

Getting back in the game

By MICHELE BITTER
Fawcett Memorial Hospital

For Regina Dugas and Sue Sisk, tennis is more than a game. It's a passion. The two friends can be found on the tennis courts just about any day of the week. They both love the game, but make no mistake: friends or not, these women are fierce competitors.

Their competitive spirit was both a curse and a blessing a few years ago, when both Regina and Sue ended up on the sidelines due to hip problems.

"It's not an 'old-people' surgery anymore — not like it used to be"

— Regina Dugas

"When I was diagnosed, I couldn't believe it!" said Sisk. "The pain got to the point where I couldn't do anything. I couldn't go to the grocery store, I could barely walk. I thought it was a muscular problem. I never thought it was my hip."

Dugas had a similar experience. At only 44 years old, she was



Photo provided

After experiencing hip problems, friends (and competitors) Sue Sisk and Regina Dugas found relief thanks to Dr. Jason Reiss, who performed a hip resurfacing technique called Birmingham Hip Resurfacing.

experiencing loss of mobility related to her hip problems. In June, 2007, Dr. Jason Reiss "fixed" Dugas' hip, utilizing a high performance hip replacement and hip resurfacing technique called Birm-

ingham Hip Resurfacing at Fawcett Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Reiss performed this same procedure for Sisk at Fawcett in January, 2008.

"It's not an 'old-people' surgery anymore — not

like it used to be," Dugas said.

Dr. Reiss is one of the few orthopedic surgeons in the United States who has been trained in new, advanced hip surgery procedures. While performing Birmingham

Hip Resurfacing, the procedure he used for both Sisk and Dugas, Dr. Reiss simply shaves and caps a few centimeters of bone within the hip joint.

Rather than replacing the entire joint, as in a

total hip replacement, hip resurfacing often results in a better outcome, allowing patients to return to higher levels of activity and better quality of life.

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According to Dugas, "Dr. Reiss took the time to explain everything to me fully. He showed me all of my x-rays, explained what he planned to do and made sure that I knew exactly what I was in for."

"He was wonderful," Stok recalled. "He was so patient and thorough, that I tell everyone to go see him!"

What makes this procedure so different from traditional hip replacement is the bone-conserving approach. Using this procedure, Dr. Reiss is able to preserve more of his patient's natural bone, which is better for structure and

stability. Dr. Reiss covers the joint's surfaces with a metal implant — similar to how a dentist would cap a tooth. By preserving natural bone, the risk of joint dislocation and inaccurate leg length after the surgery is reduced. Additionally, this procedure has the potential to last longer than traditional hip implants.

According to Stok and Dugas, joint replacement surgery is certainly not fun, but they are both very pleased with their results. They both emphasized the importance of getting up and walking as soon after their surgeries as they could.

"I'm so competitive, there was a man down

the hall from me in the hospital who didn't want to get up when the therapists wanted him to," explained Dugas. "I said, 'Come on, we can do this!' and we did." After all, there were idle tennis racquets and balls waiting for her return.

She's come a long way since then.

"People can not believe it when I tell them I had hip surgery," Dugas said. "Especially my tennis opponents!"

For Stok, who is not only an avid tennis player, but has also been a dancer all her life, "I can kick higher now with my 'fixed' leg than I can with my 'normal' leg!"

That's great news for anyone who may be having problems similar

to those that Dugas and Stok experienced. That's not-so-great news for their opponents on the court.

For more information about Dr. Jason Reiss, Birmingham Hip Resurfacing or Faussett Memorial Hospital's Spine &

Orthopedic Center, please call 941-624-4441 or visit www.FaussettHospital.com or www.charlotte-orthopedics.com.



Photo provided
Dr. Jason Reiss explains the hip resurfacing technique called Birmingham Hip Resurfacing during a recent lecture.

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