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**CITY OF COLUMBIANA MANDATES SPORTS SAFETY EDUCATION FOR COACHES**

**Columbiana, AL – March 5, 2012** –In February 2012 the City of Columbiana mandated all persons coaching within the City’s youth sports leagues to complete PREPARE, a sports safety education course, prior to their first day of practice. In as little as three hours, coaches will now have the opportunity to learn valuable information about sports safety and how to significantly reduce liability were athletic injuries are concerned.

Developed by the National Center for Sports Safety (NCSS) and a team of medical experts in 2004, PREPARE educates coaches, assistants and volunteers on how to prevent common injuries, how to recognize symptoms of potentially dangerous conditions and how to respond in emergency situations. PREPARE can be completed in a hands-on setting instructed by a certified athletic trainer, or taken online via the NCSS website. Upon completion of the course, each participant will receive a Certificate of Completion and his/her name will be added to the NCSS’ National Registry of Coaches.

A partnership with Alabama Department of Education will allow parks and recreational coaches to complete PREPARE at no cost. A hands-on PREPARE class will be offered on February 8, 2012, and those who miss the class will be required to complete the course online. When asked about the Columbiana mandate, Lisa Davis of the Columbiana Park and Recreation Board said, “Columbiana decided to mandate the PREPARE course for all head coaches that participate in youth sporting activities to promote awareness and warning signs of situations that occurs in sporting activities. Going forward, it is our hope and desire that this program can be made available to all coaching volunteers and league officials.”

Kathryn Gwaltney, NCSS Executive Director, added, “We applaud the efforts of the City of Columbiana for mandating the PREPARE course to protect and maintain our youth’s safety. We anticipate other Alabama communities to follow Columbiana’s lead and consider implementing our program.”

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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