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Troy sets sports trend with athletic trainers

By Rich Swenson
staff writer

Injuries to student athletes have become a major concern nationally in recent years, but Troy's high schools have been trendsetters in dealing with the problem.

Troy has been using athletic trainers in both high schools (Troy and Troy Athens) for years, and it may be the thing of the future in Michigan prep sports.

Troy High trainer John McMullen sees a real need for trainers. While he is not yet accredited, he plans on taking the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) exam this spring.

"I think trainers are very necessary, especially when you see the level high school athletes are playing at today," he said. "The student athlete is getting bigger and stronger. There is an enormous amount of pressure and responsibility on the coaches."

McMULLEN SAID coaches are not trained to properly evaluate and act on injuries incurred by their players.

"Coaches shouldn't be responsible," he said. "Athletic trainers are trained to handle injury situations."

Besides administering medical attention, McMullen has the final say on when, and if, an athlete should re-enter a game after sustaining an injury.

But just as important is the trainer's role in rehabilitating the athlete to get him back into action.

"Trainers help the athlete get back into competition and to prevent subsequent injuries," McMullen said. "In the next generation, there should be fewer

athletes walking around with trick knees."

MORE INJURIES have resulted in football than any other prep sport, McMullen said, giving it a negative image among many critics.

But football, with the coaches taking the lead, has been "cleaned up" after changes were implemented to protect the athlete.

Techniques on tackling and blocking have undergone major changes. Spearheading (tackling with the head) and crack-back blocking have been made illegal to minimize head and spine injuries.

And the equipment protecting the athlete has improved.

McMullen's job also involves instituting preventive measures. He has a hand in developing stretching exercises to prevent pulled muscles, and advises coaches and athletes on coping with certain field and weather conditions.

TROY HIGH also has a team doctor (Dr. Edward Hunter) available to attend to serious injuries, and an ambulance service is on call for all sports programs.

"Parents have been very supportive of our medical services and the advice we give the athletes," McMullen said. "They've been very appreciative."

Most high schools in the area still don't have trainers on staff, McMullen said, but many (such as Birmingham Brother Rice) have clinical trainers under contract to look after their athletes.

"Funding for trainers has been a big problem," he said. "Most of the money is invested in coaching. There's no money left for us."

Weightlifters need guidance

Continued from Page 5

imum number of repetitions, you should move up to the next level (increase weights).

Tips to remember include:

- Train up to three times per week.
- Warm up 15 minutes before training.
- Work at a moderate, steady pace.
- Breathe out upon exertion.
- Always work through full range of motion.
- If heart, circulatory or breathing problems exist, see physician before undertaking exercise or extending exercise limits.

dertaking exercise or extending exercise limits.

"The first time you get into weightlifting, it may look fairly simple," Lucci said. "But in reality, there are things you have to know. You can do circuit training anywhere there's access to equipment. But you have to have direction."

"When you work out at a club, you feel better and you look better. If you can run up the stairs and not run out of breath, then you've accomplished something."

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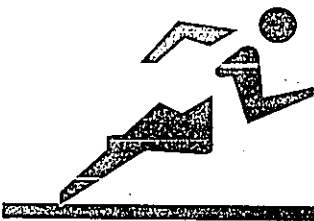
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