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Heart of the matter, part II

On April 25, my weekly column was all about the need for coaches to have CPR training.

Apparently around the time I was researching and writing that column, two things were happening that are directly related to it.

On April 22, the executive committee of the S.C. High School League approved a proposal requiring all coaches to complete the National Federation of State High School Associations' Sudden Cardiac Arrest course every year prior to the start of their season.

This is not CPR training, and from what I've heard, only includes watching a video, but it's a step in the right direction.

On April 24, Gov. Nikki Haley signed a law requiring

South Carolina high school students to learn CPR skills.

"Ronald Rouse's Law" was named after the Hartsville High School football player who collapsed and died during a game in 2012.

I remember very clearly the night Rouse died. I was on my way home from a Soconnet football game at Myrtle Beach High School when one of my coaches sent me a text message with the awful news. I could not fathom then, nor can I fathom now, what it must have been like on that sideline that night.

I also thought about the poor sports writers who had to cover that tragedy. One of the things I love about being a sports writer is that I seldom have to cover "bad" things.

I sit in a newsroom where

my fellow reporters often are working on stories about crimes, tragedies, illnesses, and the like. It's part of what newspapers do, and it's important. I just like that my job, mostly, involves cheering, applause and high-fives after a touchdown or a home run.

The majority of feedback on my April 25 column has been very positive. Several people have commented that the district should require CPR training for all teachers, especially at elementary and middle schools.

That's a great idea, too, but I'm a writer of a sports column so I'm just concentrating on coaches.

I did, however, have one coach tell me he didn't like the idea because he did not want

somebody's life in his hands. I also understand his point of view.

The Georgetown County School District already contracts with Tideland Health for the certified athletic trainers at the high school, as well as for voluntary CPR training.

The district also spent months of planning and working to get its high schools certified as a National Athletic Trainers' Association Safe Sports Schools. One of the NATA's recommendations is that coaches have CPR training.

The next logical step for the school district is a CPR requirement.

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The Sports Desk



with Chris Sokoloski