



NEW LEVEL NEWS

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COVERING THE EVENTS NO ONE COVERS

BROADCAST SCHEDULE

July 31 Harness Racing at LaGrange

August 1st Harness Racing at Lagrange

Coming this summer stock car coverage

This Week in Northern Indiana Sports and Community Events

Northern Indiana Media Show

This morning the Heartland Collegiate Athletics Conference released the following press release regarding its safe return to athletics plan: *“After extensive deliberations, the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference (HCAC) Council of Presidents has unanimously voted to modify the timing of conference competition and championships for fall sports classified by the NCAA as high contact risk (football, men’s and women’s soccer, women’s volleyball). The Conference will delay the start of those sports’ competitive seasons to the spring. The HCAC is committed to offering engaging athletic experiences for student athletes in these sports with extensive team activities this fall followed by spring competitive seasons. In adjusting to the challenges presented by the pandemic, these modifications place safety in the highest priority but help ensure the opportunity for as much participation as possible in each HCAC sport. - The decisions on shifting the competitive seasons for these high contact risk sports came after careful analysis of whether HCAC institutions could successfully fulfill NCAA testing recommendations without drawing vital health resources from their local communities. In addition, the conference feels that as continued scientific and testing gains are made with respect to the CoVid-19 virus, a spring season for the high contact risk sports will be safer for our student-athletes. Finally, with the recent NCAA waiver allowing for flexibility in how teams seasons are structured, the Council of Presidents felt that students could still have meaningful experiences this fall, even without conference competition. Based on their risk classifications as assigned by the NCAA, the HCAC will progress forward with fall seasons in the sports of golf, tennis and cross country. The Conference will also schedule some competitions for the sports of baseball and softball in the fall that will not count toward league standings. A decision on basketball (defined as high contact risk sport by the NCAA) will be made in the near future. Swimming and diving is classified as a low contact risk sport and will continue forward with their standard winter schedule. The Conference will continue to explore all options for a safe return to intercollegiate athletics. The HCAC leadership will communicate further developments regarding competition in 2020-21 as solutions are finalized and implemented. The priority of the HCAC and its Council of Presidents continues to be a commitment to the health and safety of everyone in our campus communities and those involved in intercollegiate athletics at HCAC member institutions.”* I am thankful for the thoughtful and purposeful approach that my colleague Presidents and the HCAC Commissioner, Mr. Jay Jones, used to come to this decision. The NCAA has provided clear guidance on testing and processes for each of the sports which helps to provide a safer return to athletics for our student athletes and athletics staff. As the release states, it is the priority of the HCAC and its Council of Presidents to be committed to the health and safety of everyone in our campus communities and those involved in intercollegiate athletics at our schools. It is also our priority to be able to provide an intercollegiate athletics experience for our student-athletes and our campus communities, even during this time. Athletic practice and competitive play is important for the physical and mental health of our students. We believe this can be done through our safer return to athletics plan

results of the rain shortened (round 1 was completed yesterday and round 2 was cancelled today) Indiana Junior Golf Masters event at Delaware CC in Muncie, IN can be found at: <https://igf.bluegolf.com/bluegolf/igf20/event/igf2049/contest/5/leaderboard.htm>

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Crossroads League Statement on Fall Sports

AVON, Ohio. – Crossroads League Commissioner, Larry DeSimpelare, issued the following statement on Monday while addressing the league's plans for the upcoming fall sports seasons.

Crossroads League Statement

The Crossroads League supports the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) governing body and the difficult decisions being made around the country. Our Council of Presidents and Athletic Directors continue to meet and assess competition within the Crossroads League. The Crossroads League is committed to holding athletic contests for the 2020-2021 school year. The commitment follows the current guidelines established by our local and state health departments, the Centers of Disease Control and the NAIA. If changes occur within any of these organizations, the Crossroads League will assess recommendations and make appropriate adjustments to our planned schedule of athletic competitions. Our administrators and leaders have been tremendous advocates for the health, safety and well-being of all coaches, support personnel and student-athletes. The Crossroads League is committed to providing the best practices available to maintain safety and health of our student-athletes and athletic personnel. We will continue to monitor this situation daily and diligently work to fulfil our obligation to our members and student-athletes to explore all options for competition, with health and safety as a priority.

South Bend Cubs Host

Chicago Cubs Watch Party July 31

The Cubs game will be shown on the video board with concessions available for purchase.

