Western Connecticut State University Athletic Training
William A. O'Neill Athletic & Convocation Center – 181 White Street – Danbury, Connecticut – 06810

Sickle Cell Screening Policy

The NCAA states (under bylaw 17.1.6.4.1) that all Division III student-athletes be tested for Sickle Cell Trait as part of their pre-participation physical examination. Western Connecticut State University mandates that results from this blood test be completed and reviewed by the athletic training staff prior to participation in any intercollegiate sponsored activity. All Western Connecticut State University incoming student athletes must either **show proof** of prior testing for sickle cell trait, or contact your health care provider and schedule an appointment to be tested. Western Connecticut State University does not accept declining waiver forms.

Sickle Cell Testing Documentation:

- **A copy of a blood test from the sickle cell trait done at birth.**
- **Proof of a sickle cell trait test done recently by your primary care physician.**
- **All Sports – Turn in by August 1st.**

Student-Athlete/Parent Directions:

In the State of Connecticut, Sickle Cell Testing became mandatory in 1990. This neo-natal test is performed on all newborns prior to leaving the hospital. If you are not a Connecticut resident you can follow the same guidelines listed below or contact the New England Newborn Screening Program. Residents of MA, ME, NH, RI, and VT can contact www.umassmed.edu/nbs for further information. All 50 states have newborn screening programs.

- **Contact your primary Health Care pediatrician and request documentation indicating your sickle cell status.**
- **Contact your birth hospital and request documentation on your sickle cell status.**
- **Schedule an appointment with your primary health care provider to have the Sickle Cell Trait testing done. Request the documentation of your test results.**
- **Contact the New England Newborn Screening Program.**
- **Contact your states Department of Public Health.**

No Student-athlete will be excluded from participation due to test results.

Sickle Cell Lab Results:

Please upload the lab result onto your SportsWare File under the "Forms" tab. Title this Document: SCT2019 (or accurate to current year). Directions are provided in the SportsWare Online Written Instructions tab.

Sickle Cell Trait Education:

All athletes will receive sickle cell trait education during initial team athletic training meeting. Additional handout information and websites will also be made available.

- Sickle Cell Trait is an inherited condition of the oxygen carrying protein, hemoglobin, in the red blood cells.
- 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.
- Sickle cell is usually benign, but during intense, sustained exercise, hypoxia (lack of oxygen) in the muscles may cause sickling off red blood cells. The red blood cells change from the normal disc shape to a crescent or sickle shape. These cells can than accumulate in the bloodstream and block the blood vessels leading to collapse from rapid breakdown of muscle starved blood.
- This is more likely to occur with timed runs, intense physical exertion with minimal rest periods, and can be associated with hot humid weather, dehydration and improper asthma management.
- Common signs and symptoms of a sickle cell emergency include: increased pain and weakness in the working muscles (specially the legs, buttocks, lower back); cramping type muscle pain; soft flaccid muscle tone; and/or sudden onset of symptoms without early warning signs.

For additional information (and videos) on Sickle Cell Trait:

- www.ncaa.org/health-and-safety/medical-conditions click on "Sickle Cell Trait".

For athletes positive for the sickle cell trait, the following reasonable precautions will be taken in order to appropriately manage the condition:

- The athlete will slowly build up the intensity and duration of their training. This will also include longer periods for rest and recovery.
- The athlete will participate in pre-season conditioning programs in order to prepare for the rigors of the competitive season.
- The athlete may have modified performance tests, such as mile runs, serial sprints, etc.
- **The athlete will stop all activity and seek medical evaluation with the onset of symptoms, such as muscle cramping, pain, swelling, weakness, tenderness, undue fatigue, or shortness of breath.**
- The athlete will be given the opportunity to set their own pace during conditioning drills.
- The athlete's participation may be altered during periods of heat stress, dehydration, asthma, illness, or activity in high altitudes.