



## **National Center for Sports Safety & Mississippi High School Activities Association team up to train high school and middle school coaches**

Birmingham, AL & Clinton, MS – July 15, 2014 – The National Center for Sports Safety (NCSS) and the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) has finalized a partnership to educate Mississippi’s interscholastic coaches in the area of sports safety.

NCSS began conversations with Mississippi early this year about the importance of sports safety and the MHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and MHSAA Executive Board approved an initiative to train coaches on sports first aid. The NCSS *PREPARE* program is recommended as the preferred course for all Mississippi high school and middle school coaches.

“We truly believe in *PREPARE*’s ability to reduce the number and severity of injuries to students who play sports, and we are excited that Mississippi sees the value in this kind of training for their coaches,” said NCSS Executive Director, Kathryn Gwaltney. “We applaud MHSAA for taking a proactive approach to keep their athletes safe!”

“The Mississippi High School Activities Association is very proud and excited to join forces with NCSS and the *PREPARE* program. We see this sports safety course as highly practical, very informative, very cost-effective, and extremely current. It is the type of course curriculum we believe will help to create a safe playing environment for our youth athletes across the state,” said Mr. Don Hinton, Executive Director of the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

Dr. Lawrence Lemak, NCSS founder, said his vision for the organization is not only to offer a resource for education, but also to show coaches and parents the grave importance of sports safety training for parents, coaches and athletes. The goal of NCSS is to standardize the level of care available to athletes on and off the playing field. By educating youth coaches in sports safety techniques and skills, they will gain the knowledge and confidence to prevent and respond to injuries and emergency situations appropriately until professional help arrives.

“There is not one parent that would drop their child off at a local community pool if there was not a certified lifeguard on duty. That same standard of care should be observed on the playing field,” Dr. Lemak said.

Beginning today, *PREPARE* LEVEL 1 and 2 will be offered online for all new and existing coaches. The *PREPARE* Refresher course will also be offered every five years as a review. To

register for the course, all MHSAA coaches can visit [www.SportsSafety.org/MHSAA](http://www.SportsSafety.org/MHSAA) and complete the course in as little as two and a half to three hours.

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### **ABOUT**

The National Center for Sports Safety, a non-profit organization, formed in 2001, was founded by Dr. Lawrence Lemak to promote the importance of injury prevention and safety on all levels of youth sports through education and research. *PREPARE* is a sports safety course that was developed in 2004, which educates coaches and volunteers on how to prevent common injuries, how to recognize symptoms of potentially dangerous conditions, and how to respond in emergency situations. Visit the NCSS at [www.sportssafety.org](http://www.sportssafety.org)

The Mississippi High School Activities Association, located in Clinton, Mississippi, is a non-profit, which includes junior high/middle school and secondary schools, and is responsible for academic and athletic competitions. The athletic competitions include the following sports and activities: football, swimming, slowpitch softball, volleyball, cross country, soccer, basketball, boys powerlifting, girls powerlifting, tennis, boys golf, girls golf, track, baseball, fastpitch softball, wrestling, bowling, archery, cheer and dance. Visit MHSAA at [www.misshsaa.com](http://www.misshsaa.com)