Appropriate Medical Supervision: Football

NEPSAC Sports Medicine Advisory Committee Recommendations

June 2016

**Background:** “With football remaining one of the most popular sports for children and teens, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is issuing new recommendations to improve the safety of all players while on the field. In a policy statement announced at its National Conference & Exhibition taking place in Washington DC., the AAP recommends”1:

* Officials and coaches must enforce the rules of proper tackling, including zero tolerance for illegal, head-first hits;
* Players must decide whether the benefits of playing outweigh the risks of possible injury;
* Skilled athletic trainers should be available on the sidelines, as evidence shows they can reduce the number of injuries for players1.

**Recommendation:** The Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, in conjunction with the NEPSAC executive board maintains that the health and safety of its athletes is held at the highest priority. In order to provide appropriate medical supervision, it is advised that:

* Varsity football games be staffed with a minimum of (2) certified athletic trainers, one being stationed on each opposing sidelines with every effort to have a physician and/or ambulance on site. NEPSAC schools that are staffed by (1) certified athletic trainer (AT) must arrange for a per diem AT to travel or contact the home team athletic training staff to employ a second AT for their sideline. Standard per diem rates apply.
* It is the recommendation of the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee that sub-varsity football games as well as middle school level competitions may be staffed by a single AT, however it is imperative that that person must be on the sideline rather than “on call”.