

We are a coalition of youth lacrosse programs from across the state of Ohio. Our members are from Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo. Collectively our clubs involve over 5,000 families.

We are writing to ask that you reconsider your recent extension of the dead period through July 31. In your press release you state 4 reasons for the extension.

- consistent recruiting rules for all sports
- negligible impact on recruits
- the safety of high school athletes
- the safety of college coaches

The extension accomplishes none of these objectives. If anything it makes a bad situation worse in that it will definitely have a negative impact on the mental health of our players, deny the class of 2021 players any opportunity to be evaluated and recruited by college coaches and do nothing to improve the health and safety of the kids and coaches. Rather than work to ensure that the summer events happen in a safe and responsible manner, you just shut them down and deny the kids important opportunities.

The first point is that it will maintain consistent recruiting rules for all sports. However, this is untrue. The extension impacts every sport except football. For football, July is normally a dead period (first 24 days of July were previously slated to be a dead period) therefore this ruling has no impact on them. However, for every other sport, the summer tournament schedule is the key evaluation period for coaches across the country to visit events and evaluate players. Without the summer tournament most of these players will have no opportunity to be watched, evaluated and recruited.

This leads to the second point, that this extension will have a negligible impact on recruiting. This extension actually will deny all spring sport athletes the opportunity to be recruited. As a spring sport, our players do not get a senior year because admission decisions happen before one's senior season begins. That is why summer lacrosse is so important to the recruiting and college selection process. When you realize that these players lost their high school spring season and the recruiting opportunities that go along with that, you can see why this summer is so vitally important. The bottomline is that if there are no opportunities this summer these players will have permanently lost their final year of recruiting and the college opportunities that go with that. On that basis alone I would ask that the committee reevaluate this decision for all spring sports.

The third point is player safety. Player safety needs to include all aspects of a player's well-being, not just when they are on the field. Your committee needs to realize that the kids are the forgotten people in this quarantine. They are not getting sick or dying in great numbers (less than 30 kids under the age of 18 have died from this disease compared to over 200 from the Flu). Nor are they part of the exploding unemployment numbers which make the news. However, the impact on kids has been greater than the general population. They don't have the coping skills or experience that adults have and people aren't taking their concerns seriously. This quarantine is the equivalent of 100% unemployment for them. They have no school, no sports, and no physical contact with their friends. They are left with nothing. As a result, they are struggling and we are receiving hundreds of emails, texts, and calls each week from our families about their kids and the need to get them back into sports for their mental and physical health.

No one can say exactly what the final numbers will show but we can note that studies have shown that children who have been quarantined are nearly 5x more likely to show a mental health disorder than those not in quarantine (28% to 6%), 3x more likely to be clinically depressed, and 3x more likely to have high psychological distress. We know that a 1% increase in unemployment leads to a 1% increase in suicides and that suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in people age 10 to 24. In that regard, it is possible that nationwide we could see over 1,000 additional suicides and 10,000s of cases of depression and mental health issues if we don't find a way to help kids get back their lives. Allowing the kids to participate in summer tournaments will go a long way to helping them avoid these issues.

As for the physical health of the players every tournament director and club coach that we have spoken with has a strict set of protocols / guidelines that would allow us to safely and responsibly conduct summer tournaments. These protocols include player screening (*assessing for symptoms and taking of temperature*), field rules (*no community waterjugs, hand sanitizer at all fields, sideline distancing, etc*), equipment sanitizing (*all common areas will be cleaned after use*), and enforcement of social distancing rules for participants (players and coaches must refrain from high fives, handshakes and / or celebrations that entail physical contact) and spectator rules (no parents or spectators at the fields).

Fourth, the committee discusses a concern for the safety of the coaches. While this concern is noble it is completely misplaced. The coaches travel to the events in their own cars, they stay in lodging by themselves and they can easily maintain social distancing at a lacrosse game. Our games are outdoors where only 1 case of transmission has been recorded. Our games are on a 110 yard long field allowing for over 50 coaches at 6 feet of distance each. In addition, the CDC notes that the close contact needed to transmit the disease is either 15 minutes of face to face contact or 2 hours in the same enclosed space. Since the games are outside the second factor is not applicable. As for the first, simply put in place a no face to face contact rule for players and coaches. That way the coaches can evaluate players without the concern of face to face contact. This rule is already in place for many events and will cause no issues while allowing for evaluation this summer.

Finally, across the entire country we are seeing businesses, restaurants, churches, schools, parks, beaches, fields, schools and all facets of life opening up. All of these organizations have followed their state and the CDC guidelines and have been successful in providing more opportunities to people. At this time, the NCAA should be following suit and opening up opportunities instead of shutting them down. The NCAA mission is to do what is best for the student athlete. The extension of the dead period is not in the best interest of the student athlete but rather is detrimental to the very people you are supposed to help.

For these reasons we ask that the committee reconsider its' decision and allow college coaches to attend events in July where they can watch, evaluate and recruit players. You can still maintain the no personal contact rule if your staff deems it medically necessary but allowing coaches to watch players will not put anyone at risk while allowing the players the opportunity to get evaluated and improve their mental and physical health.

Sincerely

Woody Calleri
Burning River (Cleveland)
wcalleri@brlax.net
216.373.5684

Andrew Asmo
True Lacrosse (Columbus)
aasmo@truelacrosse.com
614.638.2537

Ed Alzapiedi
Black Swamp (Toledo)
bswamplax@aol.com
419.343.6016

Brian Lalley
Xcelerate (Cleveland)
blalley@xceleratelacrosse.com
716.860.4156

Chris Sautter
Blackjack Lacrosse (Columbus)
clsfurniture@sbcglobal.net
614.554.4782

Kristi Awalt
Velocity Lacrosse (Cincinnati)
kristi@velocitylacrosse.com
513-562-7331