

# Health & Fitness Journal of Canada

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## COMMENTARY

### All Roads Lead to Dr. Jack Dave Doroghy\*

*Corresponding Author:* [doroghy@hotmail.com](mailto:doroghy@hotmail.com)

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#### Abstract

Dr. Jack Taunton's contributions to sports medicine, recreational running, philanthropy, the NBA, research, and running shoe design are truly remarkable. His hard work and dedication in these disciplines have made the lives of Canadians better. **Health & Fitness Journal of Canada 2020;13(3):30-32.**

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#### Introduction

Dave Doroghy travelled across Canada with the Rick Hansen's Man in Motion World Tour in 1986 and 1987. He later went on to become the Vice President of the Vancouver Grizzlies and the Director of Sponsorship Sales for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

The recreational and competitive running landscape in Canada and the world would look a lot different today had Dr. Jack Taunton not set his experienced and enthusiastic footprints upon it 50 years ago.

In fact, the whole practice of sports medicine as we know it, would have had a slower start if the Good Doctor had not conceived, and then developed and nurtured the new discipline back in the 1970's. The Vancouver Sun Run and the Vancouver International Marathons, which he co-founded, may not even exist, had it not been for the vision, drive and pursuit for excellence that this one man had and still has in abundance today.

And then there are the thousands of elite athletes who have directly benefited from

Dr. Jack's encyclopedic medical knowledge, and compassionate warm nature. Furthermore, an entire book could be written on his expertise in the areas of fundraising, running shoe design, and sport injury rehabilitation research. The tireless work he has done setting up medical clinics in Uganda, working with Nike to create shoes that reduce running injuries, and raising millions of dollars to advance sports and sports medicine in Canada are just a few examples of the way Dr. Jack gives back. When you wrap your head around everything he does, it leads you to wonder if he ever sleeps. He is a high-energy productivity machine on a lifelong marathon of helping others.

The "all roads" metaphor becomes even more meaningful if you consider the examples of two Canadians whose cross-country odysseys were touched, shaped, and bettered by this man; two heroes who understand the unrelenting pain and suffering that the Trans-Canada highway brings. Dr. Jack played an important role in the training, preparing, physiotherapy challenges, and medical needs of life on the

## Roads Lead to Dr. Jack

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road for both Terry Fox and Rick Hansen, as they turned the impossible into the possible. To say that Dr. Taunton is in the same league as these two iconic individuals is not a stretch.

I worked for five years at Vancouver Olympic Winter Games with Jack. In what was perhaps the opus of his career, he became the Chief Medical Officer for VANOC. His appointment to that prestigious role can only be described as a 'no brainer' for the organizing committee. I'll rely on the road analogy once again here with a short observation from those halcyon days of organizing the Winter Olympics. My desk was near a window and at around 1 pm every day I watched Dr. Jack hit the road for a long run. On some of the darkest, wettest, and windiest afternoons that a Vancouver winter could throw at you, he rarely missed one of his therapeutic and rejuvenating runs. He'd often come back soaking wet after two-hours of really pushing it hard. One time when I saw him in the building's lobby after completing a long run, I asked him if he has ever, stopped and calculated the total distance he has run over his lifetime. The answer still resonates. He said "Yah, a few years ago, I figured it was equal to running along the equator around the world more than three times." I realized this a man who practices what he preaches and if you went to see him with a knee injury, or any ailment that hindered exercise, he would do everything in his power to get you up and running again. He has a burning passion to keep human beings in motion. He understands the benefits of motion and loathes the alternative.

I worked with him in the NBA too. Night after night, in his capacity as team doctor, he unassumingly sat courtside on the player's bench, wearing an impeccably tailored suit — with the famous athletes of

the young NBA franchise possibly unaware that one of the world's greatest sports medicine gurus had their backs. His on-the-spot calls on injuries, of star players, and role in their rehabilitation could make or break careers. The calls that I watched him make in NBA board room meetings were equally impressive, and meaningful. His judgments on how to proceed on complex issues — whether medical or corporate — were always made with the wisdom of a man who had clocked thousands of miles on the road running and thinking.

Finally, my personal road to recovery after a sports injury once led to Doctor Jack. The way he interacted with me, the manner in which he spoke, listened and really cared has stuck with me to this day, 25 years later. It was interesting for me to switch from being his work colleague to one of his patients. It made no difference whatsoever to him that I wasn't an Olympic or NBA athlete. His diagnosis of my frozen shoulder, along with his explanation of the treatment and his prognosis were compassionate, easy to understand, and incredibly accurate. During my appointments with him he was always in the moment. Three simple words sum up his approach to Sports Medicine: "he really cares".

In closing I realize that this tribute is to Jack and his wife Cheryl, who is a kinesiologist. She is equally amazing and through the years it has become clear to me what a wonderful true partnership they have. Unfortunately, I simply don't know Cheryl as well as I know Jack and don't have as many anecdotes or personal experiences to draw from. I do know that the two of them have made a huge difference to so many though. As we all find our way through the personal roads in life, I'd like to thank both of them for smoothing out some of the bumps along the way, and for making

## Roads Lead to Dr. Jack

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Canada and the world a healthier and better place. And thanks for fixing my shoulder too, Dr. Jack.

### **Author's Qualifications**

The author's qualifications are as follows:

Dave Doroghy DipT.