

Sacred Heart High School Student-Athlete Handbook



**Director of Athletics
Michael Madden, Jr.**

Dear Parents and Student-Athletes:

Welcome to the Sacred Heart High School Interscholastic Athletic Program.

Parents and student-athletes are encouraged to carefully read the entire Athletic Handbook. This booklet contains information that will be important throughout each sport season. The guide gives parents and athletes a complete listing of all programs offered at each level, and the season of placement for each sport as it pertains to our scholastic calendar.

For your convenience, please log onto the **Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Council** website, www.casciac.org . This website allows the athletic community access to scheduling information, game times, and directions to contest sites. In addition, the website posts high school varsity standings, tournament brackets, seeding information, and other appropriate athletic information. It is an excellent source of information for all those involved in interscholastic athletics. For your convenience, athletic department information, team schedules, a printable copy of the sports physical form, and more can also be accessed via a tab on our school website: www.sacredhearthischool.org.

If you have any questions or concerns about this booklet, Sacred Heart athletics, or interscholastic athletics in general, feel free to call me at (203) 753-1605 or email me at mmadden@sacredhearthischool.org.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael Madden, Jr.", written in black ink.

Michael Madden, Jr.
Director of Athletics

Sacred Heart High School

Mission Statement and Core Values

The mission of Sacred Heart High School is to educate students of diverse backgrounds in a strong Catholic tradition in order to empower these students to be moral and productive members of society.

Sacred Heart High School:

- Integrates the teachings of Jesus Christ into every facet of school life.
- Provides an excellent education for students of all ability levels.
- Fosters higher order thinking skills and intellectual curiosity to enable students to become life-long learners.
- Motivates students to fulfill their God-given potential spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially.
- Challenges students to embrace their call to service within the larger community.
- Creates a safe and a supportive environment to facilitate the learning process.
- Promotes a strong partnership with parents to enhance the student learning experience.

The administration, the faculty, and the staff of Sacred Heart High School are dedicated to enabling all of our students to experience the fullness of life that results from the development of individual talents.

Governing Bodies

The Sacred Heart High School Athletic Department and its teams are governed by the regulations and guidelines established by the C.I.A.C. Further, we are members of the Naugatuck Valley League which is comprised of 16 high schools, both public and parochial. It is the purpose of the N.V.L. as an organization to formulate, adopt, and enforce policies that will allow our schools to administer and organize our interscholastic athletic programs with a mind towards sound educational practices.

These policies are put in place for the protection of our student-athletes, coaches, and administrators in kind. As a member of both the C.I.A.C. and N.V.L. we are expected to follow and comply with all regulations outlined by the above bodies.

Any specific questions regarding these guidelines should be addressed to the Athletic Director.

Spectator Code of Conduct

Spectators shall, at all times, respect officials, coaches and players and extend all courtesies to them. While wholesome cheering is encouraged, taunting, foul and abusive language, inflammatory remarks and disrespectful signs and behavior are not acceptable. The school expects our adults and parents to set the tone for all spectators and serve as appropriate role models for all of our student-athletes. Please assist the school officials and coaches in providing a healthy educational climate that our school can be proud of, and by maintaining an appropriate competitive perspective throughout the contest.

Sacred Heart High School Athletic Program Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Sacred Heart Athletic Program to allow students the opportunity to experience competitive athletics in an atmosphere that accentuates and enriches the educational process. Further, we strive to promote and maintain high standards of sportsmanship and citizenship while aiming to help our teams and individuals achieve excellence. Understanding that the desired outcome of any contest is victory, the Athletic Program strives to place major emphasis on helping the team and individual to reach their full potential. This is the true goal of the Athletic Program, and how we measure our achievements.

Programs and Seasons

Currently, Sacred Heart High School offers 19 competitive interscholastic teams in which students may participate. There are three separate athletic seasons, the starting and final dates of which are determined by the C.I.A.C. on a year to year basis. The offerings are as follows:

Fall – late August through late November

Sport	Varsity	JV	Froshmore	9th
Football	x		x	
Soccer (b)	x	x	x	
Soccer (g)	x	x		
Swim/Dive (g)	x			
Cross Country (g/b)	x			
Cheer	x			

Winter – late November through early March

Sport	Varsity	JV	9th
Basketball (b)	x	x	x
Basketball (g)	x	x	x
Swim/Dive (b)	x		
Indoor Track (g/b)	x		
Cheer	x		

Spring – late March through early June

Sport	Varsity	JV	9th
Baseball	x	x	x
Softball	x	x	
Track (g/b)	x		
Tennis (b)	x		
Tennis (g)	x		
Golf (g/b)	x		

Offerings may be subject to change due to levels of interest. This is done at the discretion of the Sacred Heart High School Administration in conjunction with the Athletic Department.

