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Your Premier Regional Magaz

# Tri-State Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine Celebrates 40 Years of Serving the Community

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**ON THE COVER:** Bottom row, L-R: Dr. Michael  
Pagnotto, Dr. Jeffrey Kann, Dr. Paul Liefeld  
Middle row, L-R: Dr. Steven Kann, Dr. Victor  
Thomas, Dr. Gerard Werries, Dr. Brian Jewell  
Back row, L-R: Dr. Christopher Emond,  
Dr. Mark Langhans

*Inset right, L-R: Sports medicine surgeons  
Dr. Mark Langhans, Dr. Christopher Emond,  
Dr. Brian Jewell*



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# Tri-State Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine Celebrates 40 Years of Serving the Community

Offering accessible orthopaedic excellence right in your own backyard

By Vanessa Orr

A lot has changed in the health care community over the last few decades, with private practices consolidating, selling and becoming part of larger hospital groups, and insurers determining where patients can go for treatment. Despite these changes, Tri-State Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine, now celebrating its 40th year of serving the North Hills community, has remained independent and accessible to patients.

"I couldn't have imagined that in 1976, when Dr. Roger Ferguson and I established this practice with just the two of us and one employee, that it would grow to include 10 doctors and more than 120 employees," said Jack Failla, MD. "We had offers to join established groups in Pittsburgh, but we wanted to be independent and do our own thing; now, we're the last remaining independent orthopaedic

Chris Emond, MD, specialist in sports medicine, knee and shoulder surgery

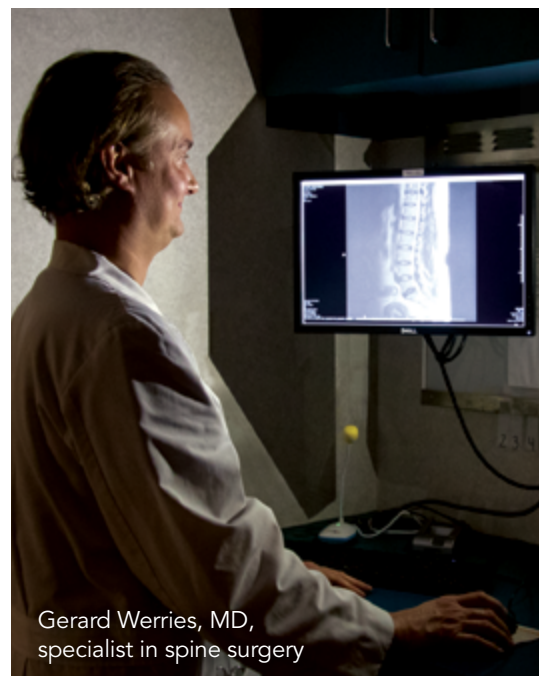


group in the North Hills and one of just a few in the city of Pittsburgh."

Dr. Failla credits the practice's success to its emphasis on personalized care. "Our staff and providers are very service-oriented, and that has been our philosophy for 40 years. When we added physicians to the group, we made sure that they were not only good doctors, but good people. Yes, they are experts in the field, but they are also very personable and care about people; that quality is evident."

One of the ways in which the practice remains accessible to patients is by accepting all major insurances, including Highmark and UPMC Health Plan, according to spine surgeon Gerard Werries, MD. "We are not constrained by some of the parameters that affect other practices because we work with both UPMC Health System and Allegheny Health Network," he explained. "We have operating privileges at hospitals that are affiliated with both networks, including UPMC Passavant, UPMC St. Margaret, West Penn and Ohio Valley hospitals, and UPMC Harnar and AHN Wexford Pavilion outpatient surgery centers. We are able to care for our surgical patients regardless of insurance."

Dr. Werries adds that patients also have an advantage in that the majority of the practice's physicians are subspecialty trained, and can treat far more than general orthopaedic issues. "While sports medicine was the initial emphasis of the practice, we have expanded to include expertise in hand, wrist and upper extremity surgery;



Gerard Werries, MD, specialist in spine surgery

foot and ankle surgery; arthroscopic shoulder, elbow and knee surgery; hip and knee joint replacement and revision surgery, and spine surgery," he said.

An area in which the practice also specializes is in caring for injured workers and getting them back into the work force as safely and quickly as possible. "Our orthopaedic surgeons are frequently asked to evaluate an injury, provide appropriate treatment and determine when it's safe to return to work," said Paul Liefeld, MD, adding that all of the physicians focus on treating the injury itself, regardless of if it is work-related.

"We strive to expeditiously identify the symptoms and recommend a treatment plan so that patients can resume normal activities and job duties," he continued. "And we treat all patients with the same level of care and respect, whether that patient is a professional athlete, a construction worker or an active parent." He added that while each individual and situation—job, injury and employer—is different, the primary goal is to make sure that the injury is resolved.

While the practice's physicians see all types of injuries, the most common are sports injuries affecting athletes and weekend warriors. "We're all athletes to some extent—even someone doing



Paul Liefeld, MD, specialist in arthroscopy and total joint surgery

*"[Our doctors] are experts in the field, but they are also very personable and care about people; that quality is evident."*

— Jack Failla, MD

yardwork can end up with sprains or strains, torn rotator cuffs or hamstring pulls," said sports medicine surgeon Christopher Emond, MD.

As team physicians, the practice has been caring for North Allegheny School District athletes for the better part of four decades and is also the sports medicine provider for Seneca Valley School District. They also care for many other area high school and collegiate athletes. "The fact that we are able to accept all types of insurance with convenient locations in the North Hills, Fox Chapel, Seven Fields and Robinson Township is especially helpful for parents who have to decide where to take their young athlete for orthopaedic treatment," said Dr. Emond.

Dr. Emond added that the group's commitment to sports medicine started in 1981, when Dr. Failla and his colleagues personally cared for the Pittsburgh Pirates' baseball club for

24 consecutive years. "That commitment to personalized care for young athletes remains today," he explained.

This past fall, Tri-State Orthopaedics opened Ortho Urgent Care hours to ensure that it was even more accessible to busy families and students. Located in the practice's Seven Fields and North Hills' offices, the Tri-State Ortho Urgent Care centers give those with orthopaedic injuries access to care on Saturday mornings, which can be especially helpful to accommodate those with busy weekday schedules or to treat injuries sustained during a Friday night football game. "Patients can get treated quickly and readily by an orthopaedic provider in our facility instead of waiting for hours in an emergency room," said Dr. Emond.

While health care continues to evolve, one thing remains certain for orthopaedic patients in the North Hills—they can continue to rely on Tri-State Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine. "I have patients that I operated on 30 or 40 years ago bringing their children, or even their



Jack Failla, MD,  
co-founder of  
Tri-State  
Orthopaedics

parents, to us," said Dr. Failla, adding that these satisfied patients are the practice's best source of referrals and that the physicians truly appreciate patients' support and confidence in the group over the past 40 years. "It's always been very, very important to us to take care of people, and I see only greater things in our future." ■

*The information in this article was provided by Tri-State Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine.*



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