

Sports Medicine Monthly

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Back to School 2012:

Tips for Injury Prevention



The time is upon us once again, and the summer months have gone. Organized practices begin on August 7th and it will be here in less than one week. As we open the calendar on another athletic year, here are some general guidelines for the beginning of your athletic season.

Overuse is the #1 Cause of injury in Adolescent Athletes

Statistically speaking, there is no greater cause for injury than overuse. Keep a close eye on your athletes for those who are always using ice, always sore, always utilizing pain medication, etc... Too much demand on the body too quickly will always result in injury. However, with progressive increases in demand, along with adequate rest, the body will run for miles.

Injuries in the other sports

When people think of injuries, they immediately gravitate to sports like football where collision is predominant. However, according to research on high school athletes, the number one sport for injury risk is cheerleading, number two is football, and number three is soccer.

Brace, Tape, and Stretch

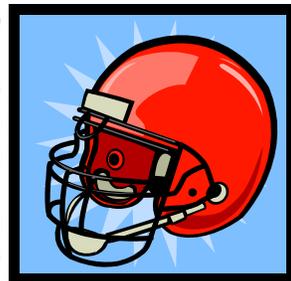
According to the National High School Sports-Related Injury Surveillance Study for the 2010-2011 School year, the most common injury, accounting for 40% of all injuries in competition and 45% of all injuries in practice are sprains and strains. For each and every athlete, always consider proper stretching and proper bracing. Doing so could very easily remove a vast majority of injuries to your team.



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Equipment Management and Cervical Spine Injuries in Football

Each year, an average of 5-10 athletes in the United States sustain a traumatic cervical spine injury as a result of participation in football. Over the course of an average coach's career, the likelihood of being present during such an injury would therefore be quite slim. Even so, 5-10 are still too many. For the coach or parent who may happen to be present when such an injury occurs, there are a few common sense interventions that should be utilized, and these are listed in order of priority.



#1. Keep the equipment on!

Research upon research has been devoted to this topic. As an exceptionally brief overview, properly fitted football equipment holds the neck in a neutral position and therefore should not be removed. In fact, diagnostic imaging such as CT Scans can be done with all equipment left in place. In short, leave it on till the imaging is done.

#2. Have the patient lay still!

In as much as you don't build a house on the sand, you don't want the athlete to move either. Instability and injury to an area only gets worse when it is moved.

#3. Alert the Athletic Trainer and local EMS



Specifically select an individual to contact your athletic trainer and EMS services and make certain all gates and ramps are open, unlocked, and ready for EMS arrival.

**August in Oklahoma:
Heat, Humidity, and
Here we go again**



For anyone who has been associated with fall football in the south central United States for any given time, or for anyone who just reads the thermometer on a daily basis, it can get hot in Oklahoma. Even so, practicing in the hot temperatures and humidity is nothing new in this part of the country. How is it done to maximize practice and keep kids and coaches healthy and safe?

Ensure Adequate Hydration

Even though it may not sound pleasant, urine color directly correlates to hydration levels. When the body takes in plenty of clear fluid, what it releases will be clear as well. When it does not, clarity is lost and color darkens in direct proportion to hydration status.

Ensure Adequate Rest

For most, this only applies to the end of the day when we lay our head on the pillow. In addition though, consider designing your outdoor events where athletes are alternating between periods of heavy intensity and light intensity workouts. By doing so, you give their bodies a break, an extra hydration stop, and you provide for an environment where your athletes can practice safer longer.

Ensure Adequate Cooling

Heat illnesses are just that; heat caused illness. Therefore, the cooler your athletes are, the less likely they are to have problems. Sprinklers, Misters, Fans, Cold Towels, Cold Water, etc... are all designed to help cool the body. In short, someone who is cold, doesn't get a heat illness.

Ensure Adequate Treatment

Should an athlete report dizziness, lightheadedness, nausea, and/or be visibly red and sweating profusely, recognize the possibility of a heat illness. In addition, recognize that cooling is the optimal treatment. Most patients will see great improvement from simple cooling and hydration. Those that do not, require an EMS call.

**Sore Shoulders:
Injury Recognition in the Softball
and Volleyball Shoulder**

Soreness in any athlete is nothing new. However, with the number one cause of injury in the adolescent population being overuse, how do we determine what is sore and what is not? Here are a few common signs and symptoms where your body is telling you that it isn't just sore anymore.

#1. Consistent Popping or Clicking

Popping and Clicking that is consistent with certain motions and seems disabling (i.e. made weak).

#2. Pain that doesn't go away

Consistent and/or progressive pain that doesn't respond to rest, ice, or medications.

#3. Loss of motion: Can't scratch your back

Every adolescent athlete should be able to scratch their backs from several directions and be able to touch the exact same position with each hand.

#4. Hurts to sleep on

The injured shoulder has a very strong tendency to hurt considerably or ache consistently when it is laid on at night.

When these things happen, don't wait. Most of the time, rest and strengthening keep a lot of little injuries from becoming surgical considerations.

A Note to the Reader.....

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