Expectations for Student Athletes

Sacred Heart High School recognizes that participation in interscholastic athletics is an important facet of student life. However, the primary focus for any student should be academics. Any student not meeting expectations academically may be disallowed from practice or competition. Further, as a matter of C.I.A.C. standard, any student who does not earn four (4) credits the prior term will be deemed academically ineligible. The student may be reinstated after meeting that standard the following term. Academically ineligible students are not permitted to attend practices, games, or any other function associated with the Athletic Program as a student-athlete.

Also, in order to be a member of the Athletic Program the student must comply with all rules and regulations outlined in the Sacred Heart Student Handbook. Student-athletes who are in violation of the guidelines put forth in the Handbook will not be allowed to participate in accordance with the rules set by school administration.

Student-athletes are expected to honor their commitment to a team once their season begins. Practices or games will be held six days per week for a minimum of two hours. Attendance and active participation are integral to the development of individual skill and team performance. Any student-athlete who did not attend school that day may not participate in any practice or contest unless the absence is communicated to the school and excused by the administration. As conflicts arise, student-athletes should be in open communication with their coaches. Excessive absences from practices may be addressed by a meeting between the student, coach and Athletic Director.

Further, in compliance with C.I.A.C. standards student-athletes will not participate or compete with outside teams during their season. A student risks losing their eligibility for the season if this violation is discovered.

Sacred Heart holds their student-athletes to a high standard and each athlete is responsible to represent their school to the best of their abilities at all times. Incidents that occur on the playing field that are deemed in violation of that standard may be dealt with disciplinarily by the school administration as well as by their coaching staffs.

Each athletic team will have its own set of guidelines and expectations. The student-athlete is expected to know and adhere to those standards set forth by the coaches. Students in violation of those rules may be referred to the Athletic Director or school administration.

Transportation to and from contests is provided by Sacred Heart High School. It is an expectation of all student-athletes to travel as required with their team. In special cases, it may be necessary for a student to travel from the contest site with a parent. These requests must be made to the school administration in advance of the contest. These should be considered rare exceptions and therefore should be reserved for emergency situations.

Sacred Heart High School is the owner of all equipment used by its teams, including uniforms. Student-athletes are responsible for these items while they are in the student's possession. Students and parents will be financially responsible for the cost of replacement of the equipment should they not be returned or returned in an unacceptable condition. Students will not be given equipment for another season without the return of the prior season's gear. Further, Senior student-athletes may have their graduation activities withheld for uniforms not returned during the spring season.

Team Captains

All Sacred Heart High School team captains are expected to be leaders on their teams and in the school community, foster team and athletic program spirit and pride, set examples of academic integrity in the classroom, and follow the policy and procedures outlined in this handbook. In addition, they must serve as positive role models to the youth of the community. The role of the team captain for a Sacred Heart High School athletic team is a prestigious honor and a privilege. The captain is viewed as a mature leader who is looked upon by students, athletes, coaches and administrators to set a positive example of team pride, fair play, dedication and school spirit. Sacred Heart High School captains are expected to have the following attributes: honesty, leadership, compassion and integrity. Captains and nominated captains who are unwilling or unable to meet these requirements in or out of their season will be relieved of their position.

Fighting Prior To, During, or After an Athletic Contest

Fighting will not be tolerated for any reason. It does not matter if you are the victim of an unsportsmanlike act, if you are provoked or taunted, if you are verbally or physically abused, or if you are subjected to any other set of circumstances. The relevant question is, did you, the Sacred Heart student-athlete, actively participate in a fight, retaliate in a fight, or leave the bench or discipline to join a fight in progress? If the answer is "YES" to any part of this question, you, the student-athlete, will be subjected to serious sanctions such as, but not limited to, suspension or dismissal from the team. Sacred Heart High School's Athletic Department holds a ZERO TOLERANCE policy when it comes to fighting. If an official ejects a student-athlete for fighting from an athletic contest, he/she will not be eligible to participate in the next scheduled or unscheduled contest. Any further ejections for fighting can result in a more significant suspension and/or dismissal from the team.

