Posterolateral Corner Injury
Conservative Management Protocol

Initial Guidance:
Progression through phases is based on measurements of the individual, functional progression, symptoms and resolution of impairments.
If varus laxity but LCL intact a medial unloader brace may be indicated during high-level athletic activities.

Phase 1: Protection, control of pain and swelling/effusion, restore ROM, quads activation.

- Immobilise knee (long lever brace locked at 0°) for 1-2 weeks
- Avoidance of excessive varus and external tibial rotation loading
- POLICE protocol for management of pain and swelling/effusion.
- Quads activation: SQ’s/SLR, aiming for fatigue (30 reps x 10 sec hold x 6 sets daily)
- Restore/preserve knee and PFJ ROM
- Normalise gait, using walking aids as required

Criteria for progression to phase 2: Full knee extension, flexion ≥ 120°, SLR with no lag.

Phase 2: Normalise gait mechanics and increase lower limb strength.

- Normalise gait
- Strength exercises focusing on quads, hamstrings, gastrocnemius and popliteus
- Bridging progressions on gym ball: double leg (straight) and curls, single leg bridge kicks
- Squats, progressing from supported (wall squats) to unsupported, stable to unstable surfaces
- Double legged proprioceptive exercises on unstable surfaces
- Lateral resisted walk

Criteria for progression to phase 3: Normal gait

Phase 3: Neuromuscular control and strengthening with functional movement patterns.

- Control of knee varus and tibial external rotation at lower flexion angles (<45°) during weight bearing exercises, using verbal, manual and visual cues as appropriate.
- Lunges, Romanian dead lifts (progressing from bilateral to unilateral), step downs
- Increase resistance with lateral walks, stepping over obstacles
- Progressive running program and graded agility, neuromuscular control and plyometrics
- Gain adequate single plane control before progressing to multi-plane movements
- Functional testing and training including timed balance, single leg squat for depth, single leg hop for distance, triple crossover hop for distance, timed hop for speed (6m)

Criteria for progression to phase 4: Limb symmetry of >85% on functional and strength testing.

Phase 4: Returning to Sport.

- Sports specific drills and gradual return to play programme.
References:
