

## Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Information for Athletic Directors and Coaches

### Catastrophic injuries can occur and you can respond:

- During any physical activity, at any age – not just with athletes
- At any level of participation
- During team and individual practices, as well as at games
- Unpredictably and without warning
- They are Low Incidence, but High Risk
- SCA is the leading cause of death in young athletes: 600-1,000 children, adolescents and young adults each year
- **Early recognition is critical. Sudden unresponsiveness means sudden cardiac arrest until proven otherwise with an AED.**
- A SCA may look like a seizure in the beginning.
- Anyone who is unresponsive and not breathing normally, needs CPR and the AED
- Should be handled by the best trained personnel available – and you cannot wait for EMS to arrive
- Average EMS response is 8-15 minutes; the brain can only wait 3-5 minutes
- Training in CPR and on-site AED programs are likely the only means of achieving early defibrillation and improving survival from sudden cardiac arrest in athletes.
- Any adult (or teen) witnessed arrest can be treated with **Hands Only CPR** until the AED arrives:
  - Send someone to call 9-1-1
  - Start continuous chest compressions, hard and fast, in the center of the chest, 2 inches down and at a rate of 100/min (beat of “Stayin’ Alive”)
  - Rationale: the victim you observe go down was breathing just before collapsing so he/she does not need breathing assistance for several minutes-just great compressions
- The single greatest factor affecting survival is the time interval from arrest to defibrillation, so recognition of the emergency is critical. Target goal: under 5 minutes from collapse to first shock (and effective CPR immediately and until AED arrives)
- Survival rates decrease by 10% with each minute of delayed response.

### National Athletic Trainer’s Association Position Statement (March 2002)

1. All personnel involved with the organization or sponsorship of athletic activities share a professional responsibility to provide for the emergency care of an injured person.
2. Must have a written emergency plan, accounting for athletes, game officials, fans, sideline participants. (comprehensive, practical, flexible)
3. All personnel share a legal duty to develop, implement and evaluate emergency plans for all sponsored athletic activities.