Alabama A&M University Sports Medicine

Athletic Injury and Medical Policy

General Policies:

A comprehensive Sports Medicine Program of prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation has been developed to ensure quality medical care for student-athletes. Our team physician (Dr. John Greco) oversees the course of care given to our student-athletes. Our sports medicine staff consists of our team physicians, team chiropractor, team sports psychologist, certified athletic trainers, and a support staff of graduate student athletic trainers (all certified or certified-eligible). Our physicians do not attend all practices and competitions; however they are immediately available via cell phone.

I. All students participating in intercollegiate athletics must be examined and approved by the team physicians before engaging in any practice, conditioning, or competition with any team. Returning student-athletes need only to update their information with the Sports Medicine Staff each year. No student-athlete will be allowed to participate until the proper paperwork has been filled out, signed, and approved by the certified athletic trainer or team physician.

II. Student-athletes who have sustained any injury three years prior to being a team candidate are required to report these injuries to the certified athletic trainer.

III. Failure to report such injuries relieves Alabama A&M University of all liability in the event that the student-athlete sustains a subsequent injury or re-injury to the affected part, provided the original injury was a contributing factor to the “new” injury in the opinion of the team physician.

IV. All scholarship student-athletes must provide proof of primary insurance (copy of insurance card front and back) or sign the notary form stating a lack of insurance coverage. The general medical insurance that is included in your tuition does not cover athletic injuries.

V. All walk-on student-athletes are required to have personal health insurance throughout the academic year (August-June) each year they compete as a student-athlete for Alabama A&M University. (see walk-on athletes)

Reporting Injuries/Illnesses

I. If a student-athlete is injured while participating, competing, or traveling (to/from an athletic event with the team) the injury should be reported to a member of the Sports Medicine Staff as soon as possible. Unless there is a life threatening injury (head injury, severe bleeding, internal injury, loss of
consciousness, unable to breathe) the student-athlete must be referred by a member of the Sports Medicine Staff in order for the charges to be covered by the Athletic Department’s secondary insurance policy (see Athletic Department Insurance).

II. Head coaches are notified immediately at the onset of any injury, illness, or medical concerns and communication (injury reports) will be kept throughout.

III. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to report signs of illness or changes in symptoms to the Sports Medicine Staff.

IV. Any female student-athlete who is pregnant must notify their coach and Head Athletic Trainer immediately for the protection of themselves and the unborn fetus. (See Special Populations: Pregnancy)

V. The Head/Assistant Athletic Trainers will review all athletic related injuries for those athletes who miss 5 consecutive practices or competitions and will consult with our team physicians to determine the course of treatment.

VI. All rehabilitation will be done during the morning hours unless prior arrangements have been made with a member of the Sports Medicine Staff. The only exception is for those athletes who are enrolled in formal physical therapy with the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant which takes place in the afternoons. Coaches will be notified of student-athletes who miss scheduled rehabilitation appointments.

VII. All rehabilitation programs should be followed through by the student-athlete until he/she is released by the Team Physician or a member of the Sports Medicine Staff. The Head Coach will be notified when the student athlete has been released from their rehabilitation program.

Walk On Student-Athletes

I. Walk-on student-athletes who are invited to short-term scheduled group tryouts must complete a medical history questionnaire and a release of liability tryout waiver.

II. The student-athlete must be 18 years of age or older to complete this waiver. Any minor must have this form completed by his/her parent or guardian prior to a scheduled try-out session.

III. Each walk-on candidate must provide adequate proof of insurance coverage.

IV. Final approval for the tryout must be obtained from the supervising certified athletic trainer based on the student-athlete’s medical history.
Special Population Athletes

It is the mission of our staff to provide the best medical care available to our student athletes regardless of their race, color, gender, creed, religion, national origin, age, gender disability, or any other status protected by law. These policies have been established for the protection of our student athletes.

I. Pregnancy
   1. Any woman who is pregnant will not be allowed to participate in contact sports after her third month of pregnancy. At Alabama A&M University the contact sports are Basketball, Cheerleading, Dance, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball. The first 3 months are contingent upon attending physician approval that must be presented in writing.
   2. Any woman who is pregnant will be allowed to participate in non-contact sports through her sixth month of pregnancy as long as she presents a written statement of approval from her attending physician. At Alabama A&M University the non-contact sports are Track and Field, Cross Country, Golf, Tennis, and Bowling.

II. Loss of a Paired Organ
    Any student-athlete who has lost any paired organ (i.e. kidney, testicle, eye, etc.) shall be disqualified from participating in any intercollegiate team sponsored by the Athletic Department unless the Team Physician deems otherwise and so states with what sports the student-athlete may participate.

III. Disordered Eating
    Student-athletes with disordered eating concerns will have access to our team physicians, psychologists, and dieticians to assist with treatment recommendations and participation concerns. All discussions or appointments will be confidential.

IV. Sickle Cell Trait
   1. Student-athletes with sickle cell trait will be allowed to participate in intercollegiate athletics.
   2. For athletes with sickle cell, the following guidelines will be adhered to:
      a. Build up slowly in training allowing longer periods of rest and recovery between repetitions.
      b. Encourage participation in pre-season strength and conditioning programs to enhance preparedness.
      c. Athletes with sickle cell will be excluded from performance tests such as mile runs, serial sprints, etc.
d. Athletes will be allowed to cease activity with onset of symptoms (muscle “cramping”, pain, swelling, weakness, tenderness, inability to catch breath, fatigue)

Athletic Department Insurance Policy

All Alabama A&M University student-athletes are covered under an intercollegiate insurance policy. This policy is secondary to, or in excess of, personal or family medical insurance coverage. **This policy only covers athletic related injuries that occur during an official practice, official competition, and/or official travel to and from said practices/competitions.** It does not cover illnesses or non-intercollegiate athletic activities or re-occurrences of pre-existing injuries which were sustained before participating in Alabama A&M University’s Athletics program.

