

ATHLETES SAVING ATHLETES.

is a program of
Advocates for Injured Athletes

CONCUSSION AND HEAD & NECK INJURIES DIABETES HEAT ILLNESS SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST ASTHMA



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ASA Ambassador: Nolan Crosson

Hometown: San Diego, California

ASA Focus: Teaching about diabetic warning signs, potential problem situations, and how to be prepared for an emergency.

Message: “For an athlete with diabetes, having some type of medical crisis is a matter of when, not if. Diabetics don’t always realize they are in danger when having a blood sugar reaction. Teammates can provide a critical first line of life-saving response.”

Nolan’s Story

A teenage athlete playing sports at an elite level is not the usual face of diabetes. Lacrosse defender Nolan Crosson was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when he was four years old. Healthy and athletic, no one suspected that an autoimmune disease had begun to destroy the insulin-producing cells of his body until Nolan began to lose weight and have intense thirst. His blood sugar was tested and found to be dangerously high. Nolan was immediately hospitalized and began a daily regimen of finger pricks and insulin injections.

The demands of managing a serious chronic disease are unrelenting and require many types of skill. Diabetic spokeswoman Mary Tyler Moore explains, “Both children and adults who live with type 1 diabetes need to be mathematicians, physicians, personal trainers, and dieticians all rolled into one. We need to be constantly factoring and adjusting.” In addition to food, exercise and adrenaline contribute to blood sugar swings.

Nolan now tests his blood sugar frequently and uses an insulin pump instead of injections. For a kid whose first word was “ball,” however, life without sports is not an option. Nolan relies on his teammates and athletic trainers to watch for signs that his blood sugar is too high or too low—both situations can be dangerous, and judgment is one of the first things to be affected. They know what to do if Nolan acts strangely, or becomes sick or unconscious. Living with diabetes may be difficult, but it doesn’t mean participating at the highest level of sports is unobtainable—being prepared expands the possible and saves lives.

Nolan is a senior at Santa Fe Christian high school, where he plays varsity soccer and is co-captain of the lacrosse team. For the past six years, he has played competitive lacrosse in tournaments throughout the East Coast and Mid-Atlantic. Nolan surfs with Insulindependence, a group dedicated to helping fellow diabetics achieve extreme athletic goals in triathlons, marathons, and outdoor expeditions.

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