**Georgia College Athletics**

**Return to campus planning document**

This document will provide a detailed plan of how the Department of Athletics will handle the transition process back to campus for the Fall of 2020 in accordance with the University System of Georgia as well as all other applicable state and local agencies. Our student-athletes and staff are part of the greater Georgia College community and will align with all campus initiatives regarding everyday campus life.

All guidelines put forth in the Reopening Procedural Document for Georgia College Workplace & Health Safety will be followed as well as the recommendations from the American College Health Association.

<https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Considerations_for_Reopening_IHEs_in_the_COVID-19_Era_May2020.pdf>

<https://www.peachbelt.com>

<https://www.ncaa.org>

The multiple scenarios for the fall semester to be addressed will include:

1. Academic Year 2020-2021 Start – Fall classes begin with limited social distancing expectations.
2. Contingency Plan 1 – Fall classes begin with social distancing expectations.
3. Contingency Plan 2 – Fall classes begin fully online.
4. Contingency Plan 3 – Classes and operations must go to an online format for a period of time during the semester.

**Georgia College Athletics - COVID-19 Action Team**

1. Wendell Staton - Athletics’ Director
2. Steve Barsby - Assistant Athletics’ Director
3. Sarah Fuller - Athletic Trainer
4. Dr. Stephen Niergarth - Team Physician
5. Jamie Grodecki - Senior Women’s Administrator
6. Dr. JJ. Arias – Faculty Athletics Representative
7. Gretchen Krumdieck - Coach Representative
8. Dr. Jake Grazer - Director of Strength and Conditioning
9. Dr. Steve Wilson - Director of Counseling Services
10. Britt McCrae - Director of Student Health Services

**Scenario #1**

**Scenario #1 would be a return to normalcy for athletics and changes would be made to enhance the cleanliness and hygiene of all areas moving forward.**

Scenario #1 entails a return to the new normal where operations will run with all programming moving forward with enhanced sanitation protocols.

**Athletic Facilities:**

All athletic facilities are maintained by Georgia College Plant Operations as part of their regular maintenance schedule. Issues that will be addressed moving forward will include the following:

1. Deep cleaning of all common areas in facilities before they are utilized by students, staff, and the general public coordinated through Plant Operations.
2. Deep cleaning of all non common areas in facilities before they are utilized by students and staff coordinated through Plant Operations. (Areas include-concessions stands, weight room, testing room, locker rooms, athletic training rooms)
3. Facility and common areas will be thoroughly cleaned on game days when the facilities are open to the public and then cleaned once the venue is vacated or first thing the following day.
4. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the facility in critical areas for attendees to utilize.
5. Signage will be placed throughout all athletic facilities reminding attendees about social distancing norms to be followed.

**Weight / Fitness Room utilized by student athletes and staff:**

1. Room to be cleaned thoroughly once a day scheduled through Plant Operations.
2. Equipment and apparatus to be wiped down after each group workout.
3. Increased hand sanitizing stations and cleaning supplies to maintain an appropriate level of cleanliness.
4. Rearrange equipment where practical to include limited social distancing.
5. Signage to include social distancing norms.

**Sports Medicine / Athletic Training Facilities:**

1. Athletic training room (ATR) will remain closed until deep cleaning has been completed.
2. Athletic training staff will utilize PPE for treatment of student-athletes.
3. Student-athletes (SAs) will schedule appointments with athletic training staff.
4. A limited number of student-athletes will be allowed in ATR at one time for treatment/evaluation.
5. SAs will adhere to scheduled appointments outside of emergency situations.
6. Social distancing guidelines will be instilled to allow adequate space between treatment areas.
7. Treatment areas will be disinfected after each use.
8. ATR will be disinfected entirely before opening and before closing.
9. Designated handwashing and hand sanitizer stations will be set in multiple locations for SAs and employees to use pre and post treatment.
10. Educational materials will be provided to SAs and coaches and posted around the athletic training room concerning proper COVID-19 health and safety measures.

 **Sports Medicine / Athletic Training Game Day Protocol:**

1. ATR treatment areas will be disinfected prior to home and visiting team arrival.
2. Treatment areas will be disinfected after each use.
3. Teams not traveling with an athletic trainer will travel with designated kit (and game towels if needed).
4. Game day towels will be designated to single person use to limit cross-contamination.
5. Visiting teams traveling without an athletic trainer will be required to complete a treatment form for SAs needing taping or pre-game treatment.
6. ATR, team benches, and coolers will be disinfected after game

**Return to Campus Physicals:**

1. Teams will report to physicals at staggered times on dates which are approved by University System of Georgia guidelines.
2. Limited number of SAs allowed in Centennial at certain times.
3. Exam tables will be disinfected after each use.
4. An added COVID-19 questionnaire will be included in physical forms.
5. SAs have the option to complete a pre-participation physical with a home physician before returning to campus.
6. All international students will follow travel guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

<https://www.nata.org/sites/default/files/icsm_return_to_campus_packet_covid19.pdf>

<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/core-principles-resocialization-collegiate-sport>

<https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Considerations_for_Reopening_IHEs_in_the_COVID-19_Era_May2020.pdf>

**Concession areas:**

1. Area to be cleaned thoroughly before and after game day events.
2. Gloves / facemasks to be worn by concession staff.
3. Non-cash payment process.