Medical expenses will be provided for 2 years from the date of injury. For International student-athletes, we will discontinue medical expense coverage once the athlete has left the country, regardless if it is within the 2 years following the injury date.

I. Eligible Expenses
   a. Major injuries due to athletic participation are covered.
   b. Dental Injuries: The Athletic Department will be financially responsible for injury to sound, natural teeth or damages to bridges incurred while participating in an official game or practice. The exceptions are:
      i. If a student-athlete is **Not** wearing the protective devices provided by the Athletic Department (i.e. mouth guard)
      ii. Dental care: Extractions and normal dental care not directly related to an athletic injury shall be the responsibility of the student-athlete.
   c. Contact Lenses
      The Athletic Department will be responsible for the replacement of a contact lens if:
      1. The student-athlete reports the loss to the Sports Medicine Staff **immediately**.
      2. The student-athlete provides a copy of their prescription to the Sports Medicine Staff.
      3. Sports Medicine will not provide eyeglasses or contact lenses for any student-athlete unless a change in vision occurs due to the direct result of an official athletic related event.
   d. Non-Athletic Related Injuries
Injuries that occur while the student-athlete is not participating in an official practice or game, shall not be the financial responsibility of the Athletic Department. For example, if an athlete uses the gym on his/her own for a workout, participates in an intramural activity, or plays a pickup game, he/she is not covered. If the athlete gets the flu or a sore throat, they are not covered. In fact, we are prohibited under the NCAA regulations from assuming responsibility.

e. Jewelry

The NCAA prohibits the wearing of jewelry during athletic practice and competition. The only exception is wearing a medal that possesses religious significance. The medal must be secured to the person’s body in a manner which prevents it from injuring other athletes.

The Athletic Department will not be responsible for injuries that occur to any student-athlete who fails to adhere to the above mentioned policy.

f. Outside Consultations

If the student-athlete and/or parents, guardian, and/or spouse prefer to seek other medical care without prior authorization from the Sports Medicine Department, the Athletic Department will:

1. Assume no financial responsibility for any expenses incurred.
2. Not render any follow-up medical care.
3. Not allow the student-athlete to participate until the Sports Medicine Department receives a detailed written report and other required medical records from the attending physician. This must include a written release for practice and/or competition within the student-athletes specific sport.

g. Second Opinions

The Athletic Department is not responsible for expenses incurred from the physician consultations for the purpose of a second opinion unless prior authorization from the Sports Medicine Staff is obtained.

h. Deferred Medical Care

Arrangements for medical care, which has been postponed for whatever reason (academic conflict, surgery schedule, etc), must be made within 2 weeks of the completion of the student-athletes competitive season. These arrangements must be made with the Sports Medicine Staff to ensure proper medical care and
financial responsibility. Failure to arrange this follow-up care will release Alabama A&M University of any further responsibility.

i. Emergencies

In instances of emergencies where the Certified Athletic Trainer cannot be contacted, student-athletes should make an attempt to contact their head coach of their specific sport. If the injury is not life threatening and the student is ambulatory, he/she should report to the Campus Health Center (372-4737) for evaluation and treatment. Further referral via the Campus Health Center may be indicated. In the event that the Campus Health Center is closed, see below.

If the injury is increasing in severity or becomes life threatening, the student-athlete should report to Huntsville Hospital Emergency Room and contact one of the above staff members as soon as possible. If you do not have transportation, you may contact campus security at 372-5555 for transportation during an injury or illness.

j. Prescriptions

The Sports Medicine Department will be responsible for medications prescribed by our team physicians for injuries sustained during official practices and competitions. The Athletic Department will not be responsible for medications that are needed for pre-existing conditions (i.e. asthma, allergies, etc).

Lightening Procedures

1. Coaches, and/or certified athletic trainers (practices), and game management staff (games) should obtain a weather report each day before a practice or event, and be aware of potential thunderstorms that may form during scheduled intercollegiate athletic events or practices. Coaches and athletic trainers on the site during practices should pay close attention to signs of developing thunderstorms in the area, and be aware of thunderstorm "watches" and "warnings" that may have been issued by the National Weather Service.

2. If there is no lightening detecting device at the school or field of play, the athletic trainer should use the “flash to bang method”.

3. If there is a lightning strike within the eight to twenty-mile range or closer, then the playing field must be cleared immediately.
4. During an event, a public address announcement will be made to inform student-athletes, staff, and spectators that lightening is in the area and that they need to seek a safe shelter by evacuating to an indoor facility or vehicle. Persons should void going underneath or near trees, metal fences, gates, and tall light/power poles, and avoid water, high ground, or open spaces.

5. During practice, the certified athletic trainer will inform the athletic director and the coaches that there is lightening in the area. The student-athletes and staff will evacuate the field and seek appropriate coverage.

6. Return to practice or athletic event will occur after 30 minutes from the last lightening strike in the eight to twenty-mile range or closer. Student-athletes, staff and spectators will remain in an appropriate shelter until the "all-clear" announcement.