SOUTH BEND, IN – The South Bend Cubs are proud to announce four Chicago Cubs Watch Parties will be held at Four Winds Field this season. The first event will be held on Friday, July 31 as the Chicago Cubs face the Pittsburgh Pirates. Gates open at 7:00pm ET with first pitch scheduled for 8:15pm ET. Additional dates to be announced in the coming weeks. In conjunction with Marquee Sports Network, the games will be shown on the video board. General admission tickets are \$15, and fans can sit in the seating bowl or in the outfield grass. Fans will be allowed to bring blankets for the field, but umbrellas and lawn chairs are prohibited. Only 1,500 tickets will be available for this event and available by [clicking here](#). The South Bend Cubs will also offer a special VIP package. The Outdoor Suite package allows for six people to watch the movie from one of the outdoor suites and includes a voucher for each guest to receive a hot dog or burger, bag of chips, and soda. The package also includes two vouchers good for a tub of popcorn. Food vouchers must be redeemed at the concession stands. Table service will not be provided. Only six suites will be available and can be purchased at [SouthBendCubs.com](#). Like movie night, two concession stands will be open as well as two Steakadelphia stands. There will be multiple beer stands open including the Miller Lite Tiki Hut. The Cubs Den Team Store will be open with a special Cubs sale and the splash pad will be on. This event will follow the State of Indiana's Phase 4.5 guidelines policies set by the CDC. Fans will be asked to keep at least six feet away from guests they do not know. Hand sanitizers will also be placed throughout the concourse. Beginning July 27, Governor Holcomb has issued an executive order requiring all Hoosiers to wear a face mask when in public spaces (indoor and outdoor) when 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained. When individuals are standing in line for concessions, drinks, bathrooms, or where people will need to congregate, a mask shall be worn. Exceptions to this rule are those with a medical condition that prevents them from safely wearing a mask and any child 2 and younger. Once individuals are back within their family unit, they can remove the mask.

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Bluffton's teams will have a selected number of practice days in the fall, and based on testing availability and COVID rates at the time, hopefully some joint practices and competitions with regional teams. Any competitions will count towards the season records; but any games against conference teams will not count towards the conference season standings. These teams will then re-start their season in the winter months and compete for the conference titles in the spring. **Baseball and Softball** have been determined to be "medium risk" and will have longer fall seasons with practice and competitions. These games will count towards season records; but any games against conference teams will not count towards the conference season standings which will remain in the spring. It is not known at this time if baseball and softball will be able to travel south for spring break games this year and the games in the fall season will make up for those missed games. Baseball and softball will then restart their season in the spring with practices and all conference games. **Cross Country, Men's and Women's Golf and Track & Field (indoor and outdoor)** have all been determined to be "medium to low risk" and at this point, there is no change to their seasons except they will have no overnight trips. **Men's and women's basketball** competitive seasons are still being evaluated; at this time practices and scrimmages will continue as planned per the NCAA guidelines. There are many questions still be answered; How many practice days in the fall? How many games? What happens with JV games? and many more questions that are yet to develop. Bluffton's Sports Medicine staff have been working hard to develop policies and procedures regarding testing and daily athlete/team care per NCAA policies. Bluffton's plan is in final review by the HCAC and will be shared with athletes and posted on the web site. I am asking for your patience and support as we continue to work through these details. We understand the urgency for some of these answers, especially for move back to campus dates. Coaches will be in contact with teams frequently during the next three weeks. I very much appreciate our coach's efforts to reorganize their fall plans in a short window of time. I have also made the commitment to work with the sports medicine staff and our local medical and testing locations to ensure that the testing needs of Bluffton University student athletes successfully fulfills NCAA testing recommendations without drawing vital health resources from our local communities. I am also making the commitment to direct a portion of the University's COVID Relief monies to help cover costs of initial testing for student-athletes. Now that we can plan for home athletics contests, and as part of the #ProtectTheDam plan to keep the Bluffton bubble as safe as possible, it is clear that we need to limit crowd sizes at all home athletics contests, both inside and outside facilities. All students, faculty and staff will be encouraged to attend home contests and at no charge. Unfortunately, this year Bluffton University will not permit families of students, faculty, staff or off-campus community guests and visitors to attend home games. Game Day recruit visits will be permitted, but in a controlled environment. Each of the HCAC schools are setting their own policies on visitors based on their local situations. As a parent of former student athletes, I know how important all college games are for families. And I am especially sad that families of seniors may not be able to join their students on campus for their final games. We are working to provide live streaming for as many home athletics contests as possible so all families and friends can cheer on our Beavers from your homes. I am committed to re-examining this decision as we all work through the coming months. If COVID rates and warning levels improve, my hope is we can be more open to our visitor policy on campus as the academic year continues. We are excited for the return of our student athletes to campus and to resume practicing, and playing, as safely as possible. Go Beavers!

