



*House of Representatives*  
*Johnny Tolbert III House Study Committee on Heat-Related Injuries, Cardiac Injuries, and Other Sports-Related Injuries*

**Study Committee Minutes**

**Chairman Kasey Carpenter**  
Representative, 4<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable William Boddie**  
Representative, 62<sup>nd</sup> District

**The Honorable Demetrius Douglas**  
Representative, 78<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable Clay Pirkle**  
Representative, 155<sup>th</sup> District

**The Honorable Deborah Silcox**  
Representative, 52<sup>nd</sup> District

**January 14, 2020**

Prepared by Cortney George, Fiscal and Policy Analyst

House Budget and Research Office

## Introduction

The Johnny Tolbert III House Study Committee on Heat-Related Injuries, Cardiac Injuries, and Other Sports-Related Injuries, created by House Resolution 259 during the 2019 Legislative Session, was tasked with studying injuries related to sports and recreational activities to protect both youth and high school athletes from serious or catastrophic injuries or illnesses.

The committee was chaired by Representative Kasey Carpenter (4<sup>th</sup>) and included four additional members: Representative William Boddie (62<sup>nd</sup>), Representative Demetrius Douglas (78<sup>th</sup>), Representative Clay Pirkle (155<sup>th</sup>), and Representative Deborah Silcox (52<sup>nd</sup>). The House Budget and Research Office staff member assigned to facilitate the meetings was Mrs. Cortney George.

The committee held two public meetings, one at the Georgia State Capitol on June 10, 2019, and the second at Welcome All Park on August 26, 2019, during which the committee heard testimony from public and private organizations.

During the June 10 meeting, the study committee heard testimony from the following stakeholders:

- Davis Bozeman Law Firm – Mr. Mawuli Davis and Mr. Harold Spence spoke on behalf of the Davis Bozeman Law Firm. The firm represented the family of 12-year old Johnny Tolbert III who passed away after having a heatstroke in July 2016 during football practice. The firm expressed appreciation for the study committee looking at the issue of heat-related injuries in recreational sports. Mr. Spence described the symptoms of heatstroke, which Johnny Tolbert III was exhibiting when he fell ill on the practice field. Those present, the coaches and parents, were not educated on how to identify or what steps to take if a participant experiences a heat-related injury. Cooling down the body quickly is critical to treating a heat-related illness, preferably with an ice bath, until medical response units can arrive. Mr. Spence stressed the importance of educating coaches on heat-related injuries and the rules of the Georgia High School Association, which say practice will not be held if the heat index exceeds a certain temperature.
- Michelle Wright – Mrs. Wright is the mother of Johnny Tolbert III, and she briefly spoke to the study committee and expressed her thanks for the committee looking into heat-related injuries.
- Mike Craven – Mr. Craven, who has been a strength and conditioning coach for 35 years, said exercise science research is not being practically applied in the field. Heat-related injuries occur in highly-motivated individuals who participate in badly-organized training and exert themselves beyond their limits. Oxygen consumption or V02 testing is now available to determine the limits of an athlete's aerobic strength to ensure athletes are not pushed beyond their limits. Moreover, coaches should not have condition training during the hottest part of the day, as 96 percent of deaths relating to heat-stroke occur during condition training. Mr. Craven conducts V02 testing for \$25 an athlete to identify each player's peak V02. This data

can then be used to create an exercise prescription to train the aerobic system as a strength.

- Rank One Health – Mr. Jason McKay and Mr. Sean Endicott presented on the Rank One software programs: Rank One Health and Rank One Sport. Rank One Sport is a logistics and admin software with more than 12 years of student data history. Over 4,500 schools use this software in 25 states, resulting in three million athlete records stored in the database annually. Rank One Health is an injury management platform in which injury data can be logged, physicians can be consulted in real time, and health records can be reviewed and entered into the system. Rank One Health can immediately connect coaches or athletic trainers to medical personnel via the application for immediate care for athletes experiencing a medical emergency. During a heat-related injury, the severity of the athlete’s injury will be reduced the quicker coaches and trainers are advised to cool down the athlete’s body.
- Richard Lamphier – Mr. Lamphier is president of the Georgia Association of Nurses and manages Project Save, which focuses on children participating in athletic sports within schools and athletic leagues. Amos Mansfield, the president of the Georgia Athletics Association, also presented with Mr. Lamphier. Mr. Lamphier stressed the need for awareness of immediate treatment by cooling in an immersion ice bath before transport. Mr. Mansfield suggested going to a feed store and buying a rubber water trough that can be filled with the ice and water from the team’s water coolers if there is an emergency situation. To greatly diminish the risk of death, the body temperature must be reduced to below 102 degrees as quickly as possible, according to Mr. Mansfield.
- John Reid – Mr. Reid, Rome City School District’s athletic director, has 31 years of coaching experience. Mr. Reid stressed the need for an athletic trainer, training room, team doctor, and a partnership with the local hospital to have a successful athletic program. He would not get on the field today without these partnerships and personnel ready on the field. Mr. Reid also brought to the committee’s attention that students today do not have the rudimentary physical stamina that used to be common in children, and coaches need to take that into consideration when conditioning these students.

