

COLD WEATHER P.14

NATM ACTION CHALLENGE P.20

HEART HEALTH P.26

# NEWS NATA

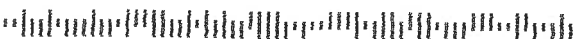
NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2020



## A 15-SECOND SAVE

A Day in the Life of an Extreme Sports Athletic Trainer



871223  
\*\*\*\*\*CAR-RT LOT\*\*C-014 MIX COMAIL  
JOSEPH SUSI  
650 W EASTERDAY AVE  
SAULT SAINTE MARIE MI 49783-1626  
430 83093 1772207  
0039 / 23560

# CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 2020  
VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2



## NEWS NATA

### Extreme Sports

Athletic trainer shares what it's like caring for this different type of athlete.

### 14 COLD WEATHER BEST PRACTICES

What to remember and review about environmental cold injuries.

### 16 A LOOK AT ESPORTS

How ATs fit in this billion-dollar, fast-growing sports industry.

### 20 HEALTH CARE IN ACTION

With March around the corner, now is the time to get ready for National Athletic Training Month.

### 26 AMERICAN HEART MONTH

From saving lives to legislative wins, this content series examines aspects of heart health, including a new heart-related infographic handout.

### 31 EDAC OFFERS GRANTS

Diversity Enhancement Grants are available to educational institutions seeking to enhance ethnic diversity within the profession.

### 32 TIPS FROM THE FIELD

ATs share how to pack an emergency kit to expedite care when time is of the essence.



Snocross runs from November to March during which temperatures can reach below freezing. Amy Metiva, AT, ATC, EMT, works as an AT with snocross athletes.

# Muscles, Brains and Quick Reflexes

**Extreme sports take a different breed of athlete - and athletic trainer**

By Elizabeth Quinn | Photos by Josh Sullivan/Papperazzi Imaging and Films

**O**n national television, during a motocross race in New York, a rider went down. In that moment, one of the team's athletic trainers, Amy Metiva, AT, ATC, EMT, had 20 seconds to get to him (10 seconds left), evaluate his status (8 seconds left), decide to stop the race or transport the rider (6 seconds left) and move out of the way before the next group of riders arrived (5 seconds left).

The finish line flagger warned Metiva there were riders inbound. Within those seconds, Metiva decided the rider was stable enough to move and had the rider sent in an ambulance to the hospital.

Seconds later, another rider – only 30 feet away – went down. Metiva once again had to jump into action to evaluate him and decide the outcome, which ended up being another hospital transport.

This was just another weekend for Metiva. When dealing with extreme sports – motocross, snocross and supercross – it takes a

tremendous amount of awareness, focus and quick thinking to care for each athlete.

## The First Step

Getting involved in such intense sports wasn't originally in the single mom's plans. However, after her company supervisor asked her if she would attend a snocross event, Metiva was drawn down the path to becoming an AT for snocross, motocross and supercross.

"When I got [to the snocross race], it was new," Metiva said. "I had to research it. I did a lot of YouTubeing researching the sport because I hadn't heard of it. [I was told] to do what I normally do [as an athletic trainer], and that was cool. I did such a good job that I did another event. After that event in April 2017, I was asked to be the lead AT and give a year commitment to go to every race for snocross. It was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

After providing medical care during more snocross events, FXR Mobile Medical Team, the snocross health care professionals, sent

Metiva to the Alpinestars, the title sponsor of the medical unit for motorsports, to get motocross and supercross experience. In July 2017, she walked into the situation knowing little about the sport.

It was 13 hours of being grilled about athletic training, Metiva said. She walked out of the experience unsure if she'd want to work another motorsport event.

"I learned a lot that day," she said. "I learned a lot of the rules and regulations. There's a lot going into it because it's on live TV, NBC Sports. There was a lot to do with the rider itself. You can die. This is a high-impact sport, and there's a lot of trauma, usually, if they do get injured."

What she learned with the Alpinestars about how to care for athletes, she brought back to her snocross team, and applied what she learned to restructure her team to better care for the athletes.

Before, the FXR Mobile Medical Team would provide care and be on the track during

races; however, following her training, the team became more visible. They created more structure to where they were placed on the track, ensuring they were where injuries might occur to better spot a crash when it happens and get to injured riders quicker. The trailer then became a medical center, making it a mobile ER beside the track, Metiva said.

Metiva didn't throw the towel in with motorsports. She went back to the Alpinestars to provide medical care during more events, and has been working with them since.

