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arthroscopic surgery techniques produced a generation of athletes that Roy describes as being "very informed and educated."

Warren is an example of this "informed" athlete, says Heinonen.

"Leann was more willing to make a quick, but not hasty, decision about being operated on," says Heinonen, pointing out that Warren had an arthroscopy done last November in her right knee.

"She decided not to wait and hope it went away. She decided to 'go for the gusto' and had the operation," Heinonen says.

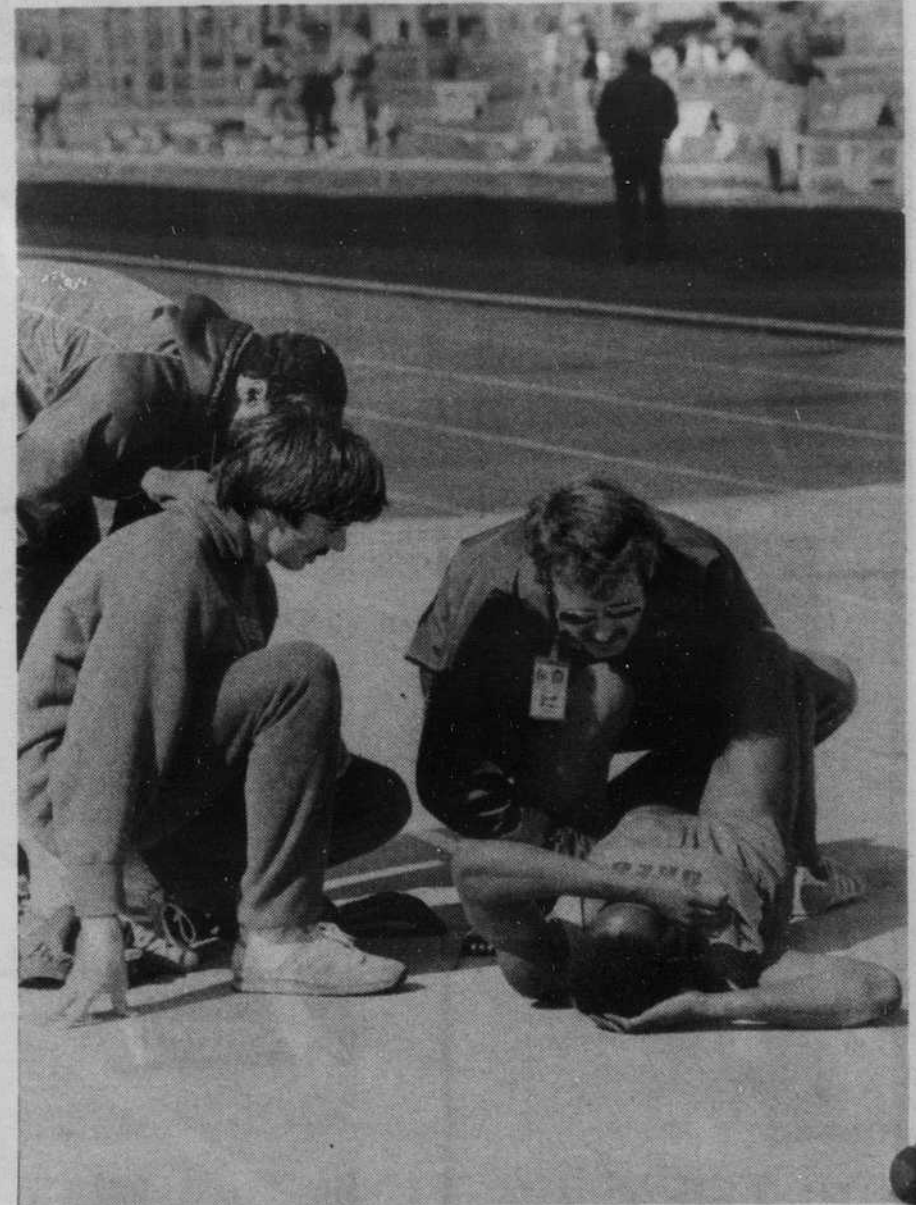
But can "going for the gusto" be abused? Will athletes use arthroscopic surgery as a quick fix?

