

Episode 24 Philipp Tischendorf

Hello and welcome back to the Future of Figure Skating. I'm Anna Kellar and my guest today is Philipp Tischendorf. Phil is a former competitive figure skater for Germany, a member of the Contemporary Skating Alliance, and an osteopath and physical therapist. He has turned his experience with injury, pain, and rehabilitation during his athletic career into a practice supporting both skaters and the general public. This episode challenges our misconceptions about injury and invites us to ask, how can we approach injury and pain with curiosity and even appreciation?

Anna

So Phil, thanks so much for coming on the podcast and I'm excited to get to talk with you.

Phil

Thanks for having me.

Anna

So first off, I'd love to ask you a little bit about your journey into the world of health for skaters, the work that you're doing now. You were a competitive skater yourself, and can you tell me a little bit about your journey through that?

Phil

Yeah, it has been a journey. Indeed. Yeah, I've been a competitive skater. For Germany, mostly in junior events, and senior level, competed until 2011. So wow, that's more than 10 years ago. Some highlights, I think, for me at the time, competitively, was taking part in the European Championships in 2007, skating at junior worlds in 2007 as well, and then one of the reasons why I at some point decided to stop competing and then go in a different direction was, yeah, related to I think what we're going to talk about today like injury and pain, disability, let's say. So after I quit competitive skating I kind of had to regroup myself and figure out what I want after I identified myself so much with skating and felt like I don't know anything else, which of course, looking back is a bit hilarious, but at the time I really identified with this. So I went into kind of a almost like a sabbatical year, traveling and doing completely different things working and decided to study what I felt I wanted to know more about, meaning how can I help basically myself, but then also others so I decided to study physiotherapy. I went to the Netherlands, did a bachelor's degree there in 2012, which was a four-year bachelor's, and then well, that was a deep dive into so many things like coming from a skating background, I had a certain image of what physiotherapy would be from perspective of an athlete. But then when you study physios, like you know, you do the basics of so many fields, like in medicine, so you go to rehab centers, hospitals, private practices, so there's a huge world that I discovered, meant for different internships and basically I got my mind about what is health or let's say different perspectives of what health is because it's also quite a cultural thing, depending where you are in this world. And the same with pain And then I went on actually funny, I never went into many shows but I did go on a cruise ship after my bachelor's degree, so I went in a bit of to show skating skated for Royal Caribbean kind of a 10 month contract around the world was a fantastic experience

and then decided I want to learn more about health and went into the field of osteopathy. So I went to London did a two years master's degree 2018 to 2020. Right into COVID. Basically endeavored more into the relation between the body and will also the mind and how it's inseparably linked. And then life brought me to Switzerland in 2021 funny enough through skating again for competitive skating again, so kind of 10 years after I quit, I went into skating club teaching what I learned basically or trying to teach what I learned from skater's perspective, or ex skater's perspective now as a coach, well, I looked after all sorts of ages from basically six till I'd say early 20s Or until like beginners to professional athletes who will also compete at high elite level and looking after their office training, but also from my trainings in physio and osteopathy, how to deal with injuries, hopefully better than they used to. And then next to it. I started earlier this year 2023, I started to work clinically again, meaning I kind of put this word for the skating club aside for the moment and I wanted to focus again on treating, let's say, a general population, which basically just means whoever steps through the door so could be athletes could be everyone, pregnant people, babies, kids, like a huge variety of people, because that's what I'm fascinated about helping people or helping themselves. That's a long introduction.

Anna

I'm fascinated by the way that you have been continuing to pursue knowledge and finding ways to apply it. When you were skating competitively. What was some of your experience with injury at that time? And what do you feel like you know, now maybe that you wish that you had known then?

