

SCOREBOARD

SPORTS MAILBAG

High school trainers a necessity

Sports Editor, The News:

I am writing in regard to the article written by Mr. Elia, "Is There a Doctor in the Stadium?" which appeared in the New Castle News Oct. 5-6, weekend edition. I question the type of medical care provided for the other secondary school student-athletes.

As a former football player at Laurel High School and former student teacher at Shenango High School, I am familiar with the medical care provided for student-athletes at these schools. It is often non-existent at practice and for the other sport programs. After reading Mr. Elia's article, I suspect the same is true of other schools in the area. A large percentage of athletic injuries occur at practice, not just at games. I doubt if the area team physicians can attend each practice. Is the team physician at the liberty to provide day-to-day rehabilitation and treatment?

Western Pennsylvania is recognized for its high school football and other quality athletic programs. Therefore, one might believe that the best possible medical care is being rendered. I feel it is not. One solution to this

problem is the certified athletic trainer.

Mr. Elia quotes Dr. Grauel in his article as saying "all it's going to require is for one school system to be sued for a million dollars ... and they will fall all over themselves to have one of their people certified as an athletic trainer." A team physician on the sidelines at football games is a step in the right direction, but again, it is only a step. Dr. Grauel states that "most smaller districts don't have a certified athletic trainer." In other economically depressed areas of the country, the need for certified athletic trainers is resolved in

many ways. The school district can hire an athletic trainer as teacher. Some districts contract out for athletic trainers.

It must be noted that the team physician is only one link in the chain of effective medical care for high school athletics. The team physician cannot "do it all." Other allied health professionals, namely certified athletic trainers are needed to improve the medical standards we provide to our students-athletes.

Jeffrey Wimer
Assistant Athletic Trainer
Instructor of Sports Medicine
The University of Charleston
Charleston, W.VA.