

Addressing Sports Injuries: Student-Athlete Community Outreach (SCORe!)

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INTRODUCTION

This project started 4 years ago after recognizing a lack of sports game coverage due to limited availability of athletic trainers within Rochester public schools. Many of our volunteers, having been student-athletes, realized the impact of injuries and injury prevention on both their long-term physical health and academic performance. Evidence shows that staffing part-time athletic trainers results in increased risk for adverse outcomes in athletes when compared to full-time (1). Though 4 athletic trainers are employed full-time through Rochester City School District (RCSD), having 46 schools with multiple sports and competition levels per school to cover makes them less than part-time at each school in terms of hours physically present and availability to attend most athletic events. Many teams regularly have no athletic trainer present during competition and have limited bandwidth to track injuries across multiple teams and programs.

15 to 46 schools ✖ ~10 teams per season
 150+ teams for 4 RCSD athletic trainers
 37+ teams per trainer per season

COMMUNITY PARTNER

East Upper School has a partnership with the Warner School of Education through the University of Rochester allowing volunteers from U of R to easily get involved in community service efforts with high school students. East is also a program that is representative of the disparities that the Rochester City School District are challenged with ranging from limited athletics funding resulting in limited athletic trainer availability to childhood poverty and low graduation rates and work force preparation. Student-athletes here deal with social determinants of health daily. With our presence we hope to address injuries and potential mentorship for academic and occupational success.

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Goal: To help recognize injury and injury risk earlier in order to intervene promptly, assist in treating and tracking injuries, and with the continuity of the relationships we form, expanding to provide mentorship and support for the student-athlete population.

Methods: Train volunteers to bridge the emergent and longitudinal needs of youth athletes recommended in the Mazerolle article, with volunteers being trained to triage injuries, address basic injury prevention techniques and assist with general athlete needs, which include taping ankles, promoting adequate hydration and proper warm-up or stretching (1). Embed volunteers with assigned teams to build relationships with players and coaches, and regularly reassess needs of the team and track injuries. Our efforts have started at East Upper School and discussions with RCSD leaders currently supportive of expanding our volunteer-led initiative to other RCSD when possible.

Assessment: Volunteer involvement was tracked, and 10 coaches were surveyed regarding perceived impact and feedback.

By The Numbers:



Retrospective Coach Survey (n=10)

Scale of 1-5 (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree)	Average (out of 5)
Our sport generally benefitted	4.8
Improvement in treatment	4.8
Improvement in sideline care	4.6
Improvement in injury prevention	4.8
Barriers to benefit and feedback	Times mentioned
More volunteers	6
More consistency / involvement	3
Introduce to team at beginning of season	1

CONCLUSIONS

- Through 9 events with liaisons, we were able to bring attention to 12 injuries that the athletic trainer agreed would not have been tracked or treated
- Our assumptions were observed with many athletic events unsupervised and many athletes lacking mentorship, role models and academic support
- Surveys regarding perceived benefit and general impact is monitored with promising numbers in both regards. Though biased, there was consistent feedback requesting more volunteer involvement and perceived benefit of treating and preventing future injuries.
- Scores below 5 were given by coaches from sports we had limited (<5 interactions) with.
- Limitations include having to stop and restart our intervention due to the pandemic leading to volunteer attrition as well as needing to rebuild relationships with new faculty and athletes each year

SUSTAINABILITY AND FUTURE

- Better assessment through pre and post surveys of athletes with possible correlation of academic scores possible with current memorandum of understanding with RCSD.
- Increase volunteer base
- Involvement with more sports and programs
- Pursue goals of injury prevention
- Partner with community resources
- Integrate more educational training
- Find avenues to help with State of Play (2) areas of need

REFERENCES

- Mazerolle SM, Raso SR, Pagnotta KD, Stearns RL, Casa DJ. Athletic Directors' Barriers to Hiring Athletic Trainers in High Schools. J Athl Train. 2015 Oct;50(10):1059-68. doi: 10.4085/1062-6050-50.10.01. PMID: 26509776; PMCID: PMC4641544.
- The Aspen Institute. (2017). State of Play Greater Rochester and Fingerlakes. Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. https://www.ralphwilsonjr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/State_Of_Play_Rochester_Fingerlakes_RWJF.pdf