ACL Reconstruction
Post-Operative Protocol

Phase I – Maximum Protection (Weeks 0 to 2):

0 to 1 Week:
- Brace – six weeks
- Use crutches weight bearing as tolerated for 7 to 10 days to reduce swelling. The patient may discontinue the crutches when they can ambulate with no limp
  - Range of motion - goal
  - Patella mobility
  - Full extension
  - 90° - 100° of knee flexion, progressing to full as tolerated
- Exercises
  - Quadriceps setting, focusing on VMO
  - Multi-plane straight leg raising
  - Gait training

Weeks 1 to 2:
  - Range of motion - goal
  - Full knee extension/hyperextension
  - 100° – 110° of knee flexion, progress as tolerated

Phase II – Progressive Stretching and Early Strengthening (Weeks 2 to 6):

Weeks 2 to 4:
  - Range of Motion
  - Full knee extension/hyperextension
  - Knee flexion to 120°, progress as tolerated
  - Exercises
  - Bilateral closed kinetic chain squatting
  - Multi-plane open and closed kinetic chain hip strengthening
  - Step-up progression
  - Stationary biking
  - Pool program when incisions healed; focus on ROM
  - Proprioception drills

Weeks 4 to 6:
  - Range of Motion
  - Full knee flexion and extension
  - Exercises
  - Advance strengthening program progressing to unilateral as tolerated
  - Increase intensity of stationary bike program may add treadmill walking and/or elliptical
  - Advance intensity of pool program; focus on strengthening
Phase III – Advanced Strengthening and Proprioception Phase (Weeks 6 to 12):

Weeks 6 to 12:
- **Range of Motion**
  - Full knee flexion and extension with terminal stretch
- **Exercises**
  - Gym strengthening progressing from bilateral to unilateral as tolerated
    - Leg press, squats, partial lunges, hamstring curls, ab/adduction, calf raises
  - Multi-directional functional cord work; no rotation or running

Weeks 8 to 12:
- Pool running program

Phase IV – Advance Strengthening and Running progression (Weeks 12 to 16):

Weeks 12 to 16:
- Implement a full gym strengthening program; including leg extensions at 30° - 0°
- Begin straight plane running
- Fit functional brace

Phase V – Return to Sport and Functional Drills Phase (Weeks 16 to 24):

Weeks 16 to 20:
- Sprinting
- Sport specific drills
- Plyometric drills - bilateral advancing to unilateral as tolerated

Weeks 20 to 24:
- Follow-up examination with the physician
- Sports test for return to competition at 6 months