



MARIST ATHLETICS
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Pioneer Football League Statement on Fall Competition

The Pioneer Football League's (PFL) Presidents Council has announced the league's schools will not conduct conference competition in fall 2020. The PFL membership is spread from coast-to-coast and throughout the Midwest which poses challenges related to team travel, as well as difficulties meeting applicable state, local and institutional health requirements and COVID-19 mitigation strategies.

James M. Danko, President of Butler University and Chair of the PFL, shared the following observations. "The Presidents and Athletic Directors of our respective universities made this very difficult decision after extensive deliberations and consideration of many factors. We recognize that our student-athletes will be disappointed, but our highest priority is the health and safety of all those involved in our athletic programs. Ultimately, the risks of proceeding are simply too high especially to ensure the safety of our students."

Recognizing competition is an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience, the PFL is committed to exploring meaningful opportunities and experiences for football student-athletes this academic year, if this can be done reasonably and safely.

According to Marist College President Dennis J. Murray, "This decision was so difficult because football is such an important part of fall culture at the College. Our contests against other major universities have provided great competition for our student-athletes and great entertainment for our alumni, student body, and community members. Concern for the health and safety of our students and the community made this action necessary, but I will personally miss the wonderful experiences I've had attending our football games over the years." Murray has attended every Marist home football game for the last four decades. He added, "We recognize that it's a terrible loss for our students, alumni, and members of the greater Dutchess County community, but it particularly pains me to see players who have devoted so many years to the sport deprived of the opportunity to play. I know this decision is a real blow to them." Murray noted that Marist will work with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to ensure that student-athletes who wish to maintain eligibility and play next year are able to do so. The College will also continue the financial aid it awards to football players so that they can continue their education and progress toward graduation.

“I share with our athletes’ sadness and disappointment with this decision, as I can appreciate their passion for the game of football,” Marist Director of Athletics Tim Murray said. “As difficult of a decision as this was for the athletic directors and presidents of the Pioneer Football League, the health and safety of our student-athletes has to be our number one priority. As we begin the fall semester, please know that the Marist Athletics Department will support our student-athletes in their athletic and academic pursuits.”

Earlier this summer, the Marist football team’s three non-league games were canceled. The Red Foxes were originally scheduled to face Georgetown of the Patriot League as well as Ivy League opponents Cornell and Dartmouth. At the conclusion of the 2019 season, Dartmouth was ranked 22nd in the Stats Perform Football Championship Subdivision Top 25 poll.

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