

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

ATHLETIC TRAINERS



The health and safety of our student-athletes is always our top priority and always will be. I am very proud of the work we have done in the CIF Southern Section, and state-wide, over the last several years implementing bylaws related to the health and safety of the young men and young women we are so fortunate to serve. Concussion management, return to play protocols, the 18 hours a week provision during the season of sport, changes in playing rules in many of our sports that eliminate dangerous play, contact limitations for football practices and training for coaches in procedures related to sudden cardiac arrest are all examples of the significant progress that has been made in these areas. While these bylaws and rules are certainly making a positive impact, our work is not done. There is another very important issue related to protecting our student-athletes and that is the lack of full time certified athletic trainers on our high school campuses.

We have certainly seen a significant decline in the number of full time athletic trainers that are currently working at our high schools. Fewer than 40% of high schools across the country have a full time athletic trainer and the numbers are even lower in California. At this critical time, there needs to be an increased commitment by our member schools to provide the essential services that our student-athletes need when it comes to the prevention and care of athletic injuries.

Mike West, Principal of Martin Luther King High School, current member of the CIF Southern Section Executive Committee and Past President of the California Athletic Trainers Association states, "The value in having a full time athletic trainer results in building strong relationships with athletes, coaches, and families, the capability of providing comprehensive care for athletes, not just practice and game coverage, but also including rehabilitation and preventative conditioning and the coordination of all athletic department medical documents in one place."

For schools seeking to hire a full time athletic trainer, here are some options to consider...

- Create a full time classified position with the hours starting later in the day so that practices and games can be covered within the work day.
- Hire an athletic trainer to teach two or three sections of a health related ROP/CTE class and have their remaining hours in the work day be devoted to athletic training.
- Contract with a local physical therapy clinic or hospital to provide an athletic trainer for your school on a full time basis.

Furthermore, Mr. West states, "In the next five years, newly certified athletic trainers will be required to have a minimum of a Master's Degree in Athletic Training from an accredited institution. Gone will be the days of internships or Bachelor's Degrees in Athletic Training. Those individuals who wish to only do part time work as athletic trainers will likely decrease."

If you are fortunate to have a full time athletic trainer, hold on to them. If not, go get one! Thank you very much for your help and support and good luck always.

All the best,

Rob Wignel