Mood Altering Chemical Use – Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs (illegal and non-prescription)

There will be absolutely no use or possession of any quantity of tobacco (including smokeless), alcohol, or illegal/non-prescription drugs, including steroids and performance enhancing substances or supplements, by a Sacred Heart student-athlete. Any individual who violates this rule either on or off campus will be subject to

disciplinary action. Reminder to students: this is a twenty-four hour rule and extends beyond the school day.

Disciplinary Actions for Violations

Consequences for violating Tobacco Policy

1st Offense: suspension for 10% of regular season (no suspension will be less than one contest)

2nd Offense: suspension for 50% of regular season contests.

3rd Offense: student-athlete will be dismissed from the team for the remainder of the season.

Consequences for Violating Alcohol and Illegal Drug Policy

1st Offense: suspension for a minimum of 20% of the regular season contests. No suspension will be less than two contests. The severity of the incident may result in a more lengthy suspension which can extend through the end of the season or the remaining school year.

2nd Offense: the student will be suspended from the team for the entire season.

3rd Offense: student will be suspended from participating on any team for the remainder of the school year.

Athletes not admitting to but subsequently found guilty of violating these rules may be suspended for the equivalent of an additional 10% of their regular season contests (but not less than one additional game)

Any offense with the penalty of a police arrest at the level of misdemeanor or felony will result in more severe consequences.

NOTE:

- 1) The student-athlete must attend and participate in all practices.
- 2) The student-athlete must attend all contests but may not participate and may not be in uniform.
- 3) The student-athlete must complete a re-entry interview with the Athletic Director and Coach.
- 4) Student-athletes found guilty of violating these rules are not eligible to receive post season awards involving character and leadership. Captains found guilty of violating these rules will lose their position and are not eligible to be named captains of a team.

Performance Enhancing Drugs Minimum Penalty

The CIAC expects member schools to monitor their student athletes to assure that they are free of performance enhancing substances and to report any violations in a timely manner.

A student-athlete who has been determined to have used, in or out-of-season, androgenic/anabolic steroids or other performance enhancing substances shall be declared ineligible for all CIAC-controlled activities for one hundred eighty (180) school days on each occurrence. The one hundred eighty (180) school day period of ineligibility commences on the day the CIAC Board of Control makes such determination.

Any student-athlete who refuses to submit to testing as part of a member school's Board of Education-approved random drug testing policy shall be ineligible to participate in any CIAC-controlled activities.

All CIAC contests/games/tournaments/championships in which the offending student-athlete participated while under the influence of performance enhancing substances shall be declared forfeitures and all records will be expunged.

A member school may apply to the CIAC Board of Control for reinstatement of the student-athlete's eligibility to participate in CIAC controlled activities. Any such application must include:

- a) The results of a CIAC-approved medically validated drug test which confirms that the student-athlete is chemical free. The test must have been completed with 30 days prior to the application. The CIAC shall not be responsible for any expenses related to this testing.
- b) A statement of the compelling circumstances on which the member school bases its application for reinstatement of the athletes' eligibility.

Performance enhancing substances and practices subject to this policy include but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Anabolic Agents, Diuretics, Peptide Hormones and Analogues
- b) Blood doping (the intravenous injection of whole blood, packed red blood cells, or blood substitutes)
- c) Substances and practices identified as banned by the NCAA and the USOC.

The CIAC allows member schools to make exceptions for those student-athletes with a documented medical history demonstrating the need for regular use of substances that are banned in this policy. These identified substances shall be medically prescribed by the student-athlete's doctor for therapeutic purposes. The documentation should contain information as to the diagnosis, medical history and dosage prescribed.

Hazing and Initiations

Hazing or initiations of student-athletes by other team members are not acceptable and any practice of this type of behavior will not be tolerated. Actions of this type may be illegal, and those involved may be subject to police action, as well as additional school consequences up to and including: dismissal and/or suspension from participation in any athletic program, and/or suspension and/or expulsion from school.

- ❖ Hazing occurs when an act is committed against a student or a student is coerced into committing an act that creates a substantial risk of harm to the student or to any third party in order for the student to be initiated into or affiliated with any school group, club, athletics team, grade level, activity or organization.

Hazing includes but is not limited to:

- 1) Any activity involving an unreasonable risk of physical harm, including paddling, beating, whipping, branding, electric shock, sleep deprivation, exposure to weather, placement of harmful substances on the body and participating in physically dangerous activities;
- 2) Any activity involving the consumption of alcohol, drugs, tobacco products or any other food, liquid, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of physical harm
- 3) Any activity involving actions of a sexual nature or the simulation of actions of a sexual nature;
- 4) Any activity that subjects a student to an extreme and unreasonable level of embarrassment, shame or humiliation or which creates a hostile, abusive or intimidating environment; and
- 5) Any activity involving any violation of federal, state or local law or any violation of school district policies and regulations.

