



News Release

For Immediate Release – 11/2/2020
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Ridgewater Announces Decision to Suspend Winter and Spring Sports

HUTCHINSON and WILLMAR, MN – In the interest of college and community safety with the ongoing pandemic, Ridgewater College has suspended all sports activities for the rest of the academic year. No organized team activities or competitive events will be held for basketball, wrestling, baseball and softball.

The difficult decision, which impacts about 80 students, was reached by Ridgewater College President Craig Johnson after extensive discussions with the Minnesota State System Office and college stakeholders, as well conducting a college-wide survey to gain feedback. “It was vital to have feedback from our campus community,” said Craig Johnson, Ridgewater College President. “The primary finding from the survey was the importance of consistency between how we handle instructional delivery and how we handle athletics, and a significant view that athletics is an important part of our college, but it is not equal to our academic programs in terms of importance to our mission.”

In addition to the survey results, other factors were taken into consideration when making the decision. Johnson noted that athletics is part of student life in the college and the College is not allowing any face-to-face student life activities this year. The College is also not allowing key in-person events and activities to occur in our academic programs that are important to the program student experience. “It is important that we align our stance on athletics with our stance on instructional delivery this year,” Johnson said.

Ridgewater Athletic Coordinator Todd Thorstad is disappointed the Warriors won’t compete the remainder of the year. “We were very optimistic that our teams would be able to play. It was difficult to share the news with our coaches and student athletes last week. Everyone was saddened by the decision.”

Ridgewater hopes to return to a normal year of athletics activities in the 2021-22 academic year. “Our athletes and coaches are resilient,” Thorstad noted. “While COVID-19 may have halted our seasons, we plan to come back even stronger after the pandemic ends.”

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 340,000 students. It is the third largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.

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