

# Q&A With Pat Griffin, Sports Physical Therapy Resident

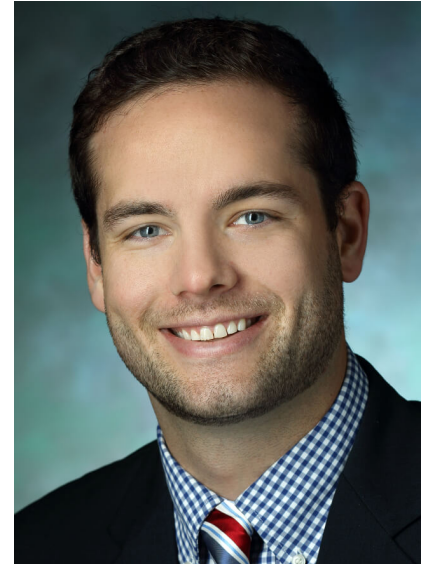
## Patrick Griffin, PT, DPT, SCS

**Undergrad:** Ithaca College, bachelor's in clinical health studies

**Graduate school:** Ithaca College, doctorate in physical therapy

**Hometown:** Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania

**Residency completion year:** [sports physical therapy residency](#), 2017



## Why did you decide to pursue a physical therapy residency in sports medicine?

I've always had a passion for sports, and I wanted the ability to treat and make a difference in as many athletes' lives as I could. I suffered a shoulder injury while playing college football, which ended my career. I have always felt that my rehab was inadequate at that time, and while I was in physical therapy school, felt that I could change the course of and prevent career-ending injuries like mine from being truly career ending.

## Why did you choose the residency program at Johns Hopkins?

Honestly, just the right place at the right time. With the Sports Physical Therapy Residency Program just starting, I jumped at the opportunity to help get the program running. It really appealed to me that I would be part of the process in growing the program both during and after residency, which is a huge reason why I remained part of the staff after completing my residency.

# What were your general responsibilities as a sports physical therapy resident?

Aside from treating athletes and other orthopaedic patients in the clinic, a large part of my residency was working with athletes in the training room and on the field at Our Lady of Mount Carmel High School. I had a blast doing so, and it was great to be able to watch and learn from the school's athletic trainer, as well as take what I had learned and apply it in the environment.

There was a research component to our residency, where I was able to write and present a case study, which was very exciting. There was also a large emphasis on continued education. Aside from the weekly residency lectures, there were many continuing education opportunities, including University of Southern California's Sports (in Los Angeles) and orthopaedic (in Baltimore) learning modules, as well as the Sports Physical Therapy Section Team Concept Conference and the American Physical Therapy Association Combined Sections Meeting.

I think the biggest responsibility was to learn and absorb all the information you get taught in 13 months!

# What was your caseload like, and what kind of patient populations did you work with?

The sports physical therapy resident's caseload is interesting, because the therapist must meet a requirement for athletes. We are lucky enough to have the majority of our clinical caseload include youth, high school, college and even professional athletes, as well as the weekend warrior. We also see a vast array of other patients, including diverse diagnoses from orthopaedics and outpatient neurology. We also get to see middle and high school athletes from Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the training room and on the field, who are a blast to be able to work with.

## Name one important thing you've learned from your mentors in the program.

The biggest thing that I was able to gain from working with the mentors in our program was late-phase rehabilitation for athletes. I think physical therapists in general are able to get a patient to a certain level after injury or surgery. What we learn in this program that sets us apart, among many other things, is to evaluate, assess and treat athletes who are nearing full return to sport. Whether it's throwing, running, jumping, kicking, shooting, cutting, pivoting —the list goes on and on — we are trained to be experts at this part of the rehab process.

## Were there activities outside work that helped you make friends and maintain work-life balance?

What I found very helpful was how tight all physical therapy residents became. There are monthly all-residency journal clubs that were inclusive of orthopaedics, sports, pediatrics, neurology, etc. Afterward, we often had happy hours to relax after long weeks. It's nice to have a large, tight-knit group where everyone is going through a similar situation.

## How has this training helped you grow professionally so far?

The professional difference is incredible. The sports residency has made me a much better therapist. The part that I find distinguishes this residency from others across the country is the emphasis on orthopaedic population alongside the sports focus. Taking orthopaedic courses and training to treat these diagnoses has set my level of care apart from others. I take a lot of pride in graduating from this program.

## Any advice you would give to someone interested in this program?

Go for it. When I was deciding whether to do a residency or not, I was honestly on the fence about whether it was right for me. After some thought, I decided that a residency would be a good fit and I went for it. It paid off tremendously. I couldn't be happier with the knowledge I gained and how much residency put me in a position to be the clinician that I am today.