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On behalf of the American Football Coaches Association and over 10,000 members from across the globe, we support the efforts of the National Athletic Trainers' Association in promoting youth sports safety. Prevention of injury and illness is paramount in every coach's mind. Each year injuries impact teams, families, and individuals. Prevention through education, conditioning, and the utilization of Athletic Trainers is essential. Injuries do occur in sports and certainly in football.

Early recognition, evaluation and treatment insures the best chance for recovery and return to play. Athletic Trainers fill this role. Their education provides them the ability to quickly assess to determine severity of the injury and perform care or arrange for care of athletic injuries. Return to play sometimes requires rehabilitation, which can also be accomplished by these individuals.

Every year we hear of reports of athletes being allowed to return to play when it was unsafe. This practice cannot continue. The old philosophy of "playing through pain" is certainly not always a good philosophy. By having qualified individuals on site at events, athletes can easily be evaluated and it can be determined if it is safe to return to play.

Sports provides young people incredible opportunities in life. Sportsmanship and promotion of fitness are so important. The safety of the athlete must be the foundation to any athletic event. Join me and the AFCA in supporting these educational efforts.

Sincerely,

Grant Teaff
Executive Director

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