Athlete/Parent/Guardian Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet and Acknowledgement of Receipt and Review Form

What is sudden cardiac arrest?
Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA doesn't just happen to adults; it takes the lives of students, too. However, the causes of sudden cardiac arrest in students and adults can be different. A youth athlete's SCA will likely result from an inherited condition, while an adult's SCA may be caused by either inherited or lifestyle issues. SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

How common is sudden cardiac arrest in the United States?
SCA is the #1 cause of death for adults in this country. There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals each year. About 2,000 patients under 25 die of SCA each year. It is the #1 cause of death for student athletes.

Are there warning signs?
Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs or symptoms, such as:

- fainting or seizures during exercise;
- unexplained shortness of breath;
- dizziness;
- extreme fatigue;
- chest pains; or
- racing heart.

These symptoms can be unclear in athletes, since people often confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?
There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who experience SCA die from it.

Public Chapter 325 – the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention Act
The act is intended to keep youth athletes safe while practicing or playing. The requirements of the act are:

- All youth athletes and their parents or guardians must read and sign this form. It must be returned to the school before participation in any athletic activity. A new form must be signed and returned each school year.

- The immediate removal of any youth athlete who passes out or faints while participating in an athletic activity, or who exhibits any of the following symptoms:
  (i) Unexplained shortness of breath;
  (ii) Chest pains;
  (iii) Dizziness
  (iv) Racing heart rate; or
  (v) Extreme fatigue; and

- Establish as policy that a youth athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to the practice or competition during which the youth athlete experienced symptoms consistent with sudden cardiac arrest

- Before returning to practice or play in an athletic activity, the athlete must be evaluated by a Tennessee licensed medical doctor or an osteopathic physician. Clearance to full or graduated return to practice or play must be in writing.

I have reviewed and understand the symptoms and warning signs of SCA.

Signature of Student-Athlete Print Student-Athlete's Name Date

_____ _____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Print Parent/Guardian's Name Date