

CHRISTUS Health Hits Texas Roads

Playing sports is good for all ages: it helps participants stay in shape, learn how to organize their time, and help build relationships with peers. However, sports can be dangerous. In fact, a 2023 study found that approximately 5.2 million sports injuries occurred in high school athletes in the US.*

No athlete goes into practice or game day thinking they will suffer an injury, but injuries do happen. Luckily, when they happen in East Texas, fast access to medical care is possible at many sporting events thanks to CHRISTUS Health's Mobile Athletic Training Room (MATR) — parked just steps away from the playing field.

CHRISTUS Good Shepherd Health System is a non-profit hospital system that serves the upper East Texas region and includes two medical centers along with a number of outpatient

centers and medical clinics.

The Sports Medicine department is housed at the CHRISTUS Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Institute. To get closer to the action and help provide the best care possible for injured athletes, the team at CHRISTUS created the MATR (pronounced mater), which is affiliated with four of its hospitals.

Each MATR is a fully stocked sports medicine clinic that travels to athletic venues across East Texas and is active year-round at football games, cross country meets, soccer matches, and other community and sporting events. The MATRs are operated by the athletic trainers at CHRISTUS Orthopedics and Sports Medicine Institute.

All of the services in the MATR are provided at no cost to the patient. "Our vision is to ensure our area athletes are all afforded the same opportunity for care.

By treating our local athletes at no cost in the MATR, we aim to provide the athlete and their family with an expedited treatment/game plan to get them back onto the field playing the games they love," said Casey Reed, MHA, LAT, OTC, Sports Medicine Coordinator, at CHRISTUS Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Institute, Longview.

MATR Hits the Road

MATR helps CHRISTUS accomplish its mission by taking the health system on the road to get as close as possible to the people of the community. "By bringing MATR to support our local school and community sporting events, we can bring state-of-the-art services and sports medicine practices Christus is known for to our local community and meet their needs right where they are," she said.

In 2022, Good Shepherd Medical Center – Longview

debuted its MATR — a 26-foot Hallmark racing trailer that has been outfitted into a mobile clinic and pulled by a Dodge 2500 Laramie that was donated by a local auto dealer.

"The community loves it!" Reed declared. "I regularly have community members telling me they saw it at their grandchild's Saturday morning community soccer game and how much it means to their family knowing we are there if anything goes sideways."

Expediting the Process

MATR has state-of-the-art medical equipment to help the CHRISTUS team treat any potential injuries on-site. One piece of equipment that has contributed to the success of the Longview MATR is the implementation of Fujifilm's FDR AQRO mini mobile digital X-ray system. The system combines the high sensitivity of Fujifilm's D-EVO



The FDR AQRO mini mobile X-ray system allows Christus personnel to image the injuries on the sideline and triage for the local emergency departments and ensure patients are streamlined to the appropriate service line.



CHRISTUS Health's Mobile Athletic Training Room (MATR) gets close to the action and can be parked just steps away from the playing field.

Driving Imaging Innovation

The team at Good Shepherd Medical Center – Longview has really benefitted from the FDR AQRO. From its size to its technical capabilities, FDR AQRO has enhanced patient care and improved workflow in a compact versatile design.

“It is an excellent choice for someone who needs to transport from site to site as it is lighter and more compact and has better wheels for loading/unloading,” said Casey Reed, MHA, LAT, OTC, Sports Medicine Coordinator, at CHRISTUS Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Institute, Longview.

At just 198 lbs, the FDR AQRO is 80% lighter than traditional mobile X-ray systems. Its four swiveling wheel casters allow precise, easy positioning and travel in any direction, and the ability to spin the system in place in tight spaces.

Easy positioning changes enable sequential exposures to be acquired quickly and easily for efficient technologist workflow. “Our rad techs were already familiar with the workflow and system of other Fujifilm products in our health system. The love the interface and ease of use [of the FDR AQRO].”

For more information: <https://us.fujimed.com/AQRO>



MATR has state-of-the-art medical equipment including Fujifilm's FDR AQRO mini mobile digital X-ray system.

II detectors and its refined image processing advancements to generate high-resolution images with low patient dose. (See sidebar.)

“CHRISTUS Health is known for its great reputation, having MATR equipped with the FDR AQRO has enhanced our ability to offer expedited healthcare across the community,” stated Reed.

FDR AQRO provides instant imaging and answers just steps away from the field. “This allows us to create a customized treatment plan and begin their path to recovery and return to playing the game they love quickly and efficiently,” Reed said.

During the recently completed 2023 season, the Longview MATR team used the FDR AQRO system to take several X-rays that revealed fractures to hands, fingers and an athlete's back. “Being able to image the [injuries] on the sideline allows us to triage for our Emergency Departments and ensure patients are streamlined to the appropriate service line. If we can cast or splint an injury in the MATR, patients can avoid a visit to the emergency department and follow up with an office visit.”

In some cases, if the X-ray has ruled out a fracture, the staff was actually able to fabricate a splint and padding to allow the athlete to return to the game that same evening.

According to Reed, the size of the FDR AQRO system is very advantageous. “For the MATR specifically, the compact size/ dimensions of the unit being higher off the ground, and the larger type of wheels versus the self-propelled/lower-to-the-ground conventional full-sized machine allowed us to easily move the unit

on and off the trailer back door incline ramp safe and effectively.

“Our rad techs love the interface of the Fujifilm systems and are familiar with it from the conventional full-sized portables in the emergency department,” Reed said.

Team Effort Matters

“It takes a great team to create an initiative like [MATR],” Reed said. The executive administration, the sports medicine team, the physicians, the rad techs and the athletic trainers have all worked together to contribute to MATR's success.

Reed added that the CHRISTUS team also had discussions with the leadership team at Fujifilm to explain their vision and passion for the community and how important the FDR AQRO was to them. Working together, CHRISTUS and Fujifilm are helping ensure that the youth and community sports programs will receive a high level of healthcare.

“We have used the [FDR AQRO

system] for many various X-rays.

At a recent football game, the visiting team's athletic trainer and physician asked us if we be willing to X-ray the athlete's neck out of an abundance of caution as he had neck pain following a whiplash mechanism of injury.

“They believed he was just experiencing pain from a muscle spasm and had planned to send him back into the game. However, since we had the X-ray machine right there, it was worth taking a quick look. The X-ray study showed the patient had a fracture in his C-spine. He was immediately immobilized and sent to the local emergency room for further care.”

The goal is to triage acute sports injuries so that the local emergency departments or Emergency Medical Services can run efficiently with the higher levels

of trauma. This also allows for patients to have instant access to care. Additionally, should a patient need a follow up, the images are loaded to the CHRISTUS PACS and physicians can view them anywhere — hospital, clinic or via their own electronic device.

Building a Healthy Future

The MATR program appears to have a bright future ahead. “By ensuring that our youth stay healthy and on the field, we can contribute to the CHRISTUS Health long term mission of transforming those healthy habits and extending them into a lifetime of health. What is ‘seemly’ only a portable X-ray unit steps from the sideline, over time it can really contribute to the physical, mental and spiritual health for a lifetime.” **itn**

For more information:
www.tinyurl.com/christushealth-longview-MATR
*www.tinyurl.com/AAOS-SportsInjuriesStudy