"With each team, you need to earn your space," Metiva said. "Just because you go, doesn't mean you get it. You have to earn a spot. I had to volunteer the first time and be a team player, and then everyone talks to each other to see if that person fits with the team. The team is close knit and out there saving lives together. As you earn a place on the Alpinestars team, you get more responsibility, earn trust and go to more events then get your hard card, [which are credentials for every race]."

### The Difference From Other Sports

Every sport has a possibility for injury, but extreme sports are more likely to have high-trauma injuries, such as severe neck and head injuries, according to a study presented at the 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. The injuries range from lacerations and fractures to neck sprains and concussions.

So what exactly constitutes something as an extreme sport? A 2017 study said, "extreme sports are usually pursued in remote locations with little or no access to medical care with the athlete competing against oneself or the forces of nature. They involve high speed, height, real or perceived danger, a high level of physical exertion, spectacular stunts and heightened risk element or death."

Metiva said there are several differences between extreme sports and other sports. For example, some extreme sports athletes have had a multitude of injuries that can contribute to future injuries. Metiva treated an athlete who landed on another rider midair, leaving them both unconscious. One of them said he broke his pelvis, which after evaluation, she determined he had. The reason he knew that was because he had broken the other side of his pelvis before.

"With snocross, you see a lot of tibia, fibula injuries, a lot of shoulders, but they're not normal shoulders," Metiva said. "They might be dislocated, but grade three is pretty normal to see. Sometimes even facial

lacerations if they hit the bars. Chest injuries if they hit the bar. Back injuries are a big thing because they are landing wrong when they land on the sled. At the end of the season, everyone is broken and landing wrong."

Another aspect of an extreme sport is dealing with extreme temperatures – both hot and cold. Snocross can take place in freezing temperatures, while in motorsports, it's not uncommon to be riding under a blazing sun.

"In extreme heat, make sure you're hydrated," Metiva said. "Races can be really hot, so we make sure all the medical personnel are hydrated because if we went down, we can't help the rider."

Metiva said there are also ice baths readily available during these especially hot days.

In the cold, such as negative 30 degrees, ATs have to make sure riders are not hypothermic, Metiva stressed.

"You have to make sure you, yourself, have the right protective clothing as well," Metiva said. "If you're too cold to help the rider, that's a problem."

Thankfully, the title sponsor does provide ATs with jackets, boots, gloves, long johns, etc., Metiva said.

On top of all of that, Metiva said snocross ATs have to trek through the snow, which can be a difficult task. With high altitudes and more energy being used to walk through



Metiva gets special equipment to wear during snocross to avoid freezing.

sometimes knee-high snow, if an AT isn't in shape, it can be the difference between life or death for an athlete.

## A Day in the Life of Amy Metiva, an Extreme Sports AT

**5:30 a.m.** Wake up, eat breakfast and get gear on for the day.

**6:15 a.m.** Leave for the track.

**7 a.m.** Set up the medical trailer – start generator, check equipment, tape and supplies.

**7:15 a.m.** Go on a tour of the track with the Polaris ranger to scout good locations for the ranger and personnel.

**7:45 a.m.** Medical meeting with local EMS providers and ambulance crew working with us for the weekend to review emergency action plans.

**8 a.m.** Riders meeting to discuss everything from where to find ATs to knowing who the staff is.

**8:15 a.m.** Racing starts, so either on the track or in the trailer working with athletes on taping, injury evaluations and injury prevention until the end of the race.

**6 p.m.** The night show starts, so everyone from the team is on the track until racing concludes.

**10:30 p.m.** Tear down the trailer, put everything away and pack it to travel to the next event.

**11:30 p.m. or midnight:** Grab something to eat at the end of the night and head back to the room to sleep.

## Muscles, Brains and Quick Reflexes

Additionally, when snocross ATs are running in the snow to assist athletes, they are wearing 50 pounds of equipment. Metiva makes working out a part of her routine to ensure she is able to keep up with the athletes and commotion that is extreme sports.

The final element to add to extreme sports is the TV aspect. There are a lot of rules and regulations for treating athletes on camera, how to do it and where to do it.

"You're on camera, so you have to do things quickly and escort [the athlete] into the trailer," Metiva said, adding that ATs also deal with journalists while abiding by HIPAA laws.

### Is It for Everyone?

According to Metiva, there's a misconception that being an AT for extreme sports is easy. The athletic trainer might stand up to 15 hours straight, Metiva said, explaining that the ATs are listening and looking to make sure everyone is safe.

