

Paralysed rugby player moves hands after spinal therapy

By Max Stephens

A RUGBY player paralysed almost 20 years ago has been able to move his hands for the first time after trialling a new treatment for spinal injuries.

The man, who lost the use of his body from the neck down after a sporting injury aged 16, began to show signs of

improvement after having the treatment three times a week over a month.

Medics at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have hailed the results from the trial as the most significant development in this field for more than 15 years.

The team made the breakthrough by using an electrical nerve stimulation machine to reconnect messages

between healthy tissue above and below the damaged spinal cord.

The rugby player was among four people involved in the trial. Dr Mariel Purcell, leader of the study, said: "He was able to bend and straighten his arm at the elbow which he had never been able to do and he had a little bit of movement in his fingers.

"Bear in mind these are arms that haven't moved in 16 years, the muscle was completely wasted away. He also had some movement in his toes for the first time. He is now able to use a mobile phone and move his wheelchair."

Doctors said they believed the machine could have even better results with newly-injured patients.