

We're On Your Team

Athletic trainers with the Marshall Sports Medicine Institute team up with local high schools to prevent and treat injuries.

When a high school athlete goes down with an injury, time stands still as players, coaches, parents and fans wait anxiously for a report. Now, thanks to a partnership between area high schools and the certified athletic trainers of the Marshall Sports Medicine Institute, everyone involved in high school sports can breathe a little easier when injuries occur.

Certified athletic trainers from the Marshall Sports Medicine Institute currently work in five local schools: Cabell Midland High School, Spring Valley High School, Wayne High School, St. Joseph Central Catholic High School and Lincoln County High School. Their experience and expertise help keep schools ahead of state regulations, which only require an athletic trainer to be on the sidelines at football practices and games.

Tom Belmaggio, MS, ATC, CSCS, coordinator of sports medicine at Cabell Huntington Hospital and director of sports medicine at Marshall University, said all high school sports are made safer when a certified athletic trainer is present.

“Our athletic trainers are going into the schools with the responsibility to prevent, recognize, treat and rehabilitate all sorts of athletic injuries,” Belmaggio said. “We want every high school athlete to have access to a professional who is certified and trained to handle sports-related injuries, whether serving as a resource for the school’s existing athletic training staff or providing a school with the only athletic trainer it’s ever had.”

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Coordinator of Sports Medicine

The certified athletic trainers of the Marshall Sports Medicine Institute are trained not only in first aid but also in physiology, nutrition and injury prevention. They have experience with a wide range of athletic injuries, including strains, sprains, fractures, dislocations and concussions. Following the highest return-to-play standards, they are dedicated to helping athletes get back on the court, field or track as quickly and safely as possible.

“These athletic trainers have the knowledge, training and skills to work with Division I athletes, but their expertise belongs in the high school realm as well,” said Belmaggio, whose own experience includes 15 years as a certified athletic trainer for collegiate and NFL teams. “The purpose of this program is simple: we want to make sure our kids are taken care of.”

It’s not just the athletes who benefit, though.

“The athletic trainers are protecting the health of the athletes, but they are also educating the coaches, the parents and the administrators,” said Charles Giangarra, MD, Chief of the Marshall Orthopaedics’ Sports Medicine division. “They are the ones saying, ‘You can’t walk this one off,’ or ‘That ankle needs to be taped.’ They are making sure our high school athletes receive effective, appropriate care.”

The certified athletic trainers of the Marshall Sports Medicine Institute are helping athletes throughout the region train more effectively and safely. When an injury requires medical or surgical treatment, they have immediate access to the sports medicine specialists of Cabell Huntington Hospital and the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine.

When a certified athletic trainer is on your team, everyone wins. 🌟