Phil

So my experience with injuries at the time was luckily not actually too in quotation marks, heavily injury or heavy loads, like I had loads of different muscle tears, of course, loads of bruises, like every skater. Of course, I'm a single skater like clearly in pairs skating, ice dancing, completely different injuries because of completely different tricks and demands, lifting and so on. But yeah, so loads of injuries to all types of muscles around the basically pelvic area. So it seemed at the time, my body couldn't really deal with a lot of those high speed rotations, which now have obviously even got more demanding with quads going on. My experience with injuries was that actually I really took it always very devastating. Maybe that's a strong word, but I always had a hard time accepting to be injured and to kind of always saw it as a kind of punishment. without going too much into religious area and not at all, but like, really identified a lot through that, like suffering, let's say. And now definitely looking back I think I viewed injury or pain, identified way too much. I focus too much on that being injured instead of looking for what else. Not just me, obviously my team around me without at the time, in a way it was what it was at the time. By the thing I didn't really look at alternatives to how to train because once you're injured you rarely ever unless you break something really that injured that you can't do anything. So I know that that didn't do anything. I did rehab, but I think I could train much more mentally, with visualizations and just different coordinations, to stay not just in shape differently, but also to learn more to learn different things, how to recover better. I think yeah, 10 years later, now also loads of things have changed in in skating.

Anna

Yeah, I think that's really interesting. The idea that you're so focused on whatever is injured and what you can't do, then that's a pretty negative, you know, place mentally to be in and also that that may be stopping you from using that time in more productive ways.

Phil

Absolutely.

Anna

That's clearly one misconception or a mistake that skaters might make when it comes to dealing with injury. What are some of the other things that you see that are commonly done that you think might not be the best way of going about it?

Phil

In a way, so many things. I have a very different lens on I think human health or on health in general, but also on skating just through my training. Like in a way I distanced myself from it, you know, I'm still following the world of competitive skating. And although I've been back now into competitive field, like helping young athletes I haven't been, let's say on with the top level skaters internationally, so I still, I would say, so many misconceptions. I think one of the biggest ones still out there and it's not that related not just related to skating, but to the general world is that we kind of equal injury or pain with tissue damage, like for us, for a lot of us that is still kind of the same, where what science tells us now research tells clearly it's it doesn't have to be that way. Like pain is such a big thing. It's such a multi-dimensional experience an unpleasant emotional experience. It's much more it's so much more complex than just simply issues with the tissues. So it's really I think, big misconception for many still that once you're injured, you try to reject have a kind of reductionist thinking of what tissue what muscle bone is causing injury where whereas what we now know, thankfully, but still it's so hard to grab that because this idea has been so long around that issues coming from tissues, pain is tissue related. It can be but it doesn't have to be so pain is really this big, collective, emergent experience that the brain tries to make sense of. And so pain is very complex, and ultimately, it's trying to be a protective signal from your whole body, your nervous system, so not just the brain or nervous system. So that's one big misconception. It's huge though. It's like it's really, especially in not just skating but in all sports really, when we think I mean you just have to read any news. When we read off any injury to any athlete, it often is very biomedically explained, and this is not wrong, but there's just so much more to it is the social effect. The psychological effect. Pain is so much more than just that becomes clearer and I understand why it is so dominant. And again, not just skating but professionals of sports in general because you're dealing with your body so so much when you have an injury, you are in pain, you can very easily locate where it is in the body, but there's so much more to it, just that location and we know that your beliefs, your network around you the way you communicate with or the coach, any healthcare practitioner, communicates with the athlete tremendously influences the experience that then is made up as what the brain interpret is pains.

Anna

Yeah, I was thinking about how in my own experiences in sports or in reading the news and seeing how people talk about it. There's almost two contradictory ways of talking about pain that it's either Oh, that's the warning sign. It's the evolutionarily you're gonna put your hand on the hot stove? Oh, that's pain. Don't do that. Learn to not do that thing that causes you pain and then like an athlete's training perspective, there's the whole no pain, no gain and like pain is good. Push yourself and those opposite extremes and terms of thinking about pain and in some ways, what you're saying is much more nuanced.

