

## 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 AED**
- An 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 time is 8-15 min. The brain can only wait 3-5 min.
- 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 911
  - Start continuous chest compressions, hard and fast, in the center of the chest, 2 inches down, and to the beat of “Stayin Alive” (rate of 100/min)
  - Rationale: the victim you observe go down was breathing just before collapsing, so 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

### NATA Position Statement (March 2002) see complete statement at [www.nata.org](http://www.nata.org) )

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.