April 4, 2016

Dear Gardner-Webb University Student – Athlete,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of recent NCAA legislation that will require your immediate attention. On April 29, 2010 the NCAA Division I Legislative Council approved legislation that requires all Division I student-athletes beginning their initial year of eligibility (freshmen and transfers) receive testing for sickle cell trait or show proof of prior sickle cell testing.

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood condition that can be found in a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. If a person receives a sickle cell gene from both parents they will inherit sickle cell disease. If he/she inherits only one sickle cell gene, then they are said to have “sickle cell trait”.

Sickle cell trait is generally benign and consistent with a long and healthy life. However, those with sickle cell trait are at a higher risk when exercising very hard in hot conditions for heat illness problems and even death. During intense sustained exercise, hypoxia (low oxygen) in muscles may cause sickling of red blood cells (red blood cells changing from a normal disc shape to a crescent or “sickle” shape), which can accumulate in the bloodstream and “logjam” blood vessels, leading to collapse from the rapid breakdown of muscles starved of blood.

Listed below are some facts you need to know about sickle cell trait:

- Sickle cell trait occurs in about 8 percent of the U.S. African-American population, and between 1 in 2,000 to 1 in 10,000; in the Caucasian population.

- Although sickle cell trait is most predominant in African-Americans and those of Mediterranean, Middle-Eastern, Indian, Caribbean, and South and Central American Ancestry; persons of all races and ancestry may test positive for sickle cell trait.

- Most U.S. States test at birth, but most student-athletes with sickle-cell trait don’t know they have it.

Effective beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, all Division I student-athletes beginning their initial year of eligibility (freshmen and transfers) must complete one of the following prior to participating in athletically related activities (examples include conditioning, weightlifting and/or practice):

- Submit test results from a recent blood test (sickle cell solubility test) for sickle cell trait signed by a licensed physician.
- Submit proof of prior testing (sickle cell solubility test) such as done at birth and signed by a licensed physician.

Testing for sickle cell trait is rather inexpensive and sickle cell solubility tests usually costs in the range of $5 - $25. Results of testing generally take several days or up to a week to return to the physician.

Results of sickle cell solubility testing signed by a licensed physician must be completed prior to engaging in athletically related activities for all student-athletes beginning their initial year of eligibility (freshmen and transfers). There will be a potential delay of several days before you will be allowed to engage in these activities.
begin practice if this information is not submitted to the Gardner-Webb University Athletic Training Staff prior to receiving your physical.

Gardner-Webb University requires all student-athletes to get tested so that you know your status in regards to sickle cell trait. The Gardner-Webb University Athletics Department advocates a slow-buildup of conditioning activities and frequent rest- and-recovery periods for all student-athletes; because this approach can reduce the adverse effect caused by sickle cell trait and is also a healthier approach.

Please note that you will need to satisfy the requirements listed in this letter prior to reporting to Gardner-Webb University. Your immediate attention to this issue is required. If you have any questions regarding this letter please contact Kevin Jones, MA ATC LAT Assistant Athletic Director for Athletic Training (704-406-3926) or Kat Ayotte, MA ATC LAT Associate Athletic Trainer (704-406-3912). A copy of this letter will be posted on the Athletic Training web site (http://gardner-webb.edu/offices-and-departments/departments/athletic-training-department/physical-forms/index) under the link “Physical Forms”. As a reminder, all student-athletes need to download and complete all the forms located on this web site before returning to Gardner-Webb University. Without the completion of these forms you will not be able to receive a physical and will be delayed in beginning athletically related activities.

Please mail documentation of your sickle cell testing results to:

Gardner-Webb University
Athletic Training Department
PO Box 877
Boiling Springs, NC 28017

Again, thank you for your prompt and immediate attention to this letter.

Sincerely,

Chuck Burch
Vice President for Athletics
Gardner-Webb University

Kevin Jones, MA ATC LAT
Assistant Athletic Director for Athletic Training
Gardner-Webb University

For additional educational materials, please review the following web sites:

NCAA Heath and Safety at: www.NCAA.org/health-safety

Sickle Cell Disease Association of America at: www.sicklecelldisease.org

American Sickle Cell Anemia Association at: www.ascaa.org