During the August 23 meeting, the study committee heard testimony from the following stakeholders:

- Dr. Ben Lefkove – Dr. Lefkove is an emergency room physician and the medical director for the Emory Decatur Hospital Emergency Department. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there are 658 heat-related deaths in the United States every year. Heat-related deaths have been the highest environmental-related death over the last 30 years. As the heat rises in the body, the body will attempt to compensate for the excess heat by implementing a number of heat reducing mechanisms to offset the rising temperature to sustain a 98.5 degree temperature. If the heat reducing mechanisms fail, the body begins to heat and injury occurs. Injury can manifest itself through simple cramps or dangerous heat-strokes. Heat-stroke occurs when the core temperature is approximately 104

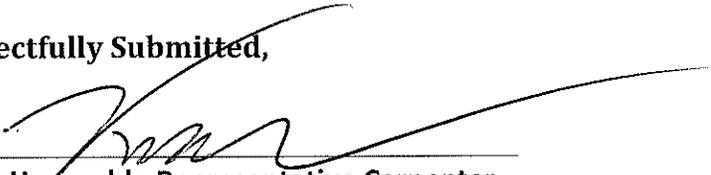
degrees, at which point organs begin to shut down and cells begin to die. Multi-organ failure causes death in patients experiencing a heat-stroke. Dr. Lefkove stressed the importance of cooling the body immediately. The ideal circumstance to immediately cool the athlete would be to take off their clothing and submerge them in an ice bath. Alternatively, putting ice packs on the major arteries will also help cool the body. Dr. Lefkove said most heat-related injuries happen at the beginning of the season when athletes are less likely to be in shape. He recommended a gradual transition from less strenuous practices to more normal practice levels.

- Rank One Health – President Traci Neely, Program Director Mitch Hall, and Government Affairs Representative Terri Lakowski presented on behalf of Rank One Health to the study committee. The group gave a live demonstration of the Rank One Sport application described during the previous meeting. The study committee was shown the data of a fictional student and walked through how to connect with a health professional if a medical event occurs to the student athlete.
- Tony Phillips – Mr. Phillips is the director of the city of South Fulton Parks and Recreation Department. A South Fulton local ordinance requires volunteer coaches to acquire a certification of basic safety and medical knowledge prior to the start of the season. The city partnered with the sports medicine program at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) to conduct this certification clinic. CHOA conducts this sports clinic every year around the month of June. All volunteer coaches are required to attend this clinic to gain a foundational knowledge of how to keep the athletes safe and healthy.
- Carl Green – Mr. Green is the athletic director for Westlake High School in the Fulton County School System and has more than 16 years of coaching experience. All coaches are trained in CPR as well as the concussion and heat-related training offered through the Georgia High School Association. Emory Healthcare provides nearly all Fulton County schools with an athletic trainer. Mr. Green conducts many early trainings indoors to gradually increase training for student athletes during the hotter months of the year. Mr. Green also relies on the wet-bulb temperature to determine whether it is safe to practice or not. The wet-bulb temperature references Georgia High School Association’s policy that a scientifically-approved instrument that measures the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature be used to properly follow heat index activity and rest break guidelines. He also recommends practicing in the morning before school to avoid the hottest part of the day. Mr. Green stated the most important aspect of coaching is using common sense to keep student athletes safe.

Chairman Carpenter concluded the study committee meeting on August 23, 2019. This was the final study committee meeting for the Johnny Tolbert III House Study Committee on Heat-Related Injuries, Cardiac Injuries, and Other Sports-Related Injuries.

**Mr. Speaker, these are the minutes of your Johnny Tolbert III House Study Committee on Heat-Related Injuries, Cardiac Injuries, and Other Sports-Related Injuries.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kasey Carpenter', written over a horizontal line.

**The Honorable Representative Carpenter,  
District 4,  
Chairman Kasey Carpenter**