Phil

Exactly. It is really way more nuanced and it is also just a reflection of our time and how we see our world like we try to often try to make things more simple in order to make sense of it or trying to you know, understand it, but the whole thing around it is so complex, which is what I would I really like to learn more about and then trying to bring across more to, especially people who needed to skating which are coaches and parents and everyone in a way. Yeah, pain is very, very nuanced and ultimately a very subjective experience. And no, you can never compare just because the coach had a certain even the word similar injury know even if you call if you say like oh I fractured whatever certain vertebral like a certain spinal segment or an elbow or something, even if you say well, I also fractured that it will never be the same. How could it be we're very different human beings in a very different social family environment, like pain is so subjective. It always is a very individual experience. really most important thing when someone is in pain is really to listen and not just listen to what that person athlete human wants to communicate and basically you want to figure out what is their story like why are they in pain and everything is valuable, what they say and what they like, not just verbally but also non verbally like there's this whole almost like Sherlock Holmes, you have to scan you have to grab so many cues, trying to make the biggest picture possible to understand that suffering. We're human being athletes. So it's a very, very complex thing. And I think this is one of the biggest misconception is that we try so often to view pain as something simple is tissue-based. And yes, that's right. But it's so much more, I think there's so many interesting subjects, how to kind of get that message a bit more clear that pain is more than just tissue injury. For example, if you look at Paralympic athletes, how much they are capable of doing incredible and they are everything but symmetrical. They're everything but what we often especially maybe in skating look at the aesthetic, beautiful thing like but if you ask most of those athletes, they're very likely not in pain, and they are very likely they're incredible athletes as well. And I think we can learn so much from people who are what we call disabled we can learn so much about disability, pain, symmetry or asymmetry, like again, I could talk so long about it like posture, the whole thing of good posture. You know, when you look at Paralympic athletes, you clearly see at some point where good posture doesn't really exist. It's really just what is your body capable of doing, what is your training load? What is the capacity you train the body to endure or not? This is important and then another interesting example to get the message across of that pain is really a measure of safety, rather than an actual state of tissue. There's a condition called congenital insensitivity to pain, CIS so it's like an really rare disease that's characterized by the inability to perceive pain from birth. So you know, although a lot of people who wish to have no pain but there is unfortunately condition that is, you know, kind of contradict myself here I said, pain is kind of a mixed and complex inflammation made up by the brain or created by the brain. So, those

humans who have this congenital insensitivity to pain they have certain receptors but they don't have them, which gives feedback to the brain about tissue state temperature, inflammation, and then those receptors do not work. So most of those individuals do not live very long because they burn themselves. They don't feel it, they can injure them. And they just don't notice it so they often bleed you know, they they don't realize that they fracture things they don't feel it so it's pain is really about it's all friend is not an enemy pain is really something that wants to protect us and not to fight us.

Anna

Yeah, that's interesting and then you have examples as well as somebody who loses a limb and then still be able to feel it even when the tissues aren't there anymore, but there are so many people with chronic pain or things that are just they're getting the signals. Yes, without the damage. It's the opposite the opposite situation, so being able to use it as a sign, but what it's signaling is not necessarily so straightforward.

Phil

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, a lot of those anomalies like not the norm in history of science in general, we learned a lot we updated our theories or modules on anomaly. So for example, phantom limb pain, like that really challenged scientists, many decades ago about what pain is and maybe what it isn't. So we'd like clearly through phantom limb pain. So for anyone who doesn't, haven't heard that term, so basically when a person gets you know, for whatever reason, a limb or doesn't have to be even a limb but like even a finger or hand or certain body part, amputated, they can still then although it's physically not present anymore, they can still experience pain in that non existing body part anymore, which sounds really odd. I think too many people but it is a real thing. And the reason therefore is because our our brain or within our brain, we have a bodily representation called homunculus looks really funny everyone who wants to have a laugh. Google's that now. So our body is presented. As no brain depending on different receptors and mostly our hands, feet lips, genitals had a very rich of certain receptors and our differently body represented. But anyhow, so because of that map in our brain, people can have pain in body parts that doesn't physically exist. So really interesting. And that that's kind of that's the white challenge to challenge the science and modules of what pain is and also Euclid is not just simply a certain tissue that is injured, and then feed back to the brain. No, because that tissue doesn't exist. anymore. So there must be a bit more to it.

