YOUTH SPORT SPECIALIZATION SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Athletic Trainers’ Association supports the following recommendations as they relate to the health and well-being of adolescent and young athletes:

DELAY SPECIALIZING IN A SINGLE SPORT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE:
Sport specialization is often described as participating and/or training for a single sport year-round. Adolescent and young athletes should strive to participate, or sample, a variety of sports. This recommendation supports general physical fitness, athleticism and reduces injury risk in athletes.

ONE TEAM AT A TIME:
Adolescent and young athletes should participate in one organized sport per season. Many adolescent and young athletes participate or train year-round in a single sport, while competing in other organized sports simultaneously. Total volume of organized sport participation per season is an important risk factor for injury.

LESS THAN EIGHT MONTHS PER YEAR:
Adolescent and young athletes should not play a single sport more than eight months per year.

NO MORE HOURS/WEEK THAN AGE IN YEARS:
Adolescent and young athletes should not participate in organized sport and/or activity more hours per week than their age (i.e., a 12-year-old athlete should not participate in more than 12 hours per week of organized sport).

TWO DAYS OF REST PER WEEK:
Adolescent and young athletes should have a minimum of two days off per week from organized training and competition. Athletes should not participate in other organized team sports, competitions and/or training on rest and recovery days.

REST AND RECOVERY TIME FROM ORGANIZED SPORT PARTICIPATION:
Adolescent and young athletes should spend time away from organized sport and/or activity at the end of each competitive season. This allows for both physical and mental recovery, promotes health and well-being and minimizes injury risk and burnout/dropout.

ENDORSED BY:

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.