



Above: GOOD CARE: Clarke Central High School athletic trainer Allison Palmer poses for a photo during a junior varsity football game on Sept. 20. Palmer attends all sporting events to give athletes medical assistance if necessary. "I'm here to take care of them and they can come to me with their injuries and I'll be there if anything happens," Palmer said. Photo by Krista Shumaker

PART-TIME TO FULL-TIME

Clarke Central High School head athletic trainer Allison Palmer is the first full-time athletic trainer in the school's history.

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At the start of the 2018-19 school year, Clarke Central High School full-time head athletic trainer Allison Palmer began working at CCHS. Palmer is the first full-time athletic trainer at CCHS and is replacing former part-time athletic trainer Ryan Johnson who resigned from the position last year.

Athletic trainers are responsible for providing care to athletes during the school day and during games.

"I provide medical coverage for all of the sports teams from acute care, meaning sideline coverage -- if someone gets hurt, I'm the one that's there when they get hurt. (I) run out there on the field and make sure that they're okay," Palmer said.

According to Athletic Director Jon Ward, the plan to hire a full-time athletic trainer originated at Cedar Shoals High School.

"CSHS, the other high school in the (CCSD) system, their situation was much worse than ours," Ward said. "They had a trainer periodically at best, and in athletics, when both schools are serving 600 to 700 student athletes in the various programs, the need for an athletic trainer to be on site and on campus full-time was paramount."

According to Ward, Piedmont Athens Regional reached out to CSHS Athletic Director Tony Derricotte and Ward, offering to place full-time athletic trainers in both high schools.

"(Piedmont Athens Regional) came to us with a proposal of giving and placing a full-time trainer in

both of the county high schools, Clarke Central and Cedar Shoals, and they're funding it totally the first year," Ward said.

Palmer believes that working through Piedmont Athens Regional will help her provide better support for athletes with injuries.

"The awesome thing with me working through Piedmont is it gives us the ability to have the support of a whole hospital system and it brings in this network of doctors and physical therapists behind us who help us to provide even better care for our athletes here," Palmer said.

According to Palmer, having a full-time athletic trainer brings various benefits.

"There is a big push (to hire full-time athletic trainers) because there is a huge need for athletic

trainers in a secondary school setting,” Palmer said. “High schools don’t have a lot of full coverage (and) full-time staff yet, and you have a ton of athletes who don’t get medical coverage.”

Athletic trainer supervisor Katie Terrell, who also works as the secondary school outreach coordinator for athletic training for Piedmont Hospital and Health Care, believes that shifting from a part-time to a full-time athletic trainer will help to better assist the student athletes.

“If someone is here consistently, they get to know the student athletes, get to know who they are and can better give them care and can also foresee an injury from start to finish,” Terrell said.

One of the primary responsibilities of an athletic trainer is to provide rehabilitation for athletes, so Palmer believes that having a full-time athletic trainer at CCHS is important for the safety of athletes.

“We really want to make sure our athletes have the care that they need (by) making sure that they’re

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--JA'MORRISHART,
varsity offensive lineman

practicing in the correct conditions, have the correct equipment, have everything that they need to stay safe if something happens on the field,” Palmer said.

Senior varsity football offensive lineman Ja'Morris Hart was assisted by Palmer after injuring his ankle on Aug. 24 during a game against Oconee County High School. Hart feels that Palmer’s suggestions for his injury were helpful.

“She told me what to do with my ankle. She told me to ice it, she pretty much told me everything,” Hart said. “It helped because I was on crutches for like two days, three days, and now I’m walking on it, with an ankle brace on it. What she’s doing, it helps.”

Freshman varsity softball outfielder Za'Mya Sims was injured on Sept. 4 during a game against North Oconee High School. According to Sims, Palmer was supportive in the medical treatment process.

“She was just making sure I didn’t have any fractures and she’s going to keep her eye on that, but it could be worse,” Sims said. “It could be a fracture in my back or it could just be a simple bruise on my bone. So she helped a lot, (with) making sure that nothing serious is going on with both of my injuries.”

Ward anticipates the hiring of a full-time athletic trainer to bring many benefits to CCHS.

“We want to provide the best care for student athletes possible. I mean, that’s what prompted us years ago to start pursuing this, and in this area it’s rare to have,” Ward said. 



Above: A HELPING HAND: Clarke Central High School athletic trainer Allison Palmer assists varsity football player Omarion Bell, a sophomore, after an injury during the CCHS vs. Cedar Shoals High School game on Sept. 28. Bell says that Palmer has been helpful and positive throughout his injury. “She puts us through very helpful rehab that gets us back on the field faster feeling 100 percent,” Bell said. “She gave me a wrap to put on my ankle for support and she told me to ice it every night.” Bell said. Photos by Kelly Fulford