"Are you scared?" Metiva asked. "Yep, but then you harness it in, suck it up and do what you need to do to take care of that person. You never see the crowd because you're so focused on what doing and the rider. [It's like] tunnel vision."

During some races, there can be up to 60,000 spectators watching. If a rider goes down, the AT has 15 to 30 seconds to get to them. Metiva said she never knows what she's walking into, adding that this job isn't for those who are squeamish. With high impact and high intensity comes high-trauma

### What's in an Extreme Sport AT's Bag?

- Ace bandages
- Avalanche shovel
- CPR mask
- Gauze
- Gloves
- Leatherman
- Oxygen
- Sam splint
- Stokes basket
- Splint bags
- Tape



Besides watching everything happening around them during the races, extreme sports ATs also have to be aware of their own bodies not getting too cold.

injuries that could have blood, broken bones and more. It's very possible for an athlete to lose a lot of blood after an injury.

"It takes a certain person," Metiva said about extreme sports. "It takes a person who doesn't care about being outside in the cold for 15 hours and work in the conditions we do, and we all have a place and role without an ego or conceited. We are not below or above anyone on that trailer. You have to be a certain person to do this, and if you're not, it's not the right field for you. It's not textbook. Everything you learned in a textbook, throw it out."

For example, one international athlete had hyphema, a pooling or collection of blood inside the eye, and couldn't fly for four days, making his stay in the U.S. longer than expected. As an extreme sports AT, even the travel for an athlete is part of the health care process.

"Everything I learned I've had to modify, so modify exercise, rehab for rider because they do a different sport," Metiva said. "I think outside the box a lot, but it challenges me to be a better AT. ... [The athlete is] depending on you to care for them to get back out there because they ride in order to make money."

To be an extreme sports AT, one has to be a little bit of a daredevil themselves, right?

"We have to be a little crazy because I'm getting on a track with bikes and sleds flying over at 200 feet," Metiva said. "I have an adrenaline rush all the time. I'm scared when

I get to accident and pray everything is OK. It's adrenaline from start to finish."

She said sometimes that can be useful, though, because extreme sports ATs see anywhere from 40 to 60 riders in a single weekend with a lot of them seen multiple times.

At national races, there can be riders from all over the world, making it a challenge to communicate with athletes.

"[I remember one Japanese athlete.] I didn't speak Japanese, so we were using Google translate to assess the athlete's injury until the translator came, and we laughed about the conversations we were having," Metiva said.

### Finding a Place in Extreme Sports

Metiva said at events, she sees young girls watching her. She hopes her involvement in extreme sports is an inspiration to them to follow their dreams.

"There are little girls looking up to me as a role model," Metiva said. "I tell my girls at the high school I work at every day that I'm getting better because every day you guys are watching. As I continue to grow, every day I get better to make you proud and see that you can achieve your dreams. It's humbling because at any time, this can be taken away."

The small-town girl from Fairgrove, Michigan, is also a single mother, which she said adds to not only her physical strength, but her mental strength.



While snocross takes place in typical winter conditions, motocross and supercross races can be the exact opposite and get pretty hot, which means ATs should pay close attention to athletes so they don't overheat. Pair the exhaust from the athletes' bikes and ATVs with blazing sun, and a rider could quickly overheat.

"[Some] people think that a lot of women can't have careers and be a mom," she said. "You can. It's hard, but you can as long as you have open communication with family and kids and have a support system."

Her two boys, Zack, 22, and Cody, 19, have been a large influence in Metiva's AT career. When she started her family, Metiva took a sabbatical in order to raise the kids. Once they grew up, she wanted to continue working as an AT. It was her sons who actually told Metiva to go after her dreams and return to athletic training.

"My youngest son was the one who told me [attending snocross] would look good on my résumé even if it was only that first weekend," Metiva said. "When looking in



my child's eyes and seeing the pride when talking about you, that is huge."

Now in her late 40s working for Plymouth Physical Therapy Specialists, in Plymouth, Michigan, Metiva didn't think she would start her professional career at 46. Through it all, Metiva has had a multitude of successes, such as becoming the lead AT for snocross and AT for MX of the Nations, the Olympics of motocross. She has

continuously proved that there is no age or gender for athletic training.

"I was in seventh grade, and I was an athlete and always hurt, and I picked up [the fourth edition of "The Principles of Athletic Training" by Daniel Arnheim and William Prentice] ... I fell in love with medicine and injuries," Metiva said. "I always wanted to be AT. I never changed, ever. Later in my career, I actually had the 10th edition of that book signed by Dr. Arnheim." \$