Anna

Let's say that you were working with a skater who, you know, keep you saying, Oh, I'm getting a lot of pain in my knee when I jump. Yeah. How would you start trying to work with that person to you know, to figure out what maybe is going on or how to approach it? Yeah, very good example, kind of with everything I just said already. I hope it's comes clearer or more clear that it is not easy to assess someone who is in pain. It is really not easy and this is why it really comes down to a lot of patience and time eventually, like basically what I tried to do is to take time to listen, first of all, to listen to what they are saying and trying to get an idea of that athlete, that human being why they are in pain. And like often the only question I asked is, tell me what do you come in with? They will tell me your story. Because it's that invites them it opens up

basically whatever they will feel important, necessary. Value valuable to let me know because the more I understand them as a human being as an athlete, the more I'm in a position to help because ultimately also another misconception me as any healthcare practitioner, whether it's a physio, a doctor, a massage therapist, anyone, I'm not there primarily to help them. Yes, of course. I'm there to help them but I'm just I've seen myself model coach in a way as a someone who guides them through their own healing journey or recovery journey like I'm not, I'm not out of disrespect, not at all but out of to empower the person as well as the athlete. Give them tools, knowledge to basically increase agency to empower them to understand what they can do to help themselves because this dependency, I think I see really critical is really not easy. It's really not easy to avoid a certain dependency on someone coming to you to make you feel better like again, you can insert any therapist here is really critical for me is to listen, take the time and try to understand them, what's important to them and then assess and try to, you know, feed it back with them.

How can I help them best and then what they do with it, in a ways is not up to me, it's up to them. But then again, athletes, of course you have to be separate here. Is it more like teenage athletes or is it really young, grown up athletes? I think that especially it's gaining there's obviously a lot of athletes who are very young compared to other sports. So then the parents much more involved like different cultures. So I tried to mainly listen first take my time to listen carefully, not just verbally but also non-verbally, what they are all the signs and symptoms I can get and then trying to make sense of that and wrap it into explaining what I understood what they're saying because often that is already first miscommunication that maybe I got things wrong, or maybe they weren't explaining the way I understood it were like trying to repeat, summarize and then reflect that no, that doesn't make sense to them. The more I understand the person in pain the better I can help them.

Anna

That also seems like it's based on whether the person who has the pain is able to sort of develop their own self-awareness and be able to communicate, you know, what is going on with them. And I think there's such a culture of not talking about what's hard or you know, just trying to be very dynamic and very, just keep going don't complain. And so I think for some people, it can be difficult to even figure out how to recognize their own experiences, much less communicate them. So I'm sure that hearing it repeated back and thinking, Oh, is that what's going on with me? can help.

Phil

Yeah, absolutely. And it really comes down to of course I need to assess first like depending what they come in, you know, there's such a variety of acute or longer-lasting, slash persisting slash chronic same word pain, anything past the normal tissue healing time. So depending on different tissues that can be different timing, but on average after three months every tissue had it's time to heal. So and if pain that persists, that's what we call chronic pain, in general that has much more to do with a certain nervous system sensitization so reacting more to something that you wouldn't have been reacting that much in under different circumstances in the past. So the main message I think, you know, we can screen for what we call red flags and many professions of course, I need to screen for any more serious sinister things like you know, potential

