

built on trust backed by data

How Dr. Mendler Built More Trust into Concussion Management with Sway



**Dr. James Christopher
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The Challenge

For nearly 30 years, Dr. James Mendler, MD, has worked in sports medicine, collaborating closely with Athletic Trainers across high school and collegiate athletics.

Like many clinicians, he relied on traditional computer-based concussion testing systems for years. But over time, he began noticing a growing problem.

He wasn't always confident in the quality of baseline data being collected.

Athletes admitted they weren't always putting forth their best effort during baseline testing. Others intentionally underperformed, making it difficult to trust the baseline data being collected. In some cases, parents even completed tests on behalf of the athletes.

“If we’re getting lackluster baseline efforts, everything else is just kind of guesswork.”

Dr. Mendler realized that even the best concussion management process is only as reliable as the baseline data supporting it.

Why Sway?

When ATs began asking about or switching to Sway, Dr. Mendler decided to evaluate it for himself.

He conducted a season-long pilot study across one high school and one college, comparing Sway alongside his existing concussion platform.

What immediately stood out wasn't the technology itself. It was the athletes' level of participation.

"I felt like I trusted the baseline data a little bit better because they were putting more effort into it."

Athletes were more focused and often described the experience as feeling "like a game," leading to stronger effort during testing.

ACCORDING TO ONE ATHLETIC TRAINER

"This was the easiest baseline season we've ever had. We had over 100 athletes in a room and you could hear a pin drop."

The Impact

- Greater confidence in baseline data**
Stronger athlete participation led to more trustworthy assessments.
- Easier large-scale testing**
ATs could administer hundreds of baseline tests simultaneously using athletes' own phones.
- More flexible concussion management**
Clinicians could retest only the areas that needed attention instead of repeating an entire assessment.
- Faster workflows**
Visual flags and trend reporting made results easier to review and interpret.
- More value beyond concussion care**
Sway's balance assessments can also support rehabilitation for ankle, knee, and other musculoskeletal injuries.

Dr. Mendler's Takeaway

"At the end of the day, if they're not putting good effort into the baseline, your whole testing schema is out the window.

If I'm getting better baseline effort and I feel equally comfortable interpreting the results afterward, it just made sense to start shifting in that direction.

About Dr. James Christopher Mendler, MD Sports Medicine Physician

- Board-certified in Family Medicine and Sports Medicine
- Medical degree: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- Residency: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
- Fellowship: Indiana University
- Affiliated with Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck, New Jersey