

One gentle adjustment

From football field to doctor's office

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The tall blond watching practice last week looked in good enough shape to play for the Lions.

And sure enough, given the injuries in their receiving corps, it wasn't long before someone ambled over and suggested to Sean Graham he could still be putting his soft hands to good use in the CFL.

But the ex-B.C. slotback is doing his hands-on work for a bigger cause these days. The guy deemed not good enough to catch passes by ex-general manager Adam Rita two seasons ago now works on former teammates, having graduated last year with a doctorate of chiropractic.

Doing volunteer work for the Lions is good advertising for Dr. Graham's four-month-old Steveston practice.

Players use a rotation of colleagues before and after Surrey training sessions. But in less than a week, Graham has a handful of ex-teammates willing to undergo back-cracking and other forms of subluxation before games.

"You have a little more trust with someone when you know them," said receiver Ryan Thelwell, who had never undergone a chiropractic session before last week. "He knows aches and pains best because he's been an athlete."

"I'm going to be with him all year," said defensive end Herman Smith.

Chiropractic had always been Graham's goal ever since he graduated from UBC. Only he thought he could play football and work on patients at the same time.

That changed in 2001 when Graham was cut by Rita. The Richmond product was prompted to accelerate his studies at the Southern California University of Health Sciences.

"I still think I could have played, so it's hard to say if [getting cut] was the best thing that ever happened," Graham said.

But the seven-year veteran didn't obsess about the snub.

He's already recruited several part-time practitioners for his clinic, Satori Integrative, to provide one-stop medical shopping. Graham is working with ex-Canucks conditioning coach Peter Twist and plans to help out at his Point Grey alma mater this fall when not assisting receivers at Hugh Boyd high school.

He's also almost finished setting up a nine-doctor CFL network for pregame visits. If getting cut was a bad thing, it's hard to tell.



CREDIT: Gerry Kahrmann, The Province

Former football player Sean Graham mixes sports and medicine in his chiropractor's office.

The trick is getting those who don't see chiropractic as a legitimate form of injury prevention to let you work on them, although with the Lions that's not a problem.

"He goes out of his way for us and guys appreciate that," said tackle Cory Mantyka, an offseason nurse.

"Athletes know the benefits," said Graham. "They know it's important to keep joints moving properly and muscles moving right, so they're more motivated to coming in when they're feeling well." You could, ahem, say he's made the adjustment from player to doctor quite well.

LIONS TALES: One of B.C.'s pressing medical concerns was alleviated Monday when receiver Chris Brazzell was cleared to play Saturday against Saskatchewan. Safety Mark Washington will also start after sustaining a concussion against Winnipeg. A decision will be made later this week on Jason Clermont (knee), however Steve Hardin (knee) will not be ready.

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