

## **WHO IS AND WHAT DOES AN ATHLETIC TRAINER DO?**

The Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) is a highly educated and skilled professional specializing in athletic health care. The athletic trainer plays a unique and important role in the health care system by helping to prevent, recognize, manage and rehabilitate sport injuries. In this role, the athletic trainer can help athletes avoid unnecessary medical treatment and disruption of normal daily activities.

Athletic training is recognized by the American Medical Association as an allied health care profession. Specifically, the athletic trainer specializes in five domains:

- Prevention of athletic injuries
- Recognition, Evaluation and Immediate Care of athletic injuries
- Rehabilitation and Reconditioning of athletic injuries
- Health Care Administration
- Education and Counseling

As part of a complete health care team, the athletic trainer works under the direction of a licensed physician and in cooperation with other health care workers, athletic administrators, coaches, and parents. The athletic trainer is the first health care provider for many athletes, and therefore, gets to know them on a personal and individualized basis.

### **EDUCATION**

Certified athletic trainers have, at minimum, a bachelor's degree from an accredited athletic training education curriculum program. Student athletic trainers study a wide range of topics, including human anatomy, exercise physiology, biomechanics, emergency care, injury / illness prevention and evaluation, nutrition, psychology, pathology, pharmacology, and administration. Student athletic trainers also participate in extensive practical experience under appropriate supervision.

### **CERTIFICATION**

Certified athletic trainers have fulfilled the requirements for certification established by the Board of Certification (BOC) for the Athletic Trainer. The BOC protects the integrity of the ATC credential by setting high standards for those who want to become certified athletic trainers. Students must earn a degree from an accredited curriculum or meet other requirements before being allowed to take the BOC certification exam. After certification, ATC's must meet continuing education requirement set by the BOC. The certification examination administered by the BOC consists of three sections; a written portion with multiple choice questions (150), a practical exam that evaluates the psychomotor skill component, and a written simulation exam that evaluates clinical and decision-making skills.

### **TYPICAL DAY**

The typical day for a certified athletic trainer varies dependant upon the employment setting: traditional; high school, college, professional, clinical; physical therapy, hospital,

industrial, or corporation. Some certified athletic trainers are hired by school systems and may also teach. These individuals must manage their time carefully to ensure students receive professional academic instruction in the classroom and quality health care in athletic endeavors. Before practice, the certified athletic trainer tapes, bandages, braces, and completes similar preventative measures. During practice, the certified athletic trainer evaluates injuries and determines to refer athletes to a physician or follow standing orders and manage injuries. The certified athletic trainer must ensure continual communication between the injured athlete, physician, coach, and family; on when and how the athlete can return to practice and competition. As specialist in the prevention, recognition, and rehabilitation of injuries incurred by athletes, certified athletic trainers administer immediate emergency care and - under the supervision of a licensed physician - use their knowledge of injuries incurred by the physically active individuals that influence them to develop a treatment program based on medical, exercise and sport sciences.

### **DIVERSITY**

Certified athletic trainers are a diverse group. Although once considered a white male-dominated profession, athletic training today includes both men and women of all backgrounds, with two national committees devoted to promoting the involvement of women and people of color. Nearly half of the members of the NATA are women, while the number of people of color seeking careers in athletic training profession has grown steadily over the years. The addition of the World Federation of Athletic Training Task Force has opened even more doors to a diverse population, encouraging participation from people and cultures all over the globe.

### **NATA**

The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) is a not-for-profit professional membership organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the physically active worldwide. The association is committed to the advancement, encouragement and improvement of the athletic training profession. Founded in 1950 with a membership of 200 athletic trainers, the NATA today has more than 29,000 members in the United States and abroad. Approximately 92% of all certified athletic trainers in the world belong to the association. In 1990, the American Medical Association (AMA) recognized athletic training as an allied health care profession, and 1998 the AMA voted unanimously to recommend certified athletic trainers in all high schools. Based in Dallas Texas, the international organization provides a variety of services to its members, including continuing education, governmental affairs, public relations, and professional development.