fractures, obviously, it's definitely a big thing. Young skating athletes who have a huge training volume in a growing body especially and female athletes who are who needs to be super bendy super strong in an ever so younger age. So there's a high more and more prominence and stress fractures. And so I would need to screen for that for sure. And if I'm in jobs and for imaging and scanning for other things, like Do you have pain at night, like if that's repetitively there might be other things really going on? Other than it's a certain musculoskeletal injury, what we call it like an injury to your bones, muscles, tendons, and ligaments, so on of course, pain can have a different origin not just giving you much more nerves, like sciatic pain you know, can be much more nerve driven, much more electric anyhow. So I screen I listen, I screen trying to make sense of the person. But what I wanted to say sorry is like ultimately I tried to give the person a sense of safety because ultimately, what pain is really about is the safety of threat or dangerous message, so can read if you really want to keep it simple. You can say someone is in pain, if there's more danger perceived than safety. That's it. That's kind of I think, as simple as it can get as you can summarize it very later on very easy to understand, I think and very true. This is what I'm trying to cultivate and not again, not just for the athlete, but for also then trying to communicate that to you know, the people they are working with. Again, no one is an island. No one lives in isolation, especially athletes like it really I can only help one athlete individually to a certain point but there has to be involvement of the team around it to that they help and of course they understand and communicate. It's all about communication, but they communicate also to the coaches. If it's a minor, which happens a lot the parents perhaps as well, but I communicate what I think is going on and how then they can support that child athlete. Because this is so important, this message of safety of empowering and then language comes hugely to play like how do you communicate? Not just me but then also coaches especially because they don't they spend not much time with me after all. They spend much more time with their parents or their you know, training staff and other athletes. How is that communicated?

Anna

Yeah, yeah, I was thinking about that when you know, often what you'll hear sort of as the summary is like, okay, you know, this athlete had this injury and maybe they're still dealing with it, but they've been cleared to compete by their doctors. And I always think of that as like, as if that was just one blanket permission. Okay, you're, you know, you are either healed enough or you're not healed enough. And it's, it does sort of take away from that agency from the athlete to be thinking about, you know, maybe it made sense on that day, but doesn't make sense on this day or, you know, things are more nuanced than that. But I think there's often that understandably, there's such a rush in skating to not as big as any sport to not be sitting out for too long and to want to go back into competition or back into training as soon as possible. And it does seem like that pressure can lead to that desire for things to be okay, we're good now. You're either injured or you're not you're sort of, you know, have that sense of Okay, now, I'm good enough to go back into competition, so I must be fine.

Phil

Yeah. And it's it is a very slippery slope. It's very, it's tightrope walking. It's really hard. It's very nuanced, and what you mentioned it is, it has so many more layers to be injured, or you know, or to be in pain. Than we want it to be or is mentioned to be allowed is presented often so like

again, but what you also just said someone's cleared, I think you know, something I haven't talked yet about, it's like, it's really context dependent. Like what is at stake here? Is it a certain important competition in a way you can argue every competition is important, but there are some that are more important to that person, especially like, I think ultimately, yes, medical person will always have to clear but I think ultimately someone that the athlete ideally needs to decide for themselves. Can I do it? Do I feel you know, an even if they're in pain, like again, pain again, there's much more measure of safety and danger, like it's contextual dependent, if it's a really important competition. It's very also likely that the person who has been in training maybe in pain is not in pain because this is such an important thing. And the brain obviously evaluates that knows that, you don't have to think about it. It just you know, so much information subconsciously going on, that you might not experience pain at all at the event. itself. There's so many examples, not just in sports, but coming from military research, like people going through extreme life-threatening scenarios do not experience pain, despite a lot of tissue damage. So again, challenges that view that pain and tissue damage kind of are causative. They're more correlated with each other but it doesn't need to be tissue injury or tissue damage to have pain. There's so much more going on to evaluate if your brain decides basically to put you in pain, so change your behavior to change something or not.

