



From the Field.....

NFMMC Athletic Training Newsletter

March 2026



Tony Surace, [M.Ed.](#), LAT, ATC: Director of Sports Medicine/Summit Rehab Manager/NFHS AT



“Care you can count on” is the theme of this year’s National Athletic Training Month for March, which is sponsored by the National Athletic Trainer’s Association (NATA), a not-for-profit organization based in Dallas, Texas. Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center employs (14) athletic trainers (AT) who work at local high schools and colleges in Niagara and Northern Erie Counties. We also provide athletic training coverage for other organizations such as the NYSAHA, AHIHA, and USA Hockey National tournaments held in WNY. We also provide sports medicine coverage for the Grand Island Little League summer baseball tournaments. Those high schools and colleges include: Niagara Falls High School, Niagara Wheatfield High School, SUNY Niagara, North Tonawanda High School, Grand Island High School, Kenmore East High School, Kenmore West High School, Tonawanda High School, and Charter School of Applied Technology. We partner with UBMD Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine in their Niagara Falls location at the Summit Healthplex which UBMDosm and NFMMC provide services that include: physical therapy, athletic training, summer strength and conditioning camps, Orthopaedics, Primary Care sports medicine and the UBMDosm concussion clinic. Athletic Trainers are involved in all of those components and are vital healthcare professionals to help patients with injury prevention, injury recognition, and injury rehabilitation. Next time you see your Athletic Trainer, say thank you for all they do to keep your children safe and healthy. For more information regarding our sports medicine program or schedule an appointment at the Summit Healthplex, Suite 600 office for care, call UBMD Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine at 716-204-3200 or for athletic training services from NFMMC, call 716-298-5903 for Summit Physical Therapy. To recognize our staff, I have asked them to tell us a little about themselves in honor of National Athletic Training Month and to thank them for ALL that they do.



Henry Luczak, LAT, ATC, CSCS, CEAS is the Assistant Director of Sports Medicine and is currently in his 21st year at NFMMC. Henry is the Athletic Trainer at SUNY Niagara. He is a CPR and First Aid instructor through the American Heart Association. He is also a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist.





Ana Salgado-Taylor, RMT, LAT, ATC, CAT(C) is currently in her 21st year at NFMCC. Ana graduated from Western university with a bachelor's degree in kinesiology and continued with post graduate studies at Sheridan College where she majored in sports injury management. She has been working at CSAT since 2018 as a certified Athletic Therapist/ Athletic trainer. Ana is also a Registered Massage Therapist.



Melissa Donato, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in her 13th year as the Athletic Trainer at Tonawanda High School through NFMCC. Melissa has been an Athletic Trainer at the D1 collegiate level and has spent time working in physical therapy clinics. Melissa graduated from Elmira College and has a Masters Degree from Central Connecticut State University. Melissa also serves as an AHA CPR instructor through NFMCC.



Darren Vukovic, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in his 14th year as the Athletic Trainer at North Tonawanda High School through NFMCC. A 2011 SUNY Brockport bachelor's degree and a Masters degree from Emporia State in 2015. His interests are in strength training and rehabilitating injured patients. He lives in Amherst with his wife and five children.



Joe Lojewski, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in his 7th year as the Athletic Trainer at Niagara Wheatfield High School through NFMCC. Joe graduated from Mercyhurst University with a bachelor's of science in athletic training in 2018 and graduated from West Virginia Wesleyan College with a master's of science in athletic training in 2019. Joe's daily responsibilities include injury evaluation, rehabilitation, and injury management.



Laura Ranieri, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in her 16th year as the Athletic Trainer at Kenmore West High School. 10th year through NFMCC. Laura received her Bachelor's in Physical Education with a concentration in Athletic Training from SUNY Brockport and her Master's in Health Promotion and Human Performance with a concentration in Performance Enhancement and Injury Prevention from California University of Pennsylvania where she received her Performance Enhancement Specialist certification.



Samara Johnson, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in her 3rd year at Grand Island High School through NFMCC. Samara received a Bachelors of Science in Athletic Training and a Masters of Science in Advanced Athletic Training at University of South Carolina. She is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Athletic Training with a certificate in Clinical Informatics through Ohio University. She has experience working in D1 athletics, NAIA, ROTC, secondary school, and youth sports.





Caleb Hancock, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in his 3rd year as the Athletic Trainer at Kenmore East High School through NFMMC. Caleb graduated from University at Buffalo with a Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and a Master's degree in Athletic Training. He has worked in a variety of settings that include: professional sports, JUCO, D1, and the secondary school settings.



Sara Minton, MS, LAT, ATC is currently in her 3rd year as the Athletic Trainer at Niagara Falls High School through NFMMC. Sara graduated from Arkansas State University with a Bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and a Masters in Athletic Training. Sara has experience working in D1 athletics such as Football, Women's Soccer, Track and Field, Baseball, NAIA, secondary school, and youth sports.



Per diem AT staff includes:

Andrew Brush, MS, LAT, ATC

Charles Geary, PT, DPT, LAT, ATC, Cert MDT

Kim Lubanski, MS, LAT, ATC

Kyle Wells, MS, LAT, ATC

NYS AT licensure news:

Effective December 22, 2025, the profession of athletic training became a licensed healthcare profession in New York State. This transition recognizes the essential role athletic trainers play in the health and safety of athletes and communities.

Written Protocols with Physicians:

Athletic trainers will practice under the continuous supervision of a physician. While direct physical presence of the supervising physician at the time and place of services is not required, a signed written protocol must be in place for supervision and practice, which:

- Describes of the nature and scope of athletic training services.
- Is mutually agreed upon by the physician and athletic trainer.
- Is reviewed annually.

Expanded Scope of Practice:

The practice of the profession of athletic training is defined as:

- The prevention, recognition, examination, evaluation, assessment, management, treatment and rehabilitation of athletic injuries.
- The recognition of illness and referral to the appropriate medical professional with implementation of treatment pursuant to physician's orders.

- Instruction to coaches, athletes, parents, medical personnel, and communities in the area of care and prevention of athletic injuries; and
- The use of clinically appropriate therapeutic modalities and techniques, including the use of physical, chemical, and mechanical means including the use of heat, cold, light, air, water, sound, electricity, massage, mobilization as it relates to athletic training, including non-thrust mobilization, and exercise; and
- appropriate preventative and supportive devices and temporary splinting or bracing.

Practice Locations:

Athletic trainers can perform athletic training under physician supervision and limits their practice to:

- Secondary and postsecondary schools
- Professional, amateur, non-profit, and dance organizations
- Military academies and facilities of the United States
- Fire and police training programs and academies
- Healthcare organizations and physicians' private practices

For more information re our Athletic Training/Sports Medicine outreach program, please contact Tony Surace at anthony.surace@nfmmc.org or visit our landing page at:

<https://nfmmc.org/programs-services/athletic-training/>

**Thank you
for catching up with us!**

As winter gives way to Spring, we're looking forward to the Spring sports season and taking care of our patients in a safe and timely manner. Enjoy the Spring weather!

Tony Surace, M.Ed., LAT, ATC

**Director of Sports Medicine/Summit Rehab Manager
NFHS Athletic Trainer
NFMMC**