Expectations for Parents

It is the philosophy of the Sacred Heart High School Athletic Program that athletics are an extension of the classroom, with the coaches as instructors. Similar to any classroom setting, as a parent you have the right to know what expectations are being placed on your student. This begins with clear communication between the parent, student and coach.

Issues that are appropriate to discuss with your student's coach may include: ways to help your student-athlete improve in their sport, the physical activity required of your student, concerns about your student's behavior, etc.

Similarly, there are issues that are inappropriate to discuss with the coaching staff. These include: play calling, team strategy, and playing time. Those are all decisions made by the coach on their respective level. Any concerns of this nature should be made to the Athletic Director, who will relay pertinent information to the athletic staff.

Parents are to adhere to the spectators' code of conduct at the beginning of this handbook. Further, they are to refrain from distracting behaviors such as shouting instruction or criticism to players in contests or interfering with the coach in any manner. As stated in the code of conduct, a parent is the student's first role model and should represent the school in the best manner possible at all times. In the unfortunate circumstance that these requirements are not followed, removal of the parent from the contest venue may be necessary.

Medical Clearance

Sacred Heart High School requires all student-athletes to have a current physical (defined as within the last 13 months) on file along with a signed parental consent to participate form. No student-athlete may be active in practice or games until this form is received by the school nurse. These forms are available in the school office.

C.I.A.C. Transfer Rules

Any student who transfers from one C.I.A.C. school to another after completion of the 9th grade year may be ineligible to play 50% of the team's regular season contests. In rare instances there are exceptions to this rule. Please contact the Athletic Director if your student is a new 10th, 11th, or 12th grader at Sacred Heart and wishes to participate in the interscholastic athletic program. All transfers will be required to fill out paperwork mandated by the C.I.A.C. that will be initialed and signed by both the last school attended and the administration at Sacred Heart.

CREED FOR COMPETITORS (Wilbur Braithwaite)

1. **PLAY HARD** - After the contest is over, you can say "I gave everything I've got physically. I fought my heart out".
2. **PLAY SMART** - Keep your poise. Be intent. Stay focused. Concentrate only on the game.
3. **PLAY FAIR** - Fight clean. Obey both the letter and the spirit of the rules. No hedging, no cheating.
4. **PLAY TO WIN** - Never concede. Never quit. Never give up or give in. Maintain your self-respect and respect your opponents by giving an all-out effort.
5. **HAVE FUN** - Don't shrink from the fear of defeat or let the bitter taste of defeat destroy your love of the game.
6. **KEEP PERSPECTIVE** - When the game is on, it is important that you win. After it is over, it makes no ethical difference whether you won or lost. Self-worth is not predicated on the vagaries of victory or defeat. What does matter most is that you love the challenge of the game, savor the camaraderie of your teammates, and earn the respect of your opponents; namely, that you have been true to your best self.



SACRED HEART HIGH SCHOOL

Student-Athlete Contract

2017 - 2018

STUDENT NAME

SPORT

I have read and understood Sacred Heart's **Student Handbook** and **Student-Athlete Handbook**, and I agree to abide by them.

I understand that if I violate any of the rules established in either handbook or by my coach, I will be subject to disciplinary action which may affect my standing on the team.

I promise that I will try my best academically, putting my studies before any athletic duties.

I realize that as a student-athlete at Sacred Heart, I represent my school both on and off the field of competition.

Therefore, I will strive to the best of my ability to represent my fellow teammates, classmates, coaches, and school.

THIS WAS SIGNED BY THE STUDENT AND THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

**THIS IS A COPY OF THE FORM THAT WAS HANDED IN
AND IS ONLY INTENDED FOR EDUCATIONAL AND REFERENCE PURPOSES**

Sacred Heart High School Athletic Department
Student and Parent Concussion Informed Consent Form
2017-2018

This consent form was developed to provide students and parents with current and relevant information regarding concussions and to comply with Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Chapter 163, Section 149b: *Concussions: Training courses for coaches. Education plan. Informed consent form. Development or approval by the State Board of Education* and Section 10-149c: *Student athletes and concussions. Removal from athletic activities. Notification of parent or legal guardian. Revocation of coaching permit.*

What is a Concussion?

