

# “Ben Is the Man”

## Shoulder Surgery Returns Local Lacrosse Player to Highest Level of Competition

Following surgeries for a dislocated shoulder, Sam is having a successful season playing Division I lacrosse at Lehigh University.



As a star lacrosse player in high school, Sam dislocated his shoulder so many times he became an expert at popping it back in. Eventually, his concerned parents took him to see Ben Kittredge, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist at Commonwealth Orthopaedics. Dr. Kittredge had a simple message for the Edgewater, Maryland teenager: “If you want this to stop, you’ll have to have surgery.”

Sam’s multiple shoulder dislocations had caused an injury known as a Bankart lesion in the lower part of his labrum, the cartilage that surrounds and cushions the shoulder joint. Both Bankart injuries and SLAP lesions, which damage the uppermost area of the labrum, are common in young overhead athletes, especially throwers, swimmers and those playing contact sports. Treatment includes physical therapy and rehabilitation to strengthen the shoulder muscles or, in more serious cases, arthroscopic or open surgery to reattach the torn tissue.

“At Commonwealth, we see a very large athletic population and do a lot of these procedures,” says Dr. Kittredge, who performed surgery to repair Sam’s left shoulder and later his right shoulder. “Many of us have fellowship training in sports medicine, which makes us highly qualified. In addition, the quality of a patient’s diagnostic tests – and the expertise of the radiologist who reads and interprets those tests – is extremely important to ensure timely, appropriate treatment. We send our patients to the area’s best facility with the best radiologists for MRIs and arthrograms.”

If an athlete suffers a Bankart or SLAP injury in the middle of the season, non-operative methods are sometimes an option. “We might try using a brace to protect the shoulder so it doesn’t dislocate, and we work with the physical therapist to strengthen the surrounding shoulder girdle muscles to try to keep the ball in the socket and provide muscular stability,” says Kevin Sumida, MD, a Commonwealth Orthopaedics surgeon and sports medicine specialist.

Older patients with SLAP tears are often able to avoid surgery with rest, anti-inflammatory medication, and other conservative treatments. But the vast majority of patients under 20 with a dislocated shoulder will typically require an operation.

If surgery is necessary, Commonwealth offers the latest minimally invasive techniques. “Because we perform these procedures arthroscopically, we don’t need to make an open incision or disrupt the normal anatomy to get to where the problem is,” explains David Novak, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon and sports medicine specialist at Commonwealth. “This tendon-preserving method is not only much easier on the patient, it also allows us to access all areas of the shoulder joint and create a more balanced repair better than a traditional, open procedure.”

### Video Extra!

Dr. Sumida explains Shoulder Bankart Repair at [www.c-o-r.com/videos](http://www.c-o-r.com/videos)



Both of Sam's surgeries were extremely successful and he has not had a shoulder dislocation since. In each case, he spent six months in rehabilitation before returning to the playing field. He is now a freshman playing Division I lacrosse at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, where he was recruited out of high school. The season includes games against top teams such as Army, Navy, and Bucknell.

"Sam had a great outcome and our family was very pleased with the whole experience at Commonwealth," says Sam's father, Bruce. "We would recommend Dr. Kittredge to anyone. He has a great demeanor and he tells it like it is. Sam doesn't always listen to me, but he listens to Dr. Kittredge. He follows his rules and he respects him. As Sam says, 'Ben is the man.'"



**Ben W. Kittredge, IV, MD** earned an undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and a Masters degree in Physiology from Georgetown University. Dr. Kittredge then returned to the University of Virginia to attain his medical degree. He then completed a general surgery internship at Roanoke Memorial Hospital and an orthopaedic residency at the University of Virginia. Additionally, Dr. Kittredge completed a fellowship in sports medicine at Jefferson Medical College and Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.



**David J. Novak, MD** earned a BA in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania and received his medical degree from Georgetown University. He remained in Washington, DC, at Georgetown University Medical Center to complete a residency in orthopaedic surgery. He then completed advanced fellowship training in sports medicine and arthroscopy at the Southern California Orthopedic Institute in Van Nuys, California.



**Kevin D. Sumida, MD**, graduated with a BA from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana and then earned a medical degree from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in Lexington. He completed his orthopaedic surgery training in Lexington before completing a fellowship in Sports Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In addition to his orthopaedic practice, he is also a clinical assistant professor at Georgetown University.

**For full biographies and a complete directory of the physicians at Commonwealth Orthopaedics who perform these and other procedures visit our website at [www.c-o-r.com](http://www.c-o-r.com).**



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