NNPS ATHLETICS

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) Information
for Student-Athletes and Parents/Guardians

What is sudden cardiac arrest? Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a condition in which the heart suddenly stops beating. When that happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA happens to adults as well as students. However, the causes of SCA in students and adults can differ. A student's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, but an adult's SCA may be caused by inherited or lifestyle issues.

What are the causes of SCA? SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. SCA is caused by several structural and electrical diseases of the heart. These conditions predispose an individual to have an abnormal rhythm that can be fatal if not treated within a few minutes. Other possible causes of SCA are a sudden blunt non-penetrating blow to the chest and the use/abuse of recreational or performance-enhancing drugs and/or energy drinks.

How common is SCA in the United States? SCA is the #1 cause of death for adults and student-athletes in this country. About 2,000 patients under the age of 25 die of SCA each year.

Warning Signs of SCA	Emergency Response to SCA
• Fainting or seizures during exercise • Unexplained shortness of breath • Dizziness • Extreme fatigue • Chest pains • Racing heart • If an athlete collapses and is unresponsive, SCA should be suspected	• Act immediately; time is most critical to increasing survival rates • Recognize SCA • Call 911 immediately, and activate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) • Administer CPR • Use Automatic External Defibrillator (AED)

What are the warning signs of potential heart issues? The following conditions need to be further evaluated by your primary care provider:

- Family history of heart disease/cardiac arrest
- Fainting, a seizure, or convulsions during physical activity

- Fainting or a seizure from emotional excitement or distress, or being startled
- Dizziness or lightheadedness, especially during exertion
- Exercise-induced chest pain
- Palpitations: awareness of the heart beating, especially if associated with other symptoms such as dizziness
- Extreme tiredness or shortness of breath related to exercise
- History of high blood pressure

What would be the risk of neglecting symptoms? Ignoring symptoms and continuing to play/practice could be catastrophic and result in sudden cardiac death. The warning symptoms should be taken seriously and seek timely, appropriate medical care that can prevent serious and possibly fatal consequences. The symptoms can be unclear in student-athletes since people often 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/playing after experiencing these symptoms? There are risks associated with continuing to practice/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.

Removal from play/return to play? Any student-athlete who shows signs or symptoms of SCA before, during, or after activity must be removed from practice/play. Play includes all athletic activities. Before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner, or cardiologist (heart doctor). The parent/guardian must provide written clearance from medical personnel for the student-athlete to return.

How can we minimize the risk of SCA and improve outcomes? Medical providers can minimize the risk of SCA by providing appropriate prevention, recognition, and treatment strategies. One important strategy is the requirement for a yearly pre-participation screening evaluation, often called a sports physical, and performed by the athlete's medical provider.

- It is imperative that you carefully and accurately complete the personal history and heart health questions about your family in the "VHSL Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form" available at vhsl.org/forms/.

You may visit the following sites for more information:

- American Heart Association heart.org
- Parent Heart Watch parentheartwatch.org
- Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation sca-aware.org

Parent/Student Athlete Acknowledgement

The Code of Virginia § 22.1-271.8 requires that in order to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent/guardian shall review, on an annual basis, the information provided by the local school division on symptoms that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest. After reviewing the materials, each student-athlete and the student-athletes parent/guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information in a manner approved by the Board of Education.

The Code of Virginia § 22.1-271.8 requires that a student-athlete experiencing symptoms that may lead to sudden cardiac arrest be immediately removed from play. A student-athlete who is removed from play shall not return to play until he is evaluated and receives written clearance to return to physical activity by an appropriately licensed health care provider as determined by the Board of Education. The licensed health care provider evaluating student-athletes may be a volunteer.

I have reviewed the Newport News Public Schools Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information Sheet.

_____	_____	_____
Student-Athlete's Printed Name	Student-Athlete's Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian's Printed Name	Parent/Guardian's Signature	Date
_____	_____	
School	Sport	