“Teeth and ice hockey sticks do not go well together”

Interview with Dr Bendicht Scheidegger and Dr Hans-Peter Frei

When Dr Frei was chosen to lead the emergency dental unit during the Championship, he asked me to draw up plans for it. The 52 games played over the 17 days of the Championship are equal to a season of the Swiss Ice Hockey League. Besides the injuries in the games, we also treat players during training sessions, as well as all the other staff members of all eight qualified teams. In total, we provide dental care to 500 to 600 people – which is quite a workload!

Our team consists of Dr Frei, Marco Frei, two assistants and me. Are you paid for your services?

Dr Scheidegger: Our work during the Championship is voluntary, and we are only paid for certain treatments and our expenses. But as a fanatic ice hockey fan, I benefit through being able to watch all the games.

Do you cooperate with the dental clinics of the University of Bern and do you admit players to them, if necessary?

Dr Scheidegger: Of course. A player is admitted to the University dental clinic if the jawbone has sustained an injury that is more serious than dislocation. The specialists there can make decisions and take measures for which we are not qualified.

Dr Frei: In most cases after the end of the player’s career. We do not take special measures here and act in accordance with traumatology guidelines.

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Dr Frei: I assisted Dr Hans-Peter Frei, who is a dentist for the Swiss hockey club SC Bern. His practice provides dental services during league games, which is where I had the opportunity to treat several emergency cases.

Johannes Eschmann: Dr Scheidegger, how did you become involved in this year’s Championship?

Dr Scheidegger: From 2005 to 2008, I assisted Dr Hans-Peter Frei, who is a dentist for the Swiss hockey club SC Bern. His practice provides dental services during league games, which is where I had the opportunity to treat several emergency cases.

Does treatment usually continue after the games?

Dr Scheidegger: Owing to the charged environment, players are very resistant to pain during a game. In the dental chair, this changes immediately. If we decide upon a special treatment, we admit the patient to our practice in Bümpliz near Bern, where another dentist is on standby. When injuries turn out to be more serious than originally appeared, we treat the patient face-to-face either after the game or the next day when the practice opens.

When does final treatment take place?

Dr Frei: In most cases after the end of the player’s career. We do not take special measures here and act in accordance with traumatology guidelines.