



**NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL  
ASSOCIATIONS**

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## Memorandum

**To:** State Association Executive Directors and Commissioners  
**From:** Dr. Karissa Niehoff / Bob Colgate  
**Subject:** Continued Research—Updated Catastrophic Injury and Fatality Reporting Forms  
**Date:** August 19, 2024

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The National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR) is a research center that tracks severe sports injuries in the United States. The NCCSIR is directed by Dr. Kristen Kucera at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It has tracked fatalities and catastrophic injuries for all sports in high schools, including cheerleading, across the nation since 1982.

It is important that you contact each school in your state to inform them of the catastrophic data collection system that is in place. We are concerned that many of the schools are not aware of this program and are not informing the state offices when a catastrophic athletic injury, illness or medical condition occurs. Many important decisions (rule changes, equipment changes, insurance rates, etc.) are based on this data, and it is essential that we have accurate information. Excellent examples are the swimming and diving and pole vault rule changes that have been implemented because of analysis of the data collected in catastrophic injury reports.

### **Catastrophic athletic injuries, illnesses, and medical conditions are defined as:**

1. Fatalities.
2. Permanent disability injuries.
3. Serious injuries (fractured spine/neck or serious head injury) even though the athlete has a full recovery.
4. Temporary or transient paralysis (athlete has no movement for a short time but has a complete recovery).
5. Heat stroke or exertional sickling due to exercise.
6. Sudden cardiac arrest or death in a student-athlete (even if not directly related to athletics).

Enclosed is an explanatory letter from Dr. Kucera and a fact sheet about the study and reporting process. Any fatality or catastrophic athletic injury, illness, or medical condition in any of your member schools should be reported.

If you have any questions about this project or about the NCCSIR, please contact the Director, Dr. Kristen Kucera by email ([kkucera@email.unc.edu](mailto:kkucera@email.unc.edu)) or by phone (919-962-6228). Thank you for your continued help and cooperation with these researchers to help minimize risk for all those involved in sports.

Attachments: NCCSIR letter, NCCSIR fact sheet

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THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

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Dear State Association Executive Directors:

I am writing to tell you about our efforts to improve catastrophic sports injury reporting and monitoring. The National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR) has developed a **national centralized reporting site where anyone can report a catastrophic injury or illness event: [sportinjuryreport.org](https://www.sportinjuryreport.org)**. This site is the result of a collaborative effort between NCCSIR and the Consortium for Catastrophic Injury Monitoring in Sport. Enclosed is a fact sheet about the NCCSIR, Consortium and our efforts.

Any fatality or catastrophic event occurring in any of your member schools should be reported as follows.

- 1) *Notify NFHS & NCCSIR about event.* Once notified, NFHS will email a notice of event and reporting packet to the State Association Executive Director.
- 2) *Contact school to complete an initial surveillance report at [sportinjuryreport.org](https://www.sportinjuryreport.org).* The State Association Executive Director forwards the reporting packet to their member school.
- 3) *Member school reports event & provides contact information for athlete and parent.* School representatives will be asked to complete a brief surveillance form about the event. The form will only take about 10 minutes to complete and may be completed online (<https://www.sportinjuryreport.org/>) or by phone (919-843-8357). Schools are also asked to provide contact information for the athlete and their family to NCCSIR.

Once the surveillance report and contact information is received, NCCSIR will send the athlete and their parent information about the study and consent forms to provide additional details about the event. NCCSIR will contact the school for additional information if needed.

If you have any questions about this project or about the NCCSIR please contact the Director Kristen Kucera by email ([kkucera@email.unc.edu](mailto:kkucera@email.unc.edu)) or by phone (919-843-8357).

This research study has been approved by the University of North Carolina Institutional Review Board and all information will be confidential and securely stored.

Thank you for your assistance and continued efforts to help make sports safer for all those involved.

Yours sincerely,

Kristen L. Kucera, PhD, ATC  
Director, National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR)

# National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research

The *mission* of the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR) is to conduct surveillance of catastrophic injuries and illnesses related to participation in organized sports in the United States at the professional, collegiate, high school, and youth levels of play.



**National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research**

The **goal** of the Center is to improve the prevention, evaluation, management, and rehabilitation of catastrophic sports-related injuries.

The most common types of fatal events are acute trauma to the head/neck/spine, exertional-related heat events, exertional-related cardiac events, and disruption of cardiac rhythm due to blunt chest impacts (commotio cordis).

National surveillance of catastrophic sports-related injuries conducted by the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research (NCCSIR) over the last thirty years has facilitated the introduction of numerous sports safety interventions.

## The Consortium for Catastrophic Injury Monitoring in Sport

Was created to develop a stronger national active surveillance program to improve reporting and monitoring of these catastrophic sports injuries.

The Consortium is a partnership between several different institutions and programs. It is divided into three research divisions corresponding to the major types of catastrophic injuries.

### Research Partners

- Datalys Center, Inc. and High School RIO—Christine Collins, PhD
- Injury Prevention Research Center, UNC-Chapel Hill—Steve Marshall, PhD & Zachary Kerr, PhD, MPH
- Lebanon Valley College—Tom Dompier, PhD, ATC

### Funding Partners

- American Football Coaches Association (AFCA)
- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM)
- National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
- National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
- National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE)

## Consortia Research Divisions

### Exertional Injuries - Douglas Casa, PhD, ATC

- Heat
- Sickling
- Asthma
- Diabetes



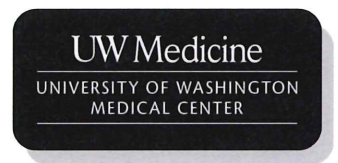
### Traumatic Injuries - Johna Register-Mihalik, PhD ATC & Kevin Guskiewicz, PhD ATC

- Head
- Spine
- Internal organ
- Lightning



### Cardiac Injuries - Jonathan Drezner, MD

- Sudden cardiac arrest
- Sudden cardiac death



### To contact the NCCSIR:

**Director:** Kristen Kucera, PhD, MSPH, ATC

**Medical Director:** Robert Cantu, MD

**Research Asst:** Randi DeLong, MPH

**Email:**

[nccsir@unc.edu](mailto:nccsir@unc.edu)

**Phone:** 919-843-8357

Report a catastrophic sport injury event at:  
<https://www.sportinjuryreport.org>