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THE RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY



Jon Heck Slotted to Speak at Adam Taliaferro Foundation 2009 Medical Symposium

Stockton's Associate Director of Athletics & Recreation to Address Prevention of Cervical Spine Injuries

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Galloway Township, NJ-Jon Heck, Associate Director of Athletics and Recreation at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, will be speaking at the Adam Taliaferro Foundation's 2009 Medical Symposium for health care professionals on Tuesday, September 29th at the William G. Rohrer Center for Health Fitness on the Virtua campus in Voorhees, New Jersey. Prevention, treatment and management of cervical spine and head injuries will be the main topics of discussion. The symposium runs from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Jon Heck's presentation titled, *Prevention of Cervical Spine Injuries: Working to Educate Your Coaches, Parents, and Athletes*, will begin at 8:50 a.m. and run for about half an hour.

Jon Heck graduated from Vineland High School in 1983, where he was a varsity baseball and football starter. He earned All-Area, All-County, and All-Press honors in football as a wide receiver. In 1989, he graduated from William Paterson University with a major in Movement Science and minors in Athletic Training and Literature with a concentration in Psychology. He went on to earn his master's degree in Exercise and Sports Science in 1991 from the University of Florida. He worked as a graduate assistant at UF for two years where he served as the Head Athletic Trainer at Gainesville High School and Supervisor of Alachua County Athletic Trainers. Finally, in September of 1991, he joined Stockton as the Coordinator of Athletic Training, and in 2008, he was promoted to his current title, Associate Director of Athletics and Recreation. In the past 18 years that Heck has been at Stockton, he has published 18 articles on prevention and management of athletic injuries. His primary interest is in the prevention of catastrophic neck injuries in football.

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Jon Heck: Expert in Prevention of Catastrophic Neck Injuries in Football / page 2

Approximately 10 to 15 athletes are paralyzed every year in football relating to cervical spine injuries. Another 10 to 20 athletes fracture their cervical spine without paralysis. The primary cause of cervical fracture with paralysis injuries is the initiation of head-down contact. Heck believes that most of these catastrophic injuries are preventable through education, coaching, practice and improved officiating. Heck's presentation will emphasize that making contact with the shoulder while keeping the head up greatly reduces the risk of these catastrophic injuries.

The Adam Taliaferro Foundation's mission is to provide "emotional, financial, and educational support to student-athletes who suffer catastrophic head or spinal injuries in sanctioned team events in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Delaware." In addition, the foundation provides financial and educational support for research, prevention, and care of such injuries. The Foundation's objective is to "share the information concerning all phases of Adam's medical treatment with every high school, college and professional football team in the country," and to "provide ancillary funding for injured athletes who need additional assistance."

Adam Taliaferro was an exceptional two-way back for Eastern Regional High School in Voorhees. On September 23rd, 2000, Taliaferro's life took a dramatic turn. Then a true freshman playing for Penn State, Taliaferro was paralyzed after breaking his neck and bruising his spinal cord while making a head-down tackle of an Ohio state player at Ohio Stadium. Two days later, Taliaferro underwent spinal-fusion surgery. Bone fragments were removed; a bone graft supported by a metal plate replaced the missing vertebra; and doctors gave Taliaferro a 3% chance of a full recovery. Three different doctors told Taliaferro's parents that their son would never walk again. Miraculously, three months later, he walked out of Magee Rehabilitation Hospital in Philadelphia.

For more information, please contact Jon Heck, Associate Director of Athletics & Recreation, at 609-652-4952 or heckj@stockton.edu.

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