

The Scars of Tommy John Surgery

October 8, 2015

[An article in today's New York Times](#) showcases Major League ballplayers who have undergone Tommy John Surgery:

The Scars of the Game

By TIM ROHAN OCT. 6, 2015



and while 2 position players were featured (Carl Crawford and Matt Holliday), the comments of 2 pitchers need to be emphasized:

Jacob deGrom

STARTER, METS

Before [being named 2014 NL Rookie of the year](#) and then [dominating in the 2015 All-Star game](#), DeGrom underwent Tommy John surgery in the minors. But it wasn't until after his surgery that he learned the changeup from one of the game's best:

And that's when you met Johan Santana and he taught you his changeup?

Yeah, we crossed paths in 2011, or whenever I was doing rehab. Played catch with him a few times. We talked about different things about pitching and stuff. I was new to it, so I was trying to learn everything I could from the people around me. That's when we talked about the changeup and the idea behind it and how he developed it from being an O.K. pitch to one of his better pitches.

I've written about the importance of the Changeup every year since 2012, [with my latest being in May](#):

The Pitch Revisited, Part 4

May 8, 2015

To watch a video presentation on the changeup, from the best grip to the best time throw it during an at-bat, [you can subscribe to my baseball video library](#).

When DeGrom was asked what may have caused his injury:

You had recently been converted to a pitcher. Were you surprised that your elbow had broken down so soon?

I never asked why or anything. My arm never hurt when I played the infield. But I think it might've been getting thrown into the mix a little too quick in college. Didn't really have much of a pitch count. In one game, I threw 130 pitches. Didn't really have a routine. Then I would go play the infield after I pitched — and sometimes the outfield. Never really took a break or had a routine to take care of my arm.

I recently wrote about [the best thing a coach can for their pitchers](#), which is allowing them to have a routine. To learn more about the best routine you can have between pitching starts, [subscribe to my video library](#).

As for the second pitcher:



he gave the REAL reason why so many Major League pitchers are getting TJS:

Why is the injury so common now?

The damage is being done early. It's like buying a used car. If you don't know that it's been in a couple of accidents, you have no idea it's probably going to break down later, in the time that you own it. I think that's the one thing in youth baseball — that's why there's all the injuries. My philosophy is this: If you're young and you throw too hard, you're taxing a ligament and tendons that don't just have the opportunity to bear that. We're throwing harder than we ever had. We're stronger. We're working out more. But we're not smarter. We have all the technology in the world, but we're working out things that are sport-specific instead of balancing the body. More pulled obliques. More pulled muscles. More Tommy Johns.



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This was echoed [back in 2014](#) by Peter Gammons in an interview on WFAN:

#3: [Peter Gammons interview on baseball injuries](#) - WFAN Sports March 21, 2014

"All these guys with the Tommy John surgery and coming off a year where 40% of starting pitchers in the Major Leagues ended up on the disabled list. I think it starts with these traveling teams when they're 15 years old, they're going to showcases and over-pitching and then college where their college coaches abuse them. A lot of injuries you see in the Major Leagues come from what they did between the ages of 12 and 21."

-Peter Gammons

Questions About This Newsletter?

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