



Hampden-Sydney College  
Q & A for Student-Athletes  
July 21, 2020

The Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) announced today the suspension of all ODAC competitions and championships for fall athletics until the spring semester and the delayed start of winter sports to no earlier than January 1. Anticipating that many of our students, parents, alumni, and fans will have questions, we have assembled the following Q&A and will do our best to answer any additional questions you may have. Much remains unknown about how COVID-19 will progress, and there are likely questions for which we don't yet have answers.

**Why did the ODAC and Hampden-Sydney make this decision?** Ultimately, this was the only decision we could make. The amount and frequency of testing that the NCAA is recommending for high contact sports (football and soccer) is not feasible for us, primarily because of the cost and availability of testing. There are also scenarios that we cannot address sufficiently, including the implications for teammates and competition if a student-athlete, coach, or athletic trainer tests positive for COVID-19.

**When will fall student-athletes report to campus?** Fall student-athletes will report to campus with the rest of the student body: Freshmen and transfer students report on August 20, and all others report on August 23. Please refer to the College website for guidance about this year's move-in process.

**Will any sports compete this fall semester?** Sports with fall championships (cross country, football, and soccer) will not compete this fall, but will instead compete next spring. Sports with split seasons (golf and tennis) may compete this fall as long as social distancing can be maintained and travel can be done in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines. Sports with winter championships (basketball and swimming) will not compete until January 2021 at the earliest.

**What will student-athletes be able to do with their teams on campus this fall?** Practices will be permitted in accordance with institutional, state, and NCAA safety protocols, which are ever changing. We will update our student-athletes as we get new information. Social distancing and smaller group activity will be the norm, whether for voluntary strength and conditioning, or team workouts and practices. Meetings and film sessions will be held remotely rather than in person.

Note that student-athletes must have a physical completed before they will be allowed to practice or work out. Freshmen and transfer student-athletes must have a physical completed before arriving on campus, and we recommend that all returning student-athletes have physicals before arriving on campus as well. Concussion testing will be scheduled within the first two weeks of classes. We are anticipating the NCAA will allow us the flexibility to use our available dates in a manner that best meets our teams' needs and training schedules.

**Will student-athletes have access to athletic training services this fall?** Yes, though procedures for accessing services may change, such as scheduling appointments to manage the number of student-athletes in the training room at any given time.

**Will all athletic facilities be open?** Facilities will be open for the campus community observing state and institutional guidelines, including physical distancing. We have not made a decision yet on the use of locker rooms.

**What will the fall sports season look like in the spring?** The ODAC will set a conference schedule sometime this fall. There will also be conference championship tournaments, except for football. Schools will need to commit to the schedule dates by December 1, and the conference office will develop the schedule. If institutions choose, and if opponents are available and time permits, they may add non-conference contests to their schedule.

**What makes you think sports will be possible during the spring semester?** When things shut down this past March, we thought that things would look much better in July, though that has not been the case. We are more optimistic about the spring because we have time to learn and plan based on experience we and others will have gained during the fall. We will also likely benefit from advances and cost reductions in testing, greater access to testing, and potentially a vaccine.

**What if we can't play in the spring or the spring season gets cut short?** On July 9, the NCAA issued a blanket waiver regarding eligibility for teams who play a limited number of contests, or whose seasons end prematurely. The waiver states that student-athletes will not be charged with participation for the 2020-21 season if their team can only complete 50% or less of the sport's maximum contests/dates of competition due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NCAA also approved a second blanket waiver which permits student-athletes to receive a two-semester/three-quarter extension of eligibility if the student-athlete is unable to participate in their sport during the 2020-21 academic year due to the impact of COVID-19 or if the student-athlete's team completed 50% or less of the sport's maximum contests/dates of competition due to COVID-19.

**Has the NCAA announced any changes to the 2020-2021 sports seasons or championships?** There have been no announcements regarding any adjustments to the NCAA length of seasons or championships.

**Can incoming first-year undergraduate students defer their acceptance to Hampden-Sydney?** Incoming first-year students considering a deferral should contact Dean of Admission Jason Ferguson ([jferguson@hsc.edu](mailto:jferguson@hsc.edu)) by Monday, August 3.

**Are returning students able to take a leave of absence for a semester or a year? What is the process?** Returning students considering a leave of absence should contact Registrar Dawn Congleton ([dcongleton@hsc.edu](mailto:dcongleton@hsc.edu)) by Monday, August 3.