National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) - *A concussion is a "trauma induced alteration in mental status that may or may not involve loss of consciousness."*

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - *"A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth."* -CDC, Heads Up: Concussion http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_what.html

Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious" -CDC, Heads Up: Concussion Fact Sheet for Coaches http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/pdf/Fact_Sheet_Coaches-a.pdf

Section 1. Concussion Education Plan Summary

The [Concussion Education Plan and Guidelines for Connecticut Schools](#) was approved by the Connecticut State Board of Education in January 2015. Below is an outline of the requirements of the Plan. The complete document is accessible on the CSDE Web site:

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2663&q=335572>

State law requires that each local and regional board of education must approve and then implement a concussion education plan by using written materials, online training or videos, or in-person training that addresses, at a minimum the following:

1. The recognition of signs or symptoms of concussion.
2. The means of obtaining proper medical treatment for a person suspected of sustaining a concussion.
3. The nature and risks of concussions, including the danger of continuing to engage in athletic activity after sustaining a concussion.
4. The proper procedures for allowing a student athlete who has sustained a concussion to return to athletic activity.
5. Current best practices in the prevention and treatment of a concussion.

Section 2. Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion: Overview

A concussion should be suspected if any one or more of the following signs or symptoms are present, or if the coach/evaluator is unsure, following an impact or suspected impact as described in the CDC definition above.

Signs of a concussion may include (i.e. what the athlete displays/looks like to an observer):

- Confusion/disorientation/irritability
- Trouble resting/getting comfortable
- Lack of concentration
- Slow response/drowsiness
- Incoherent/ slurred speech
- Slow/clumsy movements
- Loses consciousness
- Amnesia/memory problems
- Acts silly/combative/aggressive
- Repeatedly ask same questions
- Dazed appearance
- Restless/irritable
- Constant attempts to return to play
- Constant motion
- Disproportionate/inappropriate reactions
- Balance problems

Symptoms of a concussion may include (i.e. what the athlete reports):

- Headache or dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred or double vision
- Oversensitivity to sound/light/touch
- Ringing in ears
- Feeling foggy or groggy

State law requires that a coach MUST immediately remove a student-athlete from participating in any intramural or interscholastic athletic activity who: a) is observed to exhibit signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion following a suspected blow to the head or body, or b) is diagnosed with a concussion, regardless of when such concussion or head injury may have occurred. **Upon removal of the athlete, a qualified school employee must notify the parent or legal guardian within 24 hours that the student athlete has exhibited signs and symptoms of a concussion.**

Section 3. Return to Play (RTP) Protocol Overview

Currently, it is impossible to accurately predict how long an individual's concussion will last. There must be full recovery before a student-athlete is allowed to resume participating in athletic activity. Connecticut law now requires that no athlete may resume participation until they have received written medical clearance from a licensed health care professional (physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), athletic trainer) trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Concussion Management Requirements:

1. No athlete SHALL return to participation in the athletic activity on the same day of concussion.
2. If there is any loss of consciousness, vomiting or seizures, the athlete MUST be immediately transported to the hospital.
3. Close observation of an athlete MUST continue following a concussion. The athlete should be monitored for an appropriate amount of time following the injury to ensure that there is no worsening/escalation of symptoms.
4. Any athlete with signs or symptoms related to a concussion MUST be evaluated by a licensed health care professional (physician, physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), athletic trainer) trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.
5. The athlete MUST obtain an initial written clearance from one of the licensed health care professionals identified above directing her/him into a well-defined RTP stepped protocol similar to the one outlined below. If at any time signs or symptoms return during the RTP progression, the athlete should cease activity.
6. After the RTP protocol has been successfully administered (no longer exhibits any signs or symptoms or behaviors consistent with concussions), final written medical clearance is required by one of the licensed health care professionals identified above for the athlete to fully return to unrestricted participation in practices and competitions.

Medical Clearance RTP protocol (Recommended one full day between steps)

Rehabilitation stage	Functional exercise at each stage of rehabilitation	Objective of each stage
1. No activity	Complete physical and cognitive rest until asymptomatic. School may need to be modified.	Recovery
2. Light aerobic exercise	Walking, swimming or stationary cycling maintaining intensity <70% of maximal exertion; no resistance training	Increase Heart Rate
3. Sport specific exercise No contact	Skating drills in ice hockey, running drills in soccer; no head impact activities	Add Movement
4. Non-contact sport drills	Progression to more complex training drills, ie. passing drills in football and ice hockey; may start progressive resistance training	Exercise, coordination and cognitive load
5. Full contact sport drills	Following final medical clearance, participate in normal training activities	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6. Full activity	No restrictions	Return to full athletic participation

If at any time signs or symptoms should worsen during the RTP progression the athlete should stop activity that day. If the athlete's symptoms are gone the next day, she/he may resume the RTP progression at the last step completed in which no symptoms were present. If symptoms return and don't resolve, the athlete should be referred back to her/his medical provider.

