Secondary Schools Pre-Game Protocol

As athletic trainers, juggling has become an art. The constant juggling and prioritizing makes the job interesting every day. Game day arrives though and the atmosphere changes. Anything can happen on any given day but it seems that the atmosphere electrifies on game day. Suddenly everything is important to everyone. Preparation and communication is key. Following are some points to help guide you on game day.

Emergency Action Plan

If you are the home team, it is imperative that an action plan be in place and that key personnel are informed of the procedures to follow if an event occurs. If you are the away team, communication with the home athletic trainers is a must. You will be able to gain some knowledge of their procedures and how they want to operate. Remember this is their venue but you want to make sure you are comfortable if there is an emergency.

Communication/Introduction

Pre-game introductions between athletic trainers are essential. From this conversation, you will gain knowledge. You will know who is in charge. If there will be a doctor present. Will there be an ambulance on site? Is there an AED available? Where do you fill water at half time? If there is an emergency on the field, who will be your point of contact if further help is required? If you are the home athletic trainer, you can be a wealth of information for the visitor, especially a new athletic trainer to your venue, league, area, or even in this career. Consider providing a laminated info sheet of your contact info, EAP for the venue, if you have an AED, physician at the event, nearest hospital, etc. and attach to or leave on the water cooler you provide to your visitor. For outdoor events, you may want to create and/or communicate an inclement weather plan that addresses overall venue safety directly to participants and spectators. (For example, you may want to collaborate with the athletic director or site manager to create a public announcement that informs spectators and/or participants of the site evacuation plan).

Officials

Officials are in control of the game. It is wise to introduce yourself to the officials before the game. Get a short medical history from them in case they are injured during the game. You want them to know who you are so if questions come up before, during or after the game they will know you and where you are located. If you are outdoors, you can assist if inclement weather should occur and the necessary procedures to evacuate the area.