Heinonen believes it might happen on occasion. "There is a possibility for abuse. Knowing that you can heal an injury temporarily might push some coaches or athletes into opting for it."

However, Heinonen doubts that most physicians would allow the operation to be used as a "quick fix" because physicians are still conservative in their treatment.

James agrees. "I'm not a magician, and I don't promise my patients the world," he says. "It's up to the surgeon to explain to the athlete what to expect. I don't give my patients the impression that this is a simple thing, but rather I tell them it takes time and requires following a rehabilitation program closely."

"We're still not batting 100 percent," says James of the success rate of arthroscopic surgery.



Using arthroscopic surgery, physicians can often get an athlete back to light training within three weeks after the operation.

But if Leann Warren lines up for the qualifying heats at the U.S. Olympic Trials in Los Angeles next summer, James and other arthroscopic surgeons

will be batting 100 percent in her book.

By John Healy
Photos by Dave Kao

emu

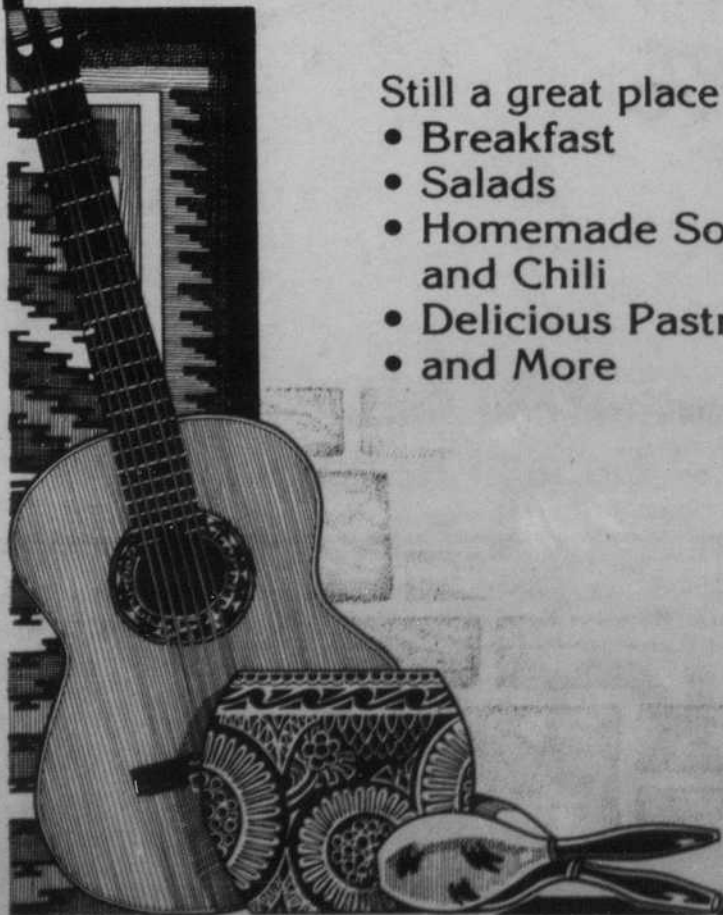
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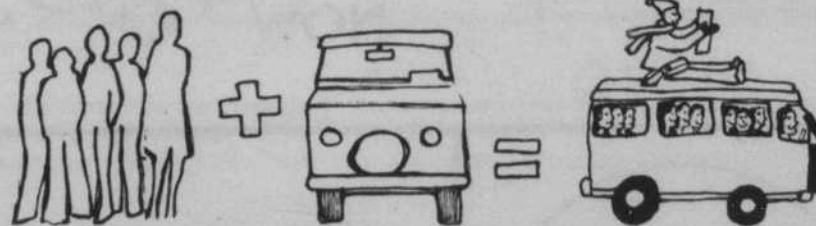
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