THIS WAS SIGNED BY THE STUDENT AND THE PARENT/GUARDIAN

**THIS IS A COPY OF THE FORM THAT WAS HANDED IN
AND IS ONLY INTENDED FOR EDUCATIONAL AND REFERENCE PURPOSES**

References:

1. NFHS. Concussions. 2008 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook (Third Edition). 2008: 77-82.
<http://www.nfhs.org>.
http://journals.lww.com/cisportsmed/Fulltext/2009/05000/Consensus_Statement_on_Concussion_in_Sport_3rd_Edition.aspx.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports*. http://www.cdc.gov/NCIPC/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm.
3. CIAC Concussion Central - <http://concussioncentral.ciacsports.com/>

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Injury Prevention & Control: Traumatic Brain Injury*. Retrieved on June 16, 2010.
<http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports Guide for Coaches*. Retrieved on June 16, 2014.

Sacred Heart High School Athletic Department
Sudden Cardiac Arrest
Student & Parent Informed Consent Form
2017-18

NOTE: This document was developed to provide student-athletes and parents/guardians with current and relevant information regarding sudden cardiac arrest. A new form is required to be read, signed, dated and kept on file by the student-athlete's associated school district annually to comply with Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 163, Section 10-149f: SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Part I – SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST - What is sudden cardiac arrest?

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA doesn't just happen to adults; it takes the lives of students, too. However, the causes of sudden cardiac arrest in students and adults can be different. A student's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues. SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

PART II - HOW COMMON IS SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST IN THE UNITED STATES?

SCA is the #1 cause of death for adults in this country. There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals each year. It is a leading cause of death for student athletes.

According to an April 2014 study for PubMed the incidence was

- 0.63 per 100,000 in all students (6 in one million)
- 1.14 per 100,000 athletes (10 in one million)
- 0.31 per student non-athletes (3 in one million)
- The relative risk of SCA in student athletes vs non-athletes was 0.65
- There is a significantly higher risk of SCA for boys than girls

Leading causes of sudden death among high school and college athletes, according to the NCAA (on CBS News, June 28, 2012)* are heat stroke, heart disease and traits associated with sickle cell anemia. Prevention of sudden death, the same study concludes, is associated with more advanced cardiac screening with attention to medical histories and birth records, improved emergency procedures, and good coaching and conditioning practices.

PART III - WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs or symptoms, such as: fainting or seizures during exercise; unexplained shortness of breath; dizziness; extreme fatigue; chest pains; or racing heart.

These symptoms can be unclear in athletes, since people often confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

Sudden cardiac arrest is a medical emergency. If not treated immediately, it causes sudden cardiac death. With fast, appropriate medical care, survival is possible. Administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) — or even just compressions to the chest — can improve the chances of survival until emergency personnel arrive. (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sudden-cardiac-arrest/basics/>)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF PRACTICING OR PLAYING AFTER EXPERIENCING THESE SYMPTOMS?

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

REMOVAL FROM PLAY

Any student-athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA must be removed from athletic activity and referred to a licensed health care professional trained specifically in the treatment of cardiac care. The symptoms can happen before, during or after activity.

RETURN TO PLAY

Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated. Clearance to return to play must be in writing. The evaluation must be performed and written clearance be provided by a licensed medical provider.

To summarize:

- SCA is, by definition, sudden and unexpected.
- SCA can happen in individuals who appear healthy and have no known heart disease.
- Most people who have SCA die from it, usually within minutes.
- Rapid treatment of SCA with a defibrillator can be lifesaving.
- Training in recognition of signs of cardiac arrest and SCA, and the availability of AEDs and personnel who possess the skills to use one, may save the life of someone who has had an SCA. (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

I have read and understand this document the "Student & Parent Informed Consent Form" and understand the severities associated with sudden cardiac arrest and the need for immediate treatment of any suspected condition.

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Sources:

Simons Fund - <http://www.simonsfund.org/>

Pennsylvania Department of Health - <http://www.simonsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Parent-Handout-SCA.pdf>

