



## **OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON PUBLIC INJURY REPORTS IN SPORTS**

### **AUGUST 2018**

The legalization of sports gambling may serve as a threat to student athlete privacy and the integrity of sports if measures are not put into place. The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) recommends that collegiate sports programs consider adopting a standard public injury report policy for sports.

The topic of legalizing sports gambling at any competitive level inevitably leads to conversations around injuries. While injuries do not necessarily predict the outcome of a game, that won't stop gambling enthusiasts from seeking injury information and using creative tactics to try to obtain it from vulnerable student athletes and others. Pressure for institutions to respond to the demand for more information is likely to result in inconsistent policies that could have lasting and negative effects on athletes as well as sports. While the NCAA and related institutions have programs and resources to educate student athletes about the perils of engaging in any form of sport gambling or information sharing, institutions have an opportunity to be proactive by publishing a standard public injury report.

A standard public injury report should provide responsible information that adheres to federal privacy policies for student athletes (HIPAA and FERPA) and will help prevent the dissemination of multifarious reports. Non-standardized reports are likely to result in inaccurate information and provide unfair disadvantages and advantages for athletes. Standard injury reports will also help to preserve integrity in sports by preventing the abuse of information as part of game day gambling strategy.

As a primary health care provider, athletic trainers have a vested interest in this issue. They are required to adhere to the athletic training professional code of ethics, which includes protecting the privacy of student athletes and delivering accurate medical information. As advocates for athletes, athletic trainers are uniquely qualified to advise on this issue because they provide a perspective from both the health care and the athletic department/sports point of view.

Athletic trainers are responsible for prevention of athletic related injuries and illnesses, examination and clinical diagnosis, treatment, care, rehabilitation and return-to-play decisions from injury. The athletic trainer is also responsible for clear and concise communication with physicians and coaches as well as generating and presenting daily and weekly injury reports.

To support conferences/institutions considering a standard injury report policy, the NATA Intercollegiate Council for Sports Medicine (ICSM), an athletic conference-based council comprised of members from the college/university setting, including athletic trainers working in DI, DII, DIII, Junior College and NAIA institutions, has provided the following public injury report recommendations.

- Provide accurate and concise information on injury reports. Reporting erroneous or misleading information is an ethics violation for the sports medicine professionals involved in the process.



- Report once or twice a week, as agreed upon by the NCAA or conference officials. The frequency of reports directly relates to the accuracy of the information included in the report.
- Limit injury descriptions to “upper body injury” or “lower body injury”. Gambling enthusiast may attempt to coax for more information, however, student athlete privacy and protection is paramount.
- Categorize athlete participation status in two categories: Out – Will not play, Doubtful – Unlikely to play.
- Engage sports medicine professionals in discussions related to injury reports to ensure compliance with student athlete and privacy policies.