 Surviving a Comotio Cordis Event

The 16% of patients who survive a comotio cordis event have three things in common:
1. Early recognition of the arrest
2. Treatment with CPR and early defibrillation
3. Since it might not be feasible to have local EMS agencies stand by at every organized game, educating coaches and parents about this potentially fatal injury is a must.

Coaches and other responsible individuals need to be trained in CPR, and emergency equipment needs to be available at organized sporting events. The increase in numbers of community-based automated external defibrillators (AED’s) is an important development in the ability to resolve ventricular fibrillation. In the absence of available defibrillation, early institution of CPR, along with rapid activation of the local ACLS EMS system, is the next best solution. Survival rates rapidly drop to zero when interventions are delayed.

Chest strike protection is available, although not widely used. Some cases of Comotio cordis have occurred to those who routinely wear protective gear, like baseball catchers. Softer “safety” baseballs are available and reduce the risk; however, there still remains a chance of a Comotio cordis event occurring, even with their use. Protective gear is beneficial, but also might add a false sense of security.

When EMS responds to an athlete-down call, the possibility of a Comotio cordis event should always be considered, even though it’s rare. A Comotio cordis event is one time when a pediatric arrest is not due to airway compromise. Maintaining certification and familiarity with both current ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support) and PALS (Pediatric Advanced Life Support) protocols is of great importance. The odds are you might never see a Comotio cordis event in your career; however, knowledge of the processes involved, as well as being properly prepared for one, are signs of a true professional.

---

Comotio Cardis continued from pg 7

---

Before the Game — Meet at home plate

- Introduce plate and base umpires, managers/coaches
- Receive official lineup cards from each team
- Discuss any local playing rules (time limit, playing boundaries, etc.)
- Discuss the strike zone
- Discuss unsportsmanlike conduct by the players
- Discuss the innings pitched by a pitcher rule
- Clarify calling the game due to weather or darkness
- Inspect playing field for unsafe conditions
- Discuss legal pitching motions or balks, if needed
- Discuss no head-first slides, no on-deck circle rules
- Get two game balls from home team
- Be sure players are not wearing any jewelry
- Be sure players are in uniform (shirts in, hats on)
- Inspect equipment for damage and to meet regulations
- Ensure that games start promptly

---

Umpire Guidelines

North Issaquah, Washington, Little League

---

During the Game — Umpires and Coaches

- Encourage coaches to help speed play by having catchers and players on the bench prepared and ready to take the field with two outs
- Make sure catchers are wearing the proper safety equipment
- Continually monitor the field for safety and playability
- Pitchers warming up in foul territory must have a spotter and catcher with full equipment
- Keep game moving — one minute or eight pitches to warm up the pitcher between innings or in case of mid-inning replacement
- Make calls loud and clear, signalling each properly
- Umpires should be in position to make the call
- No protesting of any judgment calls by the umpire
- Managers are responsible for keeping their fans and players on their best behavior
- Encourage everyone to think “Safety First!”