

# **Zanolle: Division I College Football has Dropped the Ball with Handling Coronavirus**

## Alexander Zanolle

2020 has been a year unlike any other. The coronavirus pandemic has affected every corner of the country, and college football is no exception.

For most businesses throughout the country, how they responded to the situation determined their success. We should have known, given its history, that college football would whiff on the opportunity to tackle the coronavirus correctly.

Although it is surviving, for now, their protection plans were not developed well and have not been completely cohesive throughout every team.

Without a predetermined plan and precautionary measures for each and every team, college football still continues to steam roll ahead. It was the immense question the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and college football administrators were faced with: how do we successfully handle this pandemic? This year has caught the NCAA with their pants down, yet again, and exposed the truth about what is most important to them: money.

The world now recognizes how severe COVID-19 can be, even for some of the most fit human beings on the planet. Still, the potential risks of respiratory issues and death that student athletes could face does not change the fact that the NCAA and college administrators only see dollars and cents.

If they cared about the athletes, they would not be so reckless with establishing and enforcing strict protocols. The NCAA and college administrators established some protocols, but they are not enough. They are essentially experimenting with the athletes by not having a definitive plan in place.

They did what they always do, when they had the choice between the player's safety and the money — they followed the money. This begs the question, is college athletics losing its amateurism? Athletes are making money for their schools, not getting paid in return, and in this case, risking their lives doing so.

The NCAA and college administrators say the well being of the athletes is their number one priority during this pandemic, but their actions do not back that up. Administrators are not cracking down on all the protocols and are being dangerously reckless.

Since all the colleges do not have a set plan in place to take precautions, it has subsequently led to multiple teams cancelling practices and games. In doing so, it has affected all of college football; if one team is not able to play because the other is temporarily shut down, that affects both teams' schedules and all their future opponents. It can also change a team's season because they could lose all their momentum in the time that they are in quarantine following an outbreak.

Do I think every single team has handled this poorly? No, some teams have handled this pandemic very well, but the NCAA as a whole is what one has to consider.

Do I also believe the season should be shut down? No. Although I do think colleges could do a much better job of handling this pandemic, it can be done successfully if the NCAA and college administrators get their priorities straight and put the athletes first.

*For comments/questions about this story, email [sports@thewhitonline.com](mailto:sports@thewhitonline.com) or tweet @TheWhitOnline.*



The Clemson Tigers home football field. Clemson is one of many football teams playing this season while following COVID-19 guidelines. - Photo / flickr user Ken Lund