Anna

this calculation that we've just talking about this in the conversation that I had about the Little Girls in Pretty Boxes, and we were talking about injury, that there is so much complexity in the risk and reward calculation that an athlete might make about possible that if I compete or if I do this element, I'll get more injured than if I don't, but it's worth it for me right now because this is such an important opportunity. And that that's part of the agency that we want athletes to have is to make those choices, but that it can be hard to know from the outside certainly whether that's the choice that the athletes making or if they're also under, you know, some forms of outside pressure that are pushing them. Maybe they don't get funding if they don't compete or maybe their coaches pushing them to do it or you know, those pieces that are external to what the athlete themselves is wanting.

Phil

I fully agree with that. I will keep repeating myself, but it's very complex. I think because it is complex, it can be very frustrating. Also because it is complex. I would argue it also gives you a lot of options to do something about sometimes really a change of environment, a change of communication or a change of beliefs. makes a huge difference in how they experience pain or like in a way themselves.

Anna

One of the stories that I thought about a lot and since I talked to Maé Bérénice Maité last year about her injuries and recovery process that she pushed back several times before she was maybe fully recovered. It changed her technique because she was started without really realizing it trying to learn how to jump in a way that wasn't going to hurt and how much damage that did both in terms of damage to her body in terms of risk of future injury but also just not learning could technique because of trying to work through an injury and that has stuck with me

that it took a long time to fully recover and then to try to rebuild from something that she said if she had taken you know taking the time off earlier and waited you know, recovery that that does happen but it's also hard. It's so so hard to do that and to know that, you know, will you ever get back to a point you know that we're fully recovered or should you push for it now because maybe this is gonna take and yeah, I mean I'm repeating this. I think that each of those stories each athlete can talk about you know, what they learned from themselves and what they might have wished that they were doing differently, but a lot of it does kind of come back to that. Were you actually listening to yourself and what you needed and were you able to ask for and get what you needed at that point in the career.

Phil

Absolutely. I fully agree that probably every athlete has an arsenal of stories. It really comes down often to what were your beliefs and what were your perception at the time and how were you supported like again payments I think so much more so a social influence the socially driven experience, meaning by you know, and what environment are you in? Again, it's not just about you as an individual, you do not exist in isolation like we are we are you know, we are embodied within ourselves, but we also embedded in a world like crazy vacay but embedded let's say in the world of training, like different people, different training partners, coaches, etc. So, no, I don't know anything really much about her story and injuries, but I wouldn't be surprised. It also has a lot to do with her environment that at the time, not enough knowledge, maybe skills to to alter your understanding of how to move more to less pain or maybe even pain free way of skating training.

Anna

So obviously injuries are going to happen and that's a part of sports and part of life is not that you can totally prevent that happening but in terms of creating healthier athletes and potentially preventing the risk of injuries, what kinds of things do you recommend as preventative measures

Phil

to be supported in your training load and your capacity of So basically your fitness so that the capacity overall I think this book for example, I think has changed also a lot nowadays, which is great. The not just on the ice, but around slash off the ice training loads and your your capacity of So basically your fitness so that the capacity overall I think this, for example, I think has changed also a lot nowadays which is great. To build the resilience and capacity, again of not just tissue levels but also mentally. But mainly of course we refer to tissue capacity to levels How much are you able to work on strength, endurance, coordination, and so on and so on and so on. So I think we're definitely going to look to prevent injuries to really have a very resiliently of the RV to then focus on much more technical and we also tactical and artistic things on the ice. There is then obviously a huge difference in how many skaters at a young age train and to skaters who go who are going to and who are professional athletes. Just the amount of time they have to train under age, meaning anything from let's say six till basically until the school ends and of course that's also very different for the country. Kids have a huge load just by

school like it's huge and then they obviously aren't expected to train because we need to do a lot and like the huge demand on on the body on the mind and then you know, we haven't even talked about like puberty like so many things changed in that time before you even become a professional athlete. Then when you are when you can make it through that time with little injuries or if you are lucky maybe none but even I think that doesn't really exist. Then you have much more time to focus on of course people maybe study or something but to build up that capacity to have a very resilient body off the ice to then with that on the other side. It's really about training load training capacity so important.

