

Health



Kristen Gaffney, 15, works out on VERT equipment. VERT workouts helped her recover quickly from an injury.

VERT Helps Teen Get Back Into Game After Injury

When Kristen Gaffney's doctor told her she'd have to sit out up to eight weeks after breaking her foot in a game early in the basketball season, the Green Hope High School freshman broke down and cried.

But thanks to intense physical therapy and sports training at one of the Triangle's newest fitness facilities, Gaffney's tears have turned into smiles.

At VERT, located in Morrisville, Gaffney worked with physical therapist Dee Emerson on technical equipment to play again quickly and salvage the last part of her season.

"The equipment at VERT is outstanding," Kristen said. "The training and fitness staff are wonderful there."

VERT stands for Velocity Enhanced Resistance Training, a high-tech neuro-muscular training system. VERT equipment is designed to train the nervous system to contract muscles fast. The faster the muscles contract, the faster the limbs move, and the faster limbs move, the better the athlete performs, running faster, jumping higher and hitting harder.

The VERT machines can be programmed to train athletes to perform at their own maximum potential. Each machine records and archives an athlete's information, measuring speed, force and time on every repetition and will graph the data allowing one to compare and analyze their results.

In short, VERT both teaches and trains athletes to perform their personal best, both intellectually and physically.

The system is working for Kristen, who has improved her vertical leap dramatically since she got hurt, and could very well be stronger than she was before the injury – she is averaging 17 points per game since her return.

Kristen, 15, remembers the game in which she jumped up and came down on top of an opposing player.

"We were playing Leesville County, and I went up for the ball and came down on the guard," Kristen said. "It hurt right away, but then the hurting subsided."

Kristen has been playing basketball practically since she could walk. She plays AAU ball for the Hoop City Finest when

she's not playing for Green Hope. At 5'10, she is a shooting guard, a position she loves to play.

"I like to shoot, and I like to create opportunities (for my team to score)," she said.

This was her first major sports injury, and she admits it took some time and courage to play with confidence again.

"By the third game after my injury, I was full-blown into it and diving for balls again," she said. "It was the greatest feeling when I felt like I was back all the way."

In addition to working on machines that actually made her muscles stronger, the trainers and staff helped her realize she was indeed getting stronger, and helped her overcome her fear of getting hurt again.

While Kristen's long term goal is to play college basketball, for the immediate future, she wants to keep improving and winning games.

"I want to break records, not bones," she said.

But if Kristen does get injured again, VERT will be there to help her get back in the game.



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