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FORT WAYNE, Ind. - Purdue Fort Wayne softball head coach Germaine Fairchild announced on Monday (July 27) that three student-athletes have signed to play for the Mastodons in 2021: Alyson Wiesehan (Woodburn, Indiana/WoodlanHigh School), Madisyn DeKock (Wheatfield, Indiana/Kankakee Valley High School) and Kennedy Steele (Fort Wayne, Indiana/Concordia Lutheran/Lansing Community College).

"We are very excited about the addition of these three Indiana natives to our Mastodon softball family," Fairchild said.

Wiesehan is a 5-foot-5 righty that plays third base. She earned four letters at Woodlan, playing for father, Dennis. She had a career batting average of .491, an on-base percentage of .549, and a .678 slugging percentage. In her first season with the Warriors, Wiesehan was selected to the All-Allen County Athletic Conference Second Team, then picked up First Team distinctions as a sophomore and junior. She was also named an All-State selection in 2018 and 2019, with third and second team honors, respectively. Wiesehan was also a News Sentinel All-Area Team member in 2018. Wiesehan played club ball for the Fort Wayne Lady Spiders (2015-17), the Summit City Thunder (2018), and the Summit City Select (2019-20). With the Thunder, she led the team to a first-place finish in the Midwest Firecracker 'A'. When she was with the Summit City Select, she helped the team to finish first at the NSA 'B' World Series, the Indiana NSA 'B' State, and the USFA 'B' State competitions.

"Alyson is one of the most dedicated kids you'll meet, and it shows in her academic success, her on-field tenacity, and the joy she gleans from giving back to her community," Fairchild said.

DeKock is 5-foot-4 and played first base for Kankakee Valley. Batting right-handed, DeKock had a .361 bating average and a .650 slugging percentage. She also recorded 30 hits, 23 RBIs, 20 runs and six home runs in her final full season. In 2017, she led the Kougars to a state runner-up finish. In her senior year, she was selected to the Academic All-Northwest Crossroads Conference Team in 2020. DeKock was also a member of the Sunshine Club and Hospitality Club, and was a freshman tutor. DeKock played club softball for the Lady Playmakers (2014-15), Illinois FIre (2015-16), Indiana Fury (2016), and NWI Sox (2018).

"Madisyn is a consummate team player with the competitive fire necessary to compete every day," Fairchild said. "She leads by example in the classroom, on the field, and through coaching and mentoring youth softball players in her community."

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The Missouri Valley Conference Presidents Council has announced that it will delay the start of competition in MVC fall sports until Friday, Sept. 18, and the league will conduct conference-only competition in men's soccer, women's soccer and volleyball.

This decision does not include football-playing institutions that compete in leagues with separate governing bodies (members of the Pioneer Football League and the Missouri Valley Football Conference). It also does not include non-MVC sponsored sports in which Conference institutions compete.

Fall competitive schedules for men's and women's cross country, men's and women's golf, and women's tennis will also be delayed until Sept. 18, as will the non-championship fall seasons for baseball and softball. Additionally, the start of fall practice for all MVC-sponsored sports may not start before Aug. 17. Beginning with Sept. 18, student-athletes in those sports may compete against non-conference competition, provided that non-MVC institutions meet the necessary safety specifications as outlined in the NCAA's Resocialization of College Sports Guidelines.

At this time, schedules for winter and spring sports are not impacted. MVC championship models for fall sports as previously announced are also not impacted. MVC institutions may continue with permissible athletics activities at their discretion under approved safety protocols established in the NCAA's Resocialization of College Sports Guidelines, while following state, local and institutional policies.

The MVC and its Presidents Council will continue to monitor national developments and, if necessary, will consider additional action as dictated by circumstances.

Steele is a 5-foot-7 utility player who bats and throws from the right. She returns to Fort Wayne after spending two seasons at Lansing Community College, where she was selected to the All-Michigan Community College Athletic Association Second Team. She batted .406 while slugging .629 in her two years with the Stars. While playing for Concordia Lutheran in the Summit City, she recorded a .667 batting average and a 1.203 slugging percentage as a senior. She is the program record holder for the Cadets in batting average, triples and stolen bases. Steele was named to the All-Summit Athletic Conference all four seasons: Second Team as a freshman, and First Team from then on. She earned a place on the All-State Second Team in 2018, and was an Indiana All-Star. She also earned a place on the All-Area Team in each of her final three seasons. Both her parents were collegiate athletes at Division III Concordia University Chicago. Her father played football and her mother played softball.

"Kennedy grew up on the Fort Wayne softball scene, making a name for herself with the Fort Wayne Spartans, and Concordia Lutheran High School," Fairchild said. "Her two years of collegiate experience at the junior college level will help us hit the ground running in our first Horizon League season."

The trio will join the previously signed Jadelyn Johnson, Megan Mullaney, Alyson Quinlan and Olivia Stinson to play for the Mastodons in 2021.