



EAGLES LACROSSE READIES FOR A SHOCK !!!

The 2008 West Florida Lacrosse League division B champion Sarasota Military Academy varsity Eagles took a cue from US Lacrosse seriously by gearing up to attack an often times lethal opponent - commotio cordis. Responsible for at least 8 reported lacrosse deaths since 1996, commotio cordis is the second leading cause of death in athletes. The average player is age 14 and usually a male who is struck in the chest by a lacrosse ball traveling 30 to 50 mph. Responders to a suspected cardio cordis event must initiate their efforts as quickly as possible, delivering a shock in less than 3 minutes if they hope to maximize the athlete's chance of survival.

SMA coaches Scott Kallins, J.P.Cawley, Christian Nichols, Steve Estes and rival coach Clayton Wight of Cardinal Mooney High School attended a 90 minute training session organized by Eagle lacrosse director Coach Ken Cowles in order to learn when and how to use the newly acquired AED (Automated External Defibrillator). Team physician James Villotti M.D. instructed the seminar participants, including team grandfather Bob Cowles and interested team mom Dawn Estes (respiratory therapist), how to recognize commotio cordis. All participants learned how and when to initiate a response following the "team plan" developed by the doctor.

Next year's team captain Mike Martino (defense) and fellow sophomore John Villotti (goal-tender) admitted that they gained significant confidence in recognizing commotio cordis and responding to it appropriately. They will be members of newly formed recognition and response groups that will be responsible for specific and well coordinated efforts if the need arises. EMT fire-fighter Lt. Mike Martino Sr. (Sarasota) was satisfied that all of the participants understood their role in responding appropriately to an unlikely sudden cardiac event and the importance of the goal of minimizing response time to less than one minute.

2008 team captain Matt Cowles, headed to the Merchant Marine Academy this fall, is happy that future SMA players and their opponents can be secure in the knowledge that the high flying Eagles are prepared not to just "jolt" their WFL opponents with outstanding play, but to "shock" them in the rare event that the life restoring AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is needed.

Coach Cowles hopes to pioneer regional efforts to promote the acquisition of AEDs among other area lacrosse programs. SMA plans to extend the AED safeguards to its middle school and JV programs this fall. The team plan will make the AED available at all practices and games, both home and away. Dr Villotti is also planning a team seminar where participants can earn Basic Life Support (BLS) certification. Additionally this season Cowles is appointing a motivated volunteer to serve as "safety director" to the team. The safety director will be responsible for implementing and coordinating efforts to educate and protect our children athletes.