Sara Zrzyzaniak, MD: **ACL Repair** puts outdoor enthusiast back in motion.

Sara Zrzyzaniak, MD loves the outdoors. When she can, she spends her time hiking, biking and skiing. That almost came to a halt when she tore her ACL for a second time during a ski trip. She thought that might be the end of ski trips and living an active outdoor life. However, she did her research for the best physician options to fix her knee, and is so happy she chose Dr. Van Thiel, who was able to get her back to her active life.

Because she had torn her ACL before, when Dr. Zrzyzaniak fell the first day of a ski trip in 2013, she knew instantly that her ACL was torn again. Being an ER physician herself, she knew that she wanted someone with specialized training to fix the tear. She reached out to an old anatomy partner who was now an orthopedic surgeon at the Steadman Clinic. She asked him who he would recommend to repair an ACL tear. He put her in touch with **Geoffrey Van Thiel, MD**.

Before making an appointment, Dr. Zrzyzaniak did her own additional research. "I'm big on comparing credentials, and Dr. Van Thiel had the right background. I critically looked into who he was. I wanted a track record of someone who had performed the surgery many times, and done it successfully. I looked to make sure he was fellowship trained," explained Dr. Zrzyzaniak. I liked that he was actively doing research and that he was writing medical articles and being published. He had everything that I was looking for."

She met with Dr. Van Thiel, and he explained what she could expect, "I distinctly remember sitting in his office, prepared to be told I wouldn't be able to ski again," recalls Dr. Zrzyzaniak. "When I asked him if I would be able to ski he responded, 'Yes! We will get you back to skiing.' I teared up to that! At that moment, I put my trust in Dr. Van Thiel. I had previously made an appointment with a physician at Washington University in Saint Louis, and after meeting with Dr. Van Thiel I cancelled that. I knew I found

the doctor who would perform surgery on me." Dr. Zrzyzaniak had her surgery in February 2014 at the OrthoIllinois Surgery Center. As a physician, she knew first hand how much lower a risk of infection there was having the procedure performed at a surgery center. Furthermore, she liked that the surgery center was only completing orthopedic procedures. Her surgery went well and during the months following surgery Dr. Van Thiel was always available by phone and email to answer her questions.

Before Dr. Zrzyzaniak suffered her injury, she was in the midst of planning a week long off-road trails biking trip. She had contemplated whether to go ahead with booking the trip, and is glad she did.

In August of that year, she completed the 215 mile biking trip, sending Dr. Van Thiel a post card from the trail thanking him for successfully repairing her knee.

When the next ski season approached, Dr. Zrzyzaniak was ready. She discussed with Dr. Van Thiel the best way to resume skiing, and they decided that she would wear a brace while skiing.

Dr. Zrzyzaniak concluded, "he is the reason I was able to do the bike trip, he is the reason I'm back skiing. I thought I wouldn't be able to enjoy the things I love. I didn't think I would be hiking, biking, or skiing. Dr. Van Thiel told me he would get me back to the outdoors, and he did!"

Dr. Van Thiel explains the injury and surgical treatment

"Dr. Zrzyzaniak had a complex problem with a re-tear of a previous ACL reconstruction done at another institution and a desire to lead a highly active lifestyle. New techniques and special equipment allowed us to reconstruct her ACL without being influenced by the previous surgery. This allowed her to put full weight on the leg almost immediately. Planning and meticulous surgery were required in this case given the difficult problem."

To schedule a consultation, please call 815-398-9491.

Geoffrey Van Thiel, MD, MBA
Specializing in Arthroscopic and Sports Medicine Surgery of the Hip, Knee & Shoulder

CL704 03-2017