



March 2018

About me

My name is Chris Beavington and I am a third-year resident in Sport and Exercise Medicine at the University of Alberta.

I was born and raised in Red Deer, Alberta and I moved to Edmonton for my post-secondary education. Since 2009, I have attended the University of Alberta for my undergraduate degree in biochemistry, medical school, Family Medicine residency, and now my 12-month fellowship in Sport and Exercise Medicine.

Why I chose Sport and Exercise Medicine

Ever since high school I have been fascinated with the diversity, physiology, and psychology of Exercise Medicine. It is so interesting how the anatomy of athletes from different sports can be so variable. I also continue to be amazed by the way athletes can push the limits of human physiology.

Mountaineers on Everest will allow themselves to be starved of oxygen as they ascend to altitudes that make their O₂ sat drop to 30%. Some of the best-trained cyclists can have resting heart rates near 30 bpm. In 2015, James Lawrence (the iron cowboy) completed 50 ironman triathlons in 50 states in 50 consecutive days – that is nearly two months of swimming 3.86km, 180.25km on a bike and a full 42.2km marathon, every single day. It is these super-physiologic abilities, coupled with the mental resilience of athletes, that drew me to Sport and Exercise Medicine.

Clinical life

What does a typical day of clinical duties involve?

Sport and Exercise Medicine – a typical day

07:00-08:00	Chart Review: Run through a list of the day's patients and review recent diagnostic imaging. Sign off on consultation dictations.
08:00-12:00	Clinic: See a mix of new patients referred for sports medicine consultation and returning patients for follow-up.
12:00-13:00	Lunch: Coordinate appointments for varsity athletes and review more urgent X-rays and MRIs.
13:00-17:00	Clinic: See varsity athletes in our Varsity Injury Management (VIM) clinic with athletic therapists and physiotherapists.
17:00-18:00	Post-Clinic: Dictate consultations and arrange referrals.
18:00-21:00	After Hours: Either attend a Varsity Hockey/Football practice or go to the gym.



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Sport and Exercise Medicine Fellow Profile — Chris Beavington

Sport and Exercise Medicine – weekly schedule at a glance							
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
06:00							
07:00							
08:00				Cast Clinic or Complex Concussion Clinic		Family Medicine Call-Back Clinic or Academic Day	
09:00		Ultrasound-Guided Procedures Clinic	Orthopedics Clinic or Primary Care Sports Medicine Clinic		Primary Care Sports Medicine Clinic		
10:00							
11:00							
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Varsity Football Event Coverage
13:00		Varsity Injury Management Clinic	Varsity Injury Management Clinic	Cast Clinic or Complex Concussion Clinic	Primary Care Sports Medicine Clinic	Family Medicine Call-Back Clinic or Academic Day	
14:00							
15:00							
16:00							
17:00		Medical Student Teaching	Mini Clinic at Varsity Hockey Practice				
18:00							
19:00						Varsity Hockey Game Event Coverage	
20:00				Mini Clinic at Varsity Football Practice			
21:00							
22:00							
23:00							
00:00							

What kinds of rotations are required in your program?

My program is based on a longitudinal curriculum, with the exception of electives and vacation. It is a mix of Primary Care Sports Medicine, Family Medicine, Orthopedic Surgery, Emergency Medicine, and Physiatry. As the Sport and Exercise Medicine Fellow I am also responsible as a team physician for the University of Alberta Golden Bears Football and Hockey Teams. In addition I provide sport event coverage at both the amateur and professional level.

Which of your personality characteristics have been particularly helpful in your field?

I have genuine passion for all sports and performing arts, with a breadth of experiences as an athlete and clinician. I also like the challenge of learning about sport-specific injuries and exploring pre-disposing factors that put athletes at risk. Above all, I love the thrill of running on the field and being a part of the action!

What are the best aspects of your residency?

By far the best part of my program is the sport-event coverage opportunities. It is truly a unique experience to be the physician on the sidelines reducing dislocated shoulders, suturing lacerations, and going through a concussion protocol. I have been fortunate to cover basketball, football, hockey, marathons, and rugby among other tournaments, as well as combat sports.

What are the most challenging aspects of your specialty/subspecialty?

Being the “go-to” physician for multiple teams and more than a hundred varsity athletes can be a tough schedule to manage. It can be difficult to prioritize studying, research, and clinical duties when I am also trying to liaise with team training staff. Managing my time and being efficient is essential. Each day is a new challenge, but I always look forward to it.

What is one question you’re often asked about your specialty/subspecialty?

“Are you in Ortho or Physiatry?”

My response is a mix of neither and both. However, I am proud to be a General Practitioner by training and I love my Family Medicine practice.

Can you describe the transition from clerkship into residency?

Clerkship is an eye-opening experience to real-life medicine. It can be difficult to work hard and do well on rotations and electives, but it is a new challenge to be the junior resident on call. Being responsible for patients in a hospital or a clinic requires another level of attention and professionalism. You are left to make important decisions and sign off on orders and outpatient prescriptions.

I also found that there are fewer exams in residency than clerkship, but they count for more.

What are your future practice plans?

I plan to locum for short period after I finish my training, potentially working in rural Alberta and the Yukon Territory. Eventually, I would like to balance a practice quite similar to my fellowship: a mix of primary care Sports Medicine and Family Medicine, with some cast clinic and hospitalist work. Ideally, I would also like to continue working as a team physician providing event coverage at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) level.

What are your fellow residents like and how do you interact with each other?

There are only about 10 sports medicine programs in Canada, and most programs have only one or two residents. In my two years of Family Medicine, I was in the largest post-graduate program in Alberta with over 150 residents. Now I am the only sport and exercise medicine fellow in the province, essentially being the sole resident of the smallest program in Alberta.

Because of this, I end up spending most of my time asking questions to previous fellows. Every one of them has been a great resource for me. It’s nice to have a second opinion from someone who can relate to the position I am in. The recent grads from my program work in the same clinic and they help me stay up-to-date on the latest guidelines and prepare for the certification exam by the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) at the end of the year.



I like the challenge of learning about sport-specific injuries and exploring pre-disposing factors that put athletes at risk. Above all, I love the thrill of running on the field and being a part of the action!

Non-Clinical Life

What are your academic interests?

I am a liaison representative for the College of Family Physicians of Canada Board of Directors and the Section of Residents. I also am on the Board of Directors for the Resident Doctors of Canada. I have an interest in resident advocacy and I was previously a Chief Resident for my Family Medicine program.

In my spare time, I have also been researching pharmacotherapy for knee and back pain and the effect of Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) for osteoarthritis.

What is your work-life balance like, and how do you achieve this?

Work-life balance has always been a bit of a challenge. I try to prioritize time with my wife, friends, and family and I am fortunate enough to get to travel quite a bit with my work. I also make an effort to go to the gym every day and cycle to work pretty much year-round. I think the key to work-life balance is enjoying what you do. Most clinic days don't feel like I'm working at all. Running football and hockey games and travelling with teams is also really fun.

Disclaimer: These specialty profiles illustrate some aspects of the lives of individual residents, and convey their personal perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and rewards of their chosen fields. These views may not be shared by all residents, as there is tremendous diversity in lifestyle, experience, and interest among the residents in each specialty.