

Perth Sports Surgery Fellowship August 2024 – January 2025

It is difficult to put down in words quite what a phenomenal experience this fellowship has been. Not only the volume of cases and complexity of cases but the support from the supervision team to enable you to become the best surgeon possible.

I shadowed my predecessor Pete Davies for a few lists before I started the fellowship, and I remember feeling overwhelmed thinking “I will never be able to do these cases unsupervised, he must have done loads more than me pre-fellowship”. Then, at the end of my fellowship, I was supervising the new fellow doing a PCL reconstruction and I thought “wow, I got there too!”. I had heard about the impressive case load and log books of previous fellows and can confirm... the numbers are real!

The structure of the entire fellowship is designed to maximise the fellow’s exposure and interests. From Emergency Department referral processes, registrars and other consultants all feeding into pathways that deliver the most fantastic caseload. In 6 months, as lead/independent surgeon, I performed 97 ACL reconstructions, 16 multi-ligament reconstructions, 2 meniscal transplants, countless meniscal repairs (all inside, inside out, root repairs, blood clot augmentations), 9 “hot” MPFL reconstructions with cartilage stabilisation, 17 PFJ stabilisations and many other sports cases.

One of the most unique and inspiring aspect of this fellowship is the attitudes and support of the fellowship supervision team. At the beginning of the fellowship, I was told “if you haven’t had every complication and every operative difficulty in your 6 months, then we haven’t done our jobs properly to prepare you”. I found this so liberating and it gave me the confidence to push myself and take on challenging cases, knowing there was unwavering support and help available. When a complication was met with the response “what a fantastic learning opportunity, now I can teach you how to fix it” it blew my mind! Being able to let go of my fear of failure, has resulted in the biggest shift in my abilities as a surgeon. Although my technical abilities have hugely improved, I think my confidence and self-belief have had the most dramatic change.

An area I was keen to improve on was my role as a trainer / supervisor to junior surgeons. I not only want to be an excellent surgeon myself, but I wanted to be able to confidently train others with the relaxed and supportive attitude that I had benefitted from. This is an area I’ve worked hard on and I’m proud of my progress and feedback from registrars.

Outside of work, Pete really welcomes you into his world to make the most of your Perth experience. From family trips to watch the footy to ski trips in Japan (!), the warmth and inclusivity is unmatched. In addition, becoming part of the tight network of past fellows to continue to learn and support each other with complex cases is a prime example of the long-lasting support and collegiality that this programme fosters. It really is an extreme privilege to be part of the PSSF fellowship and I am hugely grateful for my time here.