



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## CITY OF BIRMINGHAM RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR SPORTS SAFETY EDUCATION

**Birmingham, AL – August 29, 2013** – With the number of athletic-related injuries on the rise, the City of Birmingham has taken a proactive approach to keeping youth athletes injury free by becoming sports safety educated through the National Center for Sports Safety (NCSS) PREPARE sports safety course. Earlier this month, over 100 Birmingham Parks and Recreation coaches volunteered their time to complete a comprehensive 3-hour sports first aid course led by NCSS Certified Athletic Trainers, Brian Boyls-White and Jennifer Kramer.

Coaches completed the NCSS PREPARE course in a hands-on classroom setting where they learned more about preventing common injuries, how to recognize symptoms of potentially dangerous conditions, how to respond in emergency situations until medical professionals arrive, as well as many other important sports safety topics. A partnership with the State of Alabama allowed the NCSS to educate all Birmingham Parks and Recreation coaches at no cost.

"There are a growing number of concussions and heat-related injuries that occur in youth football and we want our coaches to be able to recognize these signs first, before further injury happens," said Mike Sullivan, Athletic Coordinator for the Birmingham Parks and Recreation.

Kathryn Gwaltney, NCSS Executive Director, added, "We commend the City of Birmingham for recognizing the need for education and its efforts in protecting the safety of youth athletes. We hope more parks and recreation facilities throughout the State of Alabama will consider implementing our program in an effort to become more knowledgeable about sports safety and injury prevention. Creating a safe playing environment is becoming an important aspect to all parents across this state."

It is estimated that more than 3.5 million kids under age 14 receive medical treatment for sports injuries each year.<sup>1</sup> The NCSS recognizes that injuries are bound to occur, regardless of the activity, but with proper awareness, prevention and management, the number of athletic injuries can be significantly reduced.

For more information about NCSS and/or the PREPARE course please visit [www.SportsSafety.org](http://www.SportsSafety.org) or call 866.508.NCSS (6277).

### About NCSS

Dr. Lawrence Lemak founded the National Center for Sports Safety in 2001 to promote the importance of injury prevention and safety on all levels of youth sports through education and research. The NCSS focuses on decreasing the number and intensity of injuries through developing and teaching sports-safety courses. NCSS also collects, analyzes and researches injury data to improve safety practices.

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<sup>1</sup> JS Powell, KD Barber Foss, 1999. *Injury patterns in selected high school sports: a review of the 1995-1997 seasons. J Athl Train. 34: 277-84.*