Anna

Yeah, and being able to assess where you are in in terms of being able to push and build up strength and endurance and being able to build in the right kind of recovery, all of that. It seems like you're right that that's more common than what's getting talked about and included in the plans for skaters. But the idea that you're not necessarily going to just try to do as much time on the ice and as many repetitions as you possibly can in order to get you know that won't get you to your goal as quickly as even though it seems looks you might think that that's the way to get better quickly, but it's not necessarily what's going to ultimately lead you to be successful.

Phil

Yeah, I agree. And you know, talking of loading capacity before like I think especially when it comes to then being injured, it's really about finding, finding a pacing of de-loading. Like again when someone is injured you do not have to stop I think tissue needs to heal first because you can load it again. But the worst thing - actually not the worst but often not a very good thing - is to just do nothing. Like there's always something you can do. Like literally even if it's breathing exercises to calm down the nervous system to activate those recovery processes in your body more or to at least facilitate that more you can do again what I said when the beginning of our chat like visualizations because our brain does know a difference to actually visualize the same areas are activated our blood flow and life are stimulated in the brain. So there's so much one can do once you're injured. In a way injury is just like you know the river the life that goes on the river flows. Now if it's frozen you something stone. Life goes on the river flows. You might have to go a little bit of a different route and discover probably, hopefully something about you that you haven't known yet so I think injury is always your time learn, or to reevaluate at least I think it's a very important time of as negative as of course an injury might be but to also viewed as a chance to reflect and do something different.

Anna

Yeah, definitely. I really like how you put that. one specific thing that I was wondering about is loading different sides of the body. I think one of the things that we often see is because skaters you always land on the same foot you always and you can have that kind of overuse or imbalance between sides of the body and I'm curious if you think that that's something that we should be, you know, teaching skaters at a younger age to be doing, you know, in dance you have to turn. In dance, you have to turn both directions, for example, but we don't you only have to jump and spin one direction and skating and if that's something that would be good for good

for health in this court, maybe as well as interest to see if you could train kids from a younger age to be able to do things in both directions or with both legs.

Phil

Personally, I would love to see that I think it's such a cool thing if skaters can turn whether that's spinning or jumping on both to both directions. For me personally, I would love to see that much more. I think the main reason why it is not like this is because a lot of coaches have only experienced with one direction so they support the teach. I think if it just would be for the kids. I'm pretty sure just out of knowing how kids are curious as hell. They would love to try both sides, like much more than one then the coaches kind of at some point say no, this is the way we do it now. So this is one part. Of course there is again, there is this thing as overuse injury. However, I kind of want to come back to what I said with looking at Paralympic athletes looking at non-symmetrical bodies. It really is less about symmetry or less about one-sidedness. It's really more about the capacity of the body to deal with the demands you impose on it. So I think I don't see necessarily a problem to constantly land on just one leg which happens to be in skating. It is really much more thing the probably then to intensive training. Rather than necessarily the mechanics of it. I think it's really again, more about the training load of that where I think like I think one preventative thing would be to, you don't need to. And of course, again, there are so many varieties of schools out there. You don't need to train a certain element 100,000 times to work on different ways of doing the elements of different again, it's all about the loads, I think and less so about the demand the mechanical demand, and again, that would be quite a reductionist view. Or thought process again, to just view injury or overuse injury from a mechanical point of view. Again, I fall into that site. Although I have studied for 10 years now how pain is so much more complex and has a lot of social and psychological aspects about it. I fall into this trap myself as well. To just viewed immediately as a biological source slash tissue body mechanics view lens. Whereas you know, often overuse injuries I think often has a lot more to do with a certain mental aspect of fatigue or or believing that if we do if I do that so many times because other athletes before me got injured, I probably get injured as well. Like there's so much to it, you know so much more than just the pure mechanical view

