

# Foot and Ankle Update

## Casper Orthopedic Associates



### "Athletic Stingers"

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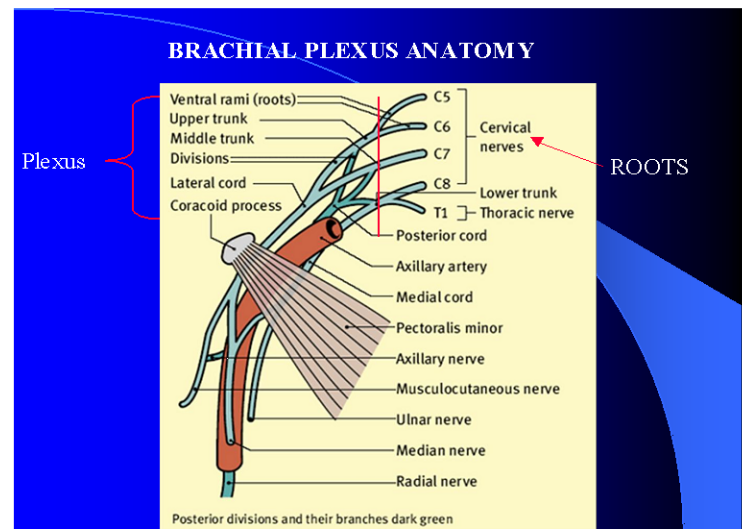
## Significance

Athletic stingers are known as "burners" or the clinical term **transient brachial neuropathy**. Players typically complain of numbness or burning pain in the upper or lower extremities. They are typically under reported because players fear getting benched. It has been estimated that 65% of college football players have experienced at least one "stinger".

Stingers can result from traction injuries to the brachial plexus or from injury to the nerve roots. (figure below). The nerve roots emerge from the cervical spine and then coalesce into the brachial plexus. Thus, nerve root injuries occur closer to the cervical spine and plexus injuries occur more in the shoulder area. **Bilateral upper extremity or lower extremity injuries are especially important because they signal possible damage to the spinal cord.**

## Return to Play

Return to play decisions are **controversial**. Any player with neck pain, diminished range of motion, or continued symptoms **should be removed from play**. Some authorities recommend **removal from play** if there have been 3 previous stingers. Additionally, **removal from play** has been recommended if 2 previous episodes of lower extremity symptoms has occurred. A player who has symptoms in one arm that resolves spontaneously with no residual symptoms can be **safely returned to play the same day**.



## Conclusion

Symptoms in one arm that resolve quickly can allow a player to return to play the same day. Lower extremity symptoms, bilateral upper extremity symptoms, and a history of previous episodes should signal caution in allowing players to return the same day. Recurrent or persistent symptoms will likely require MRI imaging.



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