

A Resolution in Support of Student-Athlete Agency and Autonomy

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WHEREAS, local and state reopening orders during the COVID-19 pandemic are accompanied by numerous health and safety standards, but most neglect to address key issues surrounding the protection of student-athletes during a return of college sports; and

WHEREAS, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) does not enforce health and safety standards, states that it has no duty to protect college athletes, and allows colleges to self-regulate and self-enforce their own adherence to health and safety guidelines¹; and

WHEREAS, the 2013 Team Physician Consensus Statement published by six medical associations states in part that ethical challenges in college sports include that those seeking financial gain may interfere with the well-being of athletes²; and

WHEREAS, UCLA Athletics's annual revenue exceeds \$100 million dollars annually, including the \$2.5 million that students contribute through student fees³; and

WHEREAS, a 2019 National Athletic Trainers Association survey found that 19% of trainers reported a coach playing a student-athlete who was deemed "medically ineligible for participation", and approximately three out of five trainers report being pressured about medical decisions by nonmedical personnel, despite NCAA guidelines discouraging such practices⁴; and

¹ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/dec/18/court-filing-ncaa-denies-legal-duty-protect-athlet/>
<https://deadspin.com/ncaa-lets-michigan-state-off-the-hook-in-nassar-case-1828719733>

² https://journals.lww.com/acsm-msse/Fulltext/2013/08000/Team_Physician_Consensus_Statement__2013_Update.24.aspx

³ https://features.dailybruin.com/2020/ballpark-figures/&sa=D&ust=1590195484490000&usg=AFQjCNFpOGM02zcaAzSwC-n6yb_bk0S7-A

⁴ <https://www.nata.org/press-release/062619/only-half-collegiate-level-sports-programs-follow-medical-model-care-student>
<http://www.chronicle.com/article/Trainers-Butt-Heads-With/141333/?cid=longform-related>
<http://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/why-the-ncaa-wont-adopt-concussion-penalties----at-least-not-yet/>

WHEREAS, the self-enforcement of health and safety guidelines by colleges has led to widespread mistreatment and abuse as well as serious injury and death among college athletes; and, if UCLA athletics and its opponents do not abide by COVID-19 health and safety standards, it may negatively impact UCLA student-athletes⁵; and

WHEREAS, college football players may face higher risks associated with COVID-19, as a disproportionate amount of college football players suffer from sickle-cell disease, heart disease, and hypertension,⁶ which are all risk factors for COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)⁷; and

WHEREAS, university and governmental discussions and decisions regarding the return to college sports have not included student-athletes, informed student-athletes on health risks, or made clear to student-athletes whether or not their scholarships may be affected if they decide not to participate during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls for student-athletes to have positions on all task forces or internal discussions related to return to practice and competition.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on UCLA to ensure that student-athletes are completely informed about COVID-19 health risks associated with their health, the health of their families, and the health of their communities so that they can make informed decisions.

⁵ https://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/14682233/university-california-admits-negligence-2014-death-lineman-ted-ag
<https://www.latimes.com/sports/ucla/la-sp-ucla-football-lawsuit-jim-mora-20190530-story.html>
https://www.pennlive.com/pennstatefootball/2018/05/sandy_barbour_muqtar_cal_penn.html
<https://www.pe.com/2019/09/14/the-pattern-of-alleged-abuse-that-forced-john-margaritis-out-as-ucr-coach/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/sports/ohio-state-sexual-abuse.html>
<http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2016/07/08/stanford-university-ncaa-facing-concussion-lawsuit-from-former-football-players/>
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/dandiamond/2012/10/27/arizona-just-broke-the-ncaas-concussion-policy-will-it-matter/#32316185d59b>
<http://deadspin.com/5949336/uscs-robert-woods-couldnt-keep-his-balance-after-a-helmet-to-helmet-hit-missed-one-play>
<http://www.cbssports.com/college-football/news/did-brady-hoke-send-shane-morris-into-the-game-with-a-concussion/>
https://sports.vice.com/en_us/article/usc-football-team-doctor-admits-to-ignoring-fda-and-ncaa-painkiller-regulations
https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/oregon-football-workouts-sent-players-to-hospital-who-will-stand-up-for-them/2017/01/17/1c0d7fae-dcf7-11e6-918c-99ede3c8c8c8_story.html
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/mike-rice-fired-by-rutgers-after-video-shows-coach-abusing-players/>
<https://www.1011now.com/content/news/Multiple-Nebraska-softball-players-filed-complaints--558838921.html>
<https://www.nj.com/rutgers/2019/10/rutgers-softball-players-say-they-were-physically-emotionally-abused-by-wife-husband-coaching-team-and-school-did-nothing.html>
<https://www.click2houston.com/news/2019/06/13/uh-announces-internal-review-following-kprc2-report-on-punishment-workout-forced-on-soccer-team/>

⁶ <https://prospect.org/health/playing-games-with-college-athletes-lives/>

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html>

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls for student-athletes to have a choice in deciding whether they return to college sports activities during the COVID-19 pandemic without the fear of the reduction and/or cancellation of their scholarship, threats, or retaliation of any kind.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls for further protections of the rights of student athletes past the pandemic and on into the future.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls for public health officials to identify and enforce health and safety standards related to COVID-19, and the prevention of serious injury, abuse, and death as a condition for resuming college sports activity. This should be funded by the university and include mandatory reporting of suspected violations witnessed by athletic personnel, whistleblower protections for those reporting a suspected violation; and the ability to retrain, suspend, or ban athletic personnel who violate such standards.

FURTHER LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC reaffirms the need to prioritize the safety of student-athletes during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic by giving them the space and position to directly express concerns to those with jurisdiction in deciding any of these matters, including the UC Regents, the UCLA Chancellor, the UCLA Athletic Director, and any public and/or elected officials.

FINALLY LET IT BE RESOLVED, the USAC calls on California Governor Gavin Newsom, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles City Council, the UC Regents, UCLA Chancellor Gene Block, and UCLA Athletic Director Martin Jarmond to immediately adopt the safeguards detailed in this resolution through their respective public health orders or university powers.