Anna

Yeah, that makes sense. It's been interesting with that brain-body connection of as a pair skater to learn how to do more things in both directions because my partner and I are opposite from each other that I'm o'clock was Chopra and she's counterclockwise. And so we learned how to do some things, you know, it makes more sense to default to her direction. Some things make more sense for my direction. Some things we learn both ways, like some things we do mirrored you know, it's interesting trying to figure that out, but it has meant a few times things like she's learning how to come down from a lift on the leg that's not normally like that you'd land on and because it's partly strength, but a lot of it is, what are the habits that are built in and trusting yourself that it will be fine when you do it.

Phil

Exactly. It really comes down a lot to habits and ultimately we can change that like we can theoretically we can change a lot. Firstly, I love to see more variety and think I was talking of

singles, so thanks for mentioning like pair skating and ice dance. Although I started of course it's much more seen in ice dance skating into two different directions but in pair skating also, I feel like it gives an element of beauty to it. It really is something pleasing to see different directions and just variety more, which I think makes it much more interesting from a spectators viewpoint. But I think also for athletes and coaches. I think it's something so interesting to work with.

Anna

Yeah. The last thing I wanted to ask you about was I saw that you're doing a workshop for the Swiss Coaches Association coming up, and what coaches in particular to know coming from all of this conversation?

Phil

Yes, I'm part of a one day seminar for coaches in Switzerland I will talk about injury and rehabilitation and how coaches can better be better equipped to deal with that because a lot of us are still perceiving this pain as a very clear signal sign of tissue damage or tissue injury but when someone is injured, you don't train I want to really educate the coaches and just things I talked about with you today, giving you a bit of a broader perspective of what pain is and how we can also use that complexity what it is ultimately how we can use that or how coaches can make more use of that to use that complexity what it is ultimately to more effectively communicate definitely with the parents as well for kids because let's face it mostly it's really much more about talk to coaches or teach coaches they deal a lot with obviously minors and to more effectively communicate definitely with the parents as well as the kids because and that again is quite different to work was done with some adults. So it's really about communication skills. And also one big thing is collaboration. I think we and that is changing in the world of skating. Definitely and that's a good point. But there's so much more to explore and to improve on to collaborate with coaches to reach out to different health care, not just healthcare but to different professionals. Teamwork, basically collaboration it's so mandatory and it's just from a social perspective. It's really also more fun I think makes life easier but the coaches aren't present. Of course, it's always a financial aspect. But ultimately I think there's so much to learn from each other.

Anna

Sounds great. We've reached the point of the podcast where I want to ask you if there is anything that we haven't touched on that you'd want to bring up or emphasize.

Phil

I feel like we could go on for ages to be honest. At the same time, I feel like we touched on a lot of topics. Again my main message here would be pain, not understanding that it is a very complex experience. It's a very individual experience. It's very socially, and psychologically driven. It's a very complex thing, which is not just a bad thing, it's not bad at all. It opens a lot of avenues for how to help people.

Anna

Well, thank you so much you've given me so much to think about and I really appreciate you sharing.

Phil

thank you and I mean, I really enjoyed it. I hope everyone who listened to this will at least get curious about this topic a bit more and feel free to reach out, and get in touch.

Thanks again to Phil for sharing his learning with us!

You can follow him on Instagram at phil_care. As always, the episode transcript and more resources are linked in the show notes.

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Resources:

Philipp Tischendorf - European Championships Short Program 2007

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Rxr3EZd4DU&pp=ygUTcGhpbGxpcCB0aXNjaGVuZG9yZg%3D%3D>

Social Determinants of Health and Pain Management

https://depts.washington.edu/fammed/improvingopioidcare/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2020/07/SDH-and-Pain-Management_2020-07-22.pdf

Congenital Insensitivity to Pain (CIS)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/books/NBK481553/>

The Cortical Homunculus

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cortical_homunculus

Phantom Limb Pain

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12092-phantom-limb-pain>