

Augustus Thorndike, M.D.
1896-1986

The “Father of Sports Medicine in the United States” is the late Dr. Augustus Thorndike. A member of the Harvard College class of 1919 and a 1921 graduate of Harvard Medical School, Dr. Thorndike spent more than three decades caring for the growing population of Harvard athletes, while serving as the chief of surgery for the Harvard University Health Service. He was a surgeon on the staff of the Massachusetts General Hospital.



Dr. Thorndike seemed unaware he was on the threshold of developing a new specialty. He simply focused on providing thoughtful, comprehensive care to every patient, including Harvard athletes. In 1926, Dr. Thorndike was appointed physician to the Harvard hockey team. “It was the first time any hockey team anywhere, pro or otherwise, ever had a doctor present at games,” he noted. In his new role, he insisted that all players wear helmets. This was the beginning of the Thorndike “canon” – a comprehensive list of rules and practices designed to preserve the health of the athlete. He designed a multitude of taping and bandaging techniques to prevent recurrent injuries, invented new braces and protective splints and casts, and designed and improved padding and protective gear for football players, notably the suspension helmet.

More importantly, Dr. Thorndike developed major sports medicine principles that in the 1930s represented breakthrough thinking. He decreed that every contact sport must have a physician in attendance at all games, established that physicians, not managers or coaches, would determine whether or not an athlete should play, and decided that any player who suffers three concussions should be barred from playing contact sports. These rules formed the basis for the modern discipline of sports medicine.

Dr. Thorndike also introduced nutritional guidelines for athletes, initiated on-site use of x-ray equipment – something unheard of at the time, and whirlpools. He upgraded the examination rooms and devised a meticulous record-keeping system. He wrote the first book in the United States on sports medicine, “Athletic Injuries” and “A Manual of Bandaging, Strapping & Splinting.”

After he retired in 1962, Dr. Thorndike received an honorary degree from Harvard.

Previous Augustus Thorndike Lecturers are Ramon Cugat, MD, PhD (2008), Mitsuo Ochi, MD (2009), Robert E. Leach, MD (2010), Frank R. Noyes, MD (2011), James R. Andrews, MD (2012), Matthew T. Provencher, MD (2013), Neal S. ElAttrache, MD (2014), Jo A. Hannafin, MD, PhD (2015), David W. Altchek, MD (2016), and K. Donald Shelbourne, MD (2017).

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL
DEPARTMENT OF ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY

11TH ANNUAL
AUGUSTUS THORNDIKE LECTURE

Scott A. Rodeo, MD

Co-Chief Emeritus, Sports Medicine and Shoulder Service
Co-Director, Tissue Engineering, Regeneration, and Repair Program
Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery, Weill Medical College of Cornell University
Attending Orthopaedic Surgeon, The Hospital for Special Surgery
Head Team Physician, New York Giants Football

“Basic Mechanism of Tendon-Bone Healing”



Thursday, October 25, 2018
6:45 am - 7:45 am



Massachusetts General Hospital
Haber Auditorium
1st Floor Blake, Room 190



Thursday, October 25, 2018
Massachusetts General Hospital
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery



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Scott A. Rodeo, MD is Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Weill Medical College of Cornell University and is an Attending Surgeon at the New York-Presbyterian Hospital and the Hospital for Special Surgery, where he is Co-Chief Emeritus of the Sports Medicine and Shoulder Service and Co-Director of the Orthopaedic Soft Tissue Research Program. He is Head Team Physician for the New York Giants Football Team.

Dr. Rodeo served as a Team Physician for the United States Olympic Team in 2004, 2008, and 2012. His clinical practice involves orthopaedic sports medicine, with specialty interest in complex knee reconstruction (ligament, meniscus and cartilage surgery), tendon repair in the shoulder and other joints, and shoulder instability.

He runs a translational research laboratory program investigating the cellular and molecular mechanisms of soft tissue repair.

Rodeo graduated cum laude from Stanford University, where he completed his undergraduate work while competing on the Stanford Swimming Team. He completed medical school graduating with honors from Cornell University Medical College.

6:45 am	Welcome	Peter D. Asnis, MD <i>Chief, Sports Medicine Service, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, MGH Instructor of Orthopaedic Surgery, HMS</i>
6:50 am	Overview <i>'Augustus Thorndike, MD - Father of Sports Medicine in the United States'</i>	Bertram Zarins, MD <i>Chief Emeritus, Sports Medicine Service, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, MGH Augustus Thorndike Clinical Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery, HMS</i>
6:55 am	Introduction	Bertram Zarins, MD
7:00 am	Basic Mechanism of Tendon-Bone Healing	Scott A. Rodeo MD
7:30 am	Discussion	Bertram Zarins, MD
7:45 am	Wrap-up / Adjourn	Peter D. Asnis, MD