**Scenario #2**

**Scenario #2 consists of Contingency Plan 1 which is Fall classes begin with social distancing expectations.**

The Athletic department Covid-19 Committee recommends there be no athletic competition and traveling if social distancing measures are in place. To allow competition would be unfair to our student-athletes since it exposes them to greater risk than the general student population. Adequate social distancing during athletic competition is either impossible or extremely difficult, depending on the sport. An effective social distancing policy should be consistent and comprehensive. Requiring student athletes to sit six feet apart in the classroom and then allowing them compete at close quarter a few hours later fails this standard. One argument for allowing competition under social distancing guidelines is that athletics departments can employ extra resources to mitigate risk. This approach would involve frequent testing and health screening of athletes, coaches and staff, as well as more extensive cleaning and disinfecting. However, Georgia College does not have these extra resources given the current fiscal environment.

**Roles of Athletic Staff**

Athletics staff members are in a high touch role for the institution. Recruiting and promoting Georgia College on a daily basis is part of their job. They understand the mission of the University and are glad to contribute and work towards the goals of the campus every day. **In a non-competition, non-travel world where students are still on campus, athletic staff will continue to work with and mentor student-athletes individually. Additionally, athletics staff should be utilized to coach / mentor the general student population as well as recruit for the general campus as admissions counselors for the Department of Admissions / Enrollment Management**. The relationships that coaches develop with their student-athletes last for a lifetime and this same relationship can be brought to the general student population that could build loyalty and trust for many years to come.

These coaching relationships have been very productive over the years for the student- athletes and would be a tremendous asset to the general student population as they navigate through their college journey.

1. Georgia College student-athletes are #1 in the USG in the most recent class measurement, and #1 in the USG with the most recent 4 class average
2. Georgia College student-athletes earned a 3.31 GPA last year, once again higher than the student body
3. Georgia College student-athletes have had six GC Valedictorians over the last six years.
4. Georgia College Athletics:
	1. Has NO formal academic support program (many large institutions spend millions on this)
	2. Our student-athletes have access to the same support services as all GC students
	3. Has ZERO “admissions exceptions”
	4. Has the same characteristics as the student body from an admissions standpoint
	5. Are active in the same majors as the regular student body
	6. Has higher graduation rates as it relates to the regular student body

Student-athletes are the exact same as the student body, but they do graduate at a higher rate and have a higher GPA. They practice 20 hours per week and travel throughout the southeast during their seasons (which averages closer to 40 hours per week of contact with their Head Coach and teammates during the busy season). As an institution, we pride ourselves on “High Impact” practices and our student-athletes participate in the highest impact program on campus and participate in the best “leadership lab” on campus each day at practice. Georgia College Athletics, in compliance with social distancing standards set by state, local, and the USG could maintain a productive course of training and interaction with student-athletes. In eliminating all competition we would utilize creative solutions to continue training and meeting regularly with our student-athletes, training mentally and physically without having physical contact with one another and without use of sport specific equipment.

1. Coaches continue a conditioning regimen for the student-athletes that does not require equipment to be shared and meet in smaller groups.
2. Weight Room will be utilized with proper cleaning strategies in place. We would minimize group size allowed in the weight room at one time and clean equipment between each group entering the weightroom.
3. Coaches can meet with student-athletes to discuss game strategy, personal development, etc. on an individual / small group basis.
4. Coaches can conduct team building/leadership development/mental training sessions with the team in a classroom setting in accordance with campus meeting space protocols.
5. Student-athletes will be able to utilize the athletic training room for rehabilitation and treatment keeping all CDC and social distancing procedures in place.
6. A student-athlete's team is their family at GC. It is important they have the ability to connect with their teammates and coaches in a safe environment and continue to grow as athletes, students, and individuals.

**Scenario #3**

**Scenario #3 consists of Contingency Plan 2 where classes begin and meet fully online for the semester.**

In this scenario, the department of athletics would utilize what is outlined in Scenario #2 in regard to departmental staff serving as mentors / life coaches / advisors to the student-athletes as well as the general student population. The role adjustment to working as part of the Enrollment Management staff would be implemented in Scenario #3 and all face to face interaction with student-athletes would cease.

**Scenario #4**

**Scenario #4 consists of Contingency Plan 3 where classes and operations must go to an online format for a period of time during the semester.**

The athletic department would defer to all Georgia College, University System of Georgia, local health authorities as well as the CDC if there is a format change midstream during the semester and fall in line immediately to all applicable standards.

The department would operate with the standards outlined in Scenario #1 and immediately move to Scenario #3 in accordance with Student Life and University direction.