Coronavirus: Preparation & Perspective

Whether or not your local community has reported cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), it’s almost certain efforts to stop the spread of the global pandemic are having an affect on local schools, businesses and sports. While sports are very quickly put into perspective at a time like this, they are nevertheless an important part of the lives of so many children and adults across America. At Play Like a Champion, we are praying for all those impacted by the outbreak, while doing our best to aggregate information for leaders in our national community and consult where asked.

We know that the safety of families is of the utmost importance for each of our partners. It is critical that anyone in charge of a team, school or an athletic organization/league take precautions and make plans to safeguard the athletes, coaches and parents in your community. Many of you have already acted swiftly to enact additional safety measures, while some of you have had to make difficult decisions regarding games and events; we applaud each of you for your commitment and care for the children and families in your community.

We encourage you to continue to keep up to date with the latest news, information and expert recommendations. A good starting place is visiting the CDC website, which has a page dedicated to all things coronavirus. We also encourage you to monitor your local news and listen to health officials for information about its affect in your area. As of this writing, the CDC has officially recommended that for the next 8 weeks all events with over 50 people are canceled or postponed (click link for additional information). We understand this may have a dramatic affect on many of our partners, particularly with spring sports. If we can do anything to assist you during this time, please let us know.

As another resource, the Aspen Institute’s Project Play initiative has created a dedicated website on Coronavirus and Youth Sports to aggregate actions being taken by youth leagues across America. Visit this terrific page for the latest expert recommendations, themes and resources related to the impact of the virus on youth sports. You can also subscribe to our free Friday Morning Rally newsletter for weekly updates on how communities across the country are handling the situation (our latest issue covered the recent news extensively). Our hope is that aggregating this information may help leaders as they consider next steps in their own organizations and schools.

In addition, please know that we are monitoring this situation closely as it relates to this summer’s Play Like a Champion Today Sports Leadership Conference. Given all the information currently available, the conference remains scheduled for June 26-27th. It is our hope that current precautions will mitigate the spread of the virus so that we can safely gather this summer as planned.

Sports provide an important physical, mental and social endeavor for our children, with many health benefits that can be a great positive in light of global concern. We encourage all administrators, coaches, parents and athletes to exercise prudence and caution while navigating these uncharted waters. Let’s do our best to keep our athletes in the game long-term, while keeping everyone safe during the current situation.
We want to hear from you! What precautions are you taking to combat coronavirus in your team or league? Whether you're in a community with zero cases or one that has seen a major affect, we'll collect best practices to share with others who may be considering how to respond. Email us at information@playlikeachampion.org.

Saint of the Week: Saint Patrick is a Model for Student-Athletes

Saint Patrick was born late in the 4th century in Britain and sold into slavery in Ireland as a teenager. During captivity Patrick had a conversion and later in a dream, received a call to return to Ireland and convert a population that was mostly pagan. Patrick spent nearly 40 years preaching to the people of Ireland, leading thousands to God through his wise teaching, passionate defense of the faith, and perseverance in the face of difficulty and violence. During this time many of the legends we now hear about Saint Patrick began to spread, including his use of shamrocks to explain the Holy Trinity and his driving all the snakes out of Ireland. His example of fortitude and his ardent defense of the faith in a society that rejected God provide a great example, as does his commitment to the mission on which he was called. If our athletes strive to model these virtues in their own calling, they too can succeed in becoming leaders (and saints!) in their team and community.

A Novena to Our Lady

While studying in Germany, Pope Francis came across a painting that depicts Mary patiently undoing the knots in a long cord. The original was painted in 1700 by Johan Schmidtnner and hangs in the Church of Saint Peter in Augsburg, Germany. Pope Francis took a copy of the painting to Argentina and he spread a devotion to Our Lady Undoer of Knots there. In a difficult situation like the one we now face, this prayer can be a powerful request for the intercession of Our Lady. Here is the Opening Prayer:

Mary, you are our tender and loving Mother. From the first moment of your being, you were filled with grace and blessing. You responded with faith and total abandonment to the good will of the Father. By your faith and obedience you untied the knot of sin caused by the sin of our first parents. We come to you today and present our petition: for the healing of all those with COVID-19 and protection from the virus. Though it seems impossible that this knot can ever be undone, we believe in your never-failing intercession. We thank you for hearing our request and we ask that you present it to your Son, Jesus, who always listens to your prayers.

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Play Like a Champion Today Educational Series
PO Box 72, Notre Dame, IN 46556 | information@playlikeachampion.org
www.playlikeachampion.org

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