

# IN TOP SHAPE

## MERCYHEALTH PROGRAM HELPS PRO FOOTBALL PLAYER STAY COMPETITIVE

As a teenager, Dean Lowry had lofty ambitions — he wanted to play football for one of the schools in the Big Ten Conference. He knew that to achieve his dream, he would need to do more than just practice with his team at Boylan Catholic High School in Rockford. He needed a trainer who would help him become one of the best defenders in the region. So, he started working with Tim Bailey, PES, Performance Enhancement Specialist with Top Performers in Loves Park, Illinois, which is now part of Mercyhealth.

His hard work paid off: He played football for Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and was drafted to play for the Green Bay Packers in fall 2016. And through it all, he has stuck to the intense training regimen Tim has customized for him. “Nobody knows where I’ve come from like Tim does,” says Dean.

Dean Lowry, a defensive end for the Green Bay Packers, relies on Mercyhealth Top Performers for his off-season training.





Performance Enhancement Specialist Tim Bailey helps Dean develop his upper body strength.

## A TRUSTED MENTOR

When he was in his 20s, Tim played for the Arena Football League for four years, but he had to leave because of an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury in 2003. He decided to use his background in kinesiology, biomechanics and anatomy to start Top Performers and help other athletes improve their performance level. “There’s a lot more than just strength and conditioning involved in helping an athlete reach his or

her full potential,” he says. “A good performance specialist understands how the body works, and how we change it to do what we want it to do.”

Tim first met Dean when he was a sophomore at Boylan. Some of Dean’s teammates had already started working with Tim, and the teenager could see just how much they had improved on the field. He wanted that, too, so he began seeing Tim twice a week. Tim worked on increasing

Dean’s speed, flexibility, mobility and strength. He helped him become more explosive and agile, so that when he moved, he moved with purpose.

When Dean headed to Evanston to play for the Northwestern Wildcats, his relationship with Tim changed. Instead of seeing him weekly, he would come back to Top Performers during school breaks so he could keep himself in good shape during the off-season. “Every time he came home,

we would work together to see what we could add to his game,” says Tim.

That included working with special, cutting-edge equipment that can be used for young athletes who are ready, as well as pros. The Keiser AIR300 Squat enables athletes to utilize up to 500 pounds of force without putting excessive stress on the joints and connective tissues that they experience with conventional weights. Additionally, the AIR300 Runner is an apparatus that helps athletes improve explosive leg power, allowing the muscles to fire faster. It’s very safe on the connective tissues and eliminates much of the shock load that athletes experience with conventional equipment.

After Dean was drafted by the Packers, he continued to work with Tim during the off-season. Every time they get together, Dean and Tim discuss what the Packers trainers have been doing with him, but they also add other unique elements to their routine. Dean now sees Tim four times a week when he’s away from Green Bay. “Tim does a great job of mixing up the old-school methods of weight training with new techniques to help an athlete,” Dean says.

## HELPING PARTICIPANTS IMPROVE

At Mercyhealth Top Performers, located in Mercyhealth Sportscore Two, 8800 E. Riverside Blvd. in Loves Park, Tim works with athletes of all

ages and adults who want to improve their physical fitness. Whenever a new client comes in, he performs a needs analysis, which allows him to have a greater understanding of the athlete’s physical abilities. Then, he customizes a program based on those needs, working to improve the weak links in the athlete’s performance.

The program is growing and developing relationships with area high schools and other local sports programs. Tim and the Mercyhealth physical therapy staff hope to bring Mercyhealth’s integrated approach to Winnebago County and the surrounding areas — offering an option for athletes who are injured and want to reach a level beyond where they were before their injury.







Dean uses a 20-pound weighted vest, plus additional force from Tim, to work out with the TRX suspension system.

Of course, that requires an extremely high level of dedication. Dean knows that better than anyone. “If you want to reach your true capabilities, you have to have a plan, and you have to be consistent with that plan,” he says. “You can’t just do something

here and there. If you are not serious about your training, Tim isn’t the right trainer for you. He will call you out.”

Dean is a perfect example of the need to continually improve physical capabilities, says Tim. Even when an

athlete has reached the highest level of a sport, he or she can always continue to grow. “If an athlete doesn’t understand the importance of improving his or her physical qualities, that athlete will plateau at some point,” says Tim.



## A FULL RANGE OF SERVICES FOR ATHLETES

Since 2001, Mercyhealth has offered a performance component to its sports medicine program in Rock County, Wisconsin. Now, it provides performance training in Winnebago County and the surrounding areas, as well, through Mercyhealth Top Performers. An athlete can receive every service he or she needs through Mercyhealth — primary care, injury assessment with the health system’s athletic trainers, physical therapy, nutrition, neuropsychological evaluation for concussions, and now, performance training for athletes who want to reach the next level. “All of our specialties work together to make an athlete’s experience seamless,” says Donna Storbakken, PT, Director of Rehabilitation Services and Sports Medicine at Mercyhealth.

**FOR A FREE EVALUATION AT MERCYHEALTH TOP PERFORMERS, CALL (815) 971-3940.**