



THE MEDICAL STAFF'S EPIC JOURNEY TO RUSSIA



“Many players have become fans of massage and recovery techniques.”

Exclusive interview with **Franck Le Gall, French national football team doctor, Christophe Geoffroy and Denis Morcel, licensed team masseurs and physiotherapists**: how did they get here, **how do they use Cellu M6 Alliance®** stories from the World Cup, player recovery and physical therapy, and more. **LPG® is proud to bring you this exclusive interview.**

Franck Le Gall, you are THE doctor for France’s national football team and you led the medical team in Russia. Can you tell us a little bit about your history, how you got where you are, and what it was like to live this adventure from within?

After a residency in Rennes with Pierre Rochcongar (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation) from 1990 to 1993, I joined the Technical Center in Clairefontaine (France’s national football center) in 1993. There, I oversaw the physical therapy center, the National Football Institute, coordinated the national recruitment process of U15 players for the French B-team, and I was also the doctor for Junior and Hopeful recruits. In 2008, I left for Lille to work with Rudi Garcia as doctor for the LOSC (Lille football club) professional team, then came to work with OM (Marseille football club) a year and a half ago. I’ve worked with Didier Deschamps and Guy Stephan for the French national team since 2012.

With four sports medicine specialist physiotherapists (Christophe Geoffroy, Denis Morcel, Alexandre Germain, and Guillaume Vassout) and an osteopath (Jean-Yves Vandewalle), how much time out of the players’ busy schedule was given to preparation and recovery while the team was in Istra?

We provided physical therapy treatments throughout the day. Pathology-focused treatments and lots of recovery treatment, massages, LPG® treatments, pressotherapy, balneotherapy, etc. At noon and again in the evening, physiotherapists would go around and work out when which players would come in for any of the four or five 1 to 2-hour time-slots available. I must say, many players are fans of massage and recovery techniques.

Were there any players who got particularly worn out or even injured during a match who used Cellu M6 Alliance® as part of their recovery/physical therapy?

We made frequent use of the LPG® device. Some people got full treatments from Denis Morcel, while others received traumatology or recovery treatments. There was also Olivier Giroud, who I put six stitches in for a head wound. Denis took charge of his care and used the machine to soften and drain his scar. Of course, we also used the device on hematoma and for general recovery massages, especially when players’ legs felt heavy after a game. The players really appreciated these

treatments.

And what now that you're back? Will OM be getting an LPG® device?

Yes, I think so. After seeing it in action at the World Cup, we'd like to use it at our facility. Now, we'll have to train one or several of the club physiotherapists, so they can see that the technique works and learn how much it can help with treating players.

Denis Morcel, Christophe Geoffroy, together you are half of the physiotherapist team that monitored, supported, and treated the France national team during the World Cup. How did both of you wind up in this dream job?

Christophe Geoffroy: Since 1990, I've been working with athletes at every level, from trainees up through professionals. Over all these years, I've always wanted to provide athletes with more options. When the national team's physiotherapist position opened up in 2012, I was offered the job. I really believe that in life, there's no such thing as random chance, it's all about the connections you make.

Denis Morcel: I worked with teams from Caen, Senegal, Morocco, and Japan before coming to work with France's team. Each new opportunity arose thanks to the contacts I've made, recommendations, and word-of-mouth. This time, it was thanks to a team doctor who really looks at skills when building his team, and to Didier Deschamps who approves the human being. He wouldn't tell us how to give a massage, but he might veto if the person would not fit in.

Cellu M6® technology is an integral part of your work, when did you first come across an LPG® device?

Denis Morcel: I've been using this technique for the last fifteen or twenty years. Why? Because it offers such clear advantages compared to traditional techniques. Our office has had 3 or 4 machines over the years. The real revolution was the inclusion of the flap (Cellu M6 Alliance®), because it's almost like a hand, except that it doesn't compress the muscles as much. Yes, with the medical endermologie® technique, there's much less compression than when you use your hands, it creates less strain on the body.

Cellu M6 Alliance® is already in use at Clairefontaine and travelled to Russia with the team. What role did the device play in your medical approach?

Christophe Geoffroy: We mostly used it for physical therapy, though we're using it more and more for recovery, but that's a recent development. During therapeutic treatments, we don't give the player a choice, but for recovery treatments, they can choose whether they want us to use our hands or the technology. Some of them don't like getting massaged, so it's an alternative we can offer. At such a high level of competition, we used the machine practically every day and on almost all of the players.

What did the players think of this technique?

Denis Morcel: They liked it once we explained it and when we decided it was necessary. This was the case for injuries that were too painful for manual treatment, for example, or when the player had large hematoma that need to be worked on at a distance, or a scar, fibrosis, etc. Once the players realized that the machine was helping them, the technology became an essential component of the equipment necessary for a good physical therapy. Some of the players already knew the technique. Those from Olympique Lyonnais (Lyon football club), for example, because it is near the LPG® technology's birthplace, but players from Monaco and from English clubs had already experienced it as well.

What kind of equipment would you recommend for a sports physiotherapist who wants to make an investment in their practice, but is daunted by the wide range of options?

Denis Morcel: First of all, their own hands, which need to be skillful enough to detect areas of tension, fibrosis, or edema. Sometimes, however there are hyperalgesic areas, or that have bled, or where the edema is too big that we can't treat with our hands. The LPG® technique acts as an intermediary between the therapist's hand and the athlete's body, and we can work freely without constricting the tissue. If you want to work with athletes, Cellu M6® is one of the first investments you should make for your practice.

Of course, for recovery, cold baths have also been shown to be effective, along with pressotherapy, just like medical endermologie® which as a plus also allows for drainage. You have to decide which approach you'd like to use. The thing to remember is that **your hands are what make the difference**, guiding the machine to make the treatment effective. There are an infinite number of possible treatment plans: 100% mechanical, sometimes 70% manual treatment and 30% mechanical, or the other way around. Anything is possible, making the right therapeutic choices is just essential.



To wrap up, what advice would you have for other physiotherapists who want to get licensed to work with famous athletes?

Christophe Geoffroy: I actually teach a course called “How to become a sports therapist.” The goal is to explain what you need to know and what mistakes to avoid. There are three basic things you need: passion for your work, skills, and above all human qualities. You need to get used to living in a large group, and have support from your friends and family, since work will take you far from them. I think the French team conveyed those values during the World Cup.

“We’d like to thank LPG[®], which allowed us to offer more treatment options as mentioned above.”