**Sudden Cardiac Arrest Education and Information**

**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 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.

If not treated within minutes, SCA results in death. The normal rhythm of the heart can only be

restored with defibrillation, an electrical shock that is safely delivered to the chest by an

automated external defibrillator (AED).

**How common is sudden cardiac arrest?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that every year there are about

300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals. About 2,000 patients under 25 die of SCA each year.

**Are there warning signs?**

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs or symptoms, such as:

 dizziness;

 lightheadedness;

 shortness of breath;

 difficulty breathing;

 racing or fluttering heartbeat (palpitations);

 syncope (fainting);

 fatigue (extreme tiredness);

 weakness;

 nausea;

 vomiting; and

 chest pains.

These symptoms can be unclear and confusing in athletes. Often, people confuse these

warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be

diagnosed and treated.

**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

have SCA die from it. Symptoms are the body’s way of indicating that something might be

wrong. Athletes who experience one or more symptoms should get checked out.

*Adapted from PA Department of Health: Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet 7/2012*

**What is the best way to treat Sudden Cardiac Arrest?**

 Early Recognition of SCA

 Early 9-1-1 access

 Early CPR

 Early Defibrillation

 Early Advance Care

**Public Chapter 325 – the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act**

The Act is intended to keep youth athletes safe while practicing or playing in an athletic activity. The Act requires:

* Require that, on a yearly basis, a sudden cardiac arrest information sheet be signed and returned by each coach and athletic director
* The immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:

(i) Unexplained shortness of breath;

(ii) Chest pains;

(iii) Dizziness

(iv) Racing heart rate; or

(v) Extreme fatigue; and

* Establish as policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest.
* Before returning to practice or play in an athletic activity, the athlete must be evaluated by a Tennessee licensed medical doctor or an osteopathic physician. Clearance to return to full or graduated practice or play must be in writing.

*I acknowledge that I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of*

*SCA.*

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Signature Date