



Editorial Contact: Jennifer Toone, Trion Communications
jtoone@trioncom.com
401-453-3100, ext 105

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUMMER HEAT CAN MEAN TROUBLE FOR KIDS IN PRE-SEASON SPORTS

Providence, RI (August 14, 2003) - The month of August signals the start of pre-season sports practices for thousands of high school and youth athletes across the Ocean State. While many of these young people are concerned about getting new cleats or uniforms, and their parents about how their child will perform, their certified athletic trainers (ATC's) are focused on preventing and treating heat illness.

"Pre-hydration is a critical component to the prevention aspect," said Kim Bissonette ATC, Head Athletic Trainer for the University of Rhode Island. "All our athletes are encouraged to drink lots of fluids prior to workouts. During post practice, athletes drink a combination of water and electrolyte drinks to replenish their bodies critical fluid supply - we recommend 12-20 oz of fluids per pound lost," said Bissonette. "In addition, our athletes are required to weigh themselves before and after practice. We use the 2-3-5 rule. If an athlete loses 2% of body weight during a practice they are put on a watch list, 3% loss means they may not practice based on their symptoms and at 5% they definitely don't practice.

The Rhode Island Athletic Trainer's Association (RIATA) is urging coaches, parents and athletes to learn more about heat illness, its symptoms and treatment. In an effort to educate the public on heat illness, the National Athletic Trainers Association along with the National Safe Kids Campaign sponsored a taskforce to identify key components of understanding heat illness. This task force was comprised of experts from various medical and allied health care professions.

"As an administrator and certified athletic trainer it is very important to make sure our student-athletes are well hydrated, and our coaches take more frequent water breaks, especially during the hot days of August," said George Finn ATC, Director of Athletics and Student Activities for Barrington High School. "I try to express to the coaches and athletes not to wait until they are thirsty before they take a drink, states Joyce Champlin - Freeman ATC, Athletic Trainer at Moses Brown School. "It's also imperative to keep open communication with your coach and let them know if you need a water break - don't be too cool to refuel".

Each year about 300 Americans die in heat related incidents, some of them healthy athletes. Recent well-publicized deaths of Kory Stringer of the Minnesota Vikings and Steve Bechler of the Baltimore Orioles have brought about much needed news coverage of heat illness. The overriding and most important factor is that most exertional heat illness cases are preventable, and can be successfully treated if onsite personnel identify the condition and implement appropriate and timely care.

The "Parents and Coaches Guide to Dehydration and Heat Illness in Children" can be found at www.nata.org. This guide outlines the 3 major types of heat illness and identifies signs, symptoms and treatments for each. It also includes helpful hints for parents and coaches on preventing heat illness, when to have fluid breaks during practice and guidelines on when an athlete should return to practice following heat illness.

The Rhode Island Athletic Trainers' Association urges everyone involved with sports to learn more about heat illness to create a safe and fun atmosphere for all kids. For more information, please visit www.nata.org or email the RIATA at riata2@cox.net.

###