten familiar with the routine.

And while he may grit his teeth a bit while Turner bends him this way and that, Leggott says he has noticed an improvement in the stiffness that troubled him earlier in the season.

For a football team operating on a shoestring budget and desperately seeking on-field success, the partnership with Turner has given the squad a rare edge over their British Columbia Football Conference competition.

Turner's clinic is focused on sports therapy and boasts a pair of chiropractors, a physiotherapist, three massage therapists and, soon, an acupuncturist. Turner said it was natural to try and pair with the Huskers.

"We're always looking for different ways to get into the community, particularly the sports community," she said.

After meeting Huskers assistant coach Jason Campbell, Turner—who has also worked

with the BC Lions and the Canadian National Cycling Team—inquired about the possibility of helping out. The response has been about what one would expect.

"It's been a little overwhelming," she says, laughing. "I'm surprised how many injuries they do have right now."

With everything from chronic conditions like shin splints and muscle strains to knee injuries, ankle sprains and aching backs, the Huskers have kept Turner and her team scrambling. The challenge is not only to help the players overcome current maladies, but also to help them avoid future hazards and improve their on-field performance.

"If the athletes are feeling good and they're confident with their bodies, I think it will take them far," said Turner.

And for a football team that only plays 10 games in a year, injuries need to be fixed right, but also fixed fast.

"If you're an offensive or defensive lineman, you have a collision . . . basically every play, so that adds up and the body breaks down a little bit," said Huskers head coach Luke Acheson.

So the partnership has the Huskers coaching staff excited about the possibilities.

"Now we are able to get very high-level rehabilitation for our guys in a matter of days, if not the next day, and that's huge for us," said Acheson. "Not only can we get guys into her clinic but she has a presence at practices and is going to be coming out to games, and that's great."