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Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mood and Motivation in Division 2 Athletes

Lydia Sedjo¹, David Kohan^{2,3}, Timothy Runge², Reginald Overton², Hayden D. Gerhart^{1,2}, and Madeline P. Bayles², FACSM. ¹Grove City College, Grove City, PA, ²Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA, ³Kent State University, Kent, OH

PURPOSE: The purpose of the present study is to identify the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on mood and motivation in division two collegiate athletes. **METHODS:** Forty division two collegiate athletes were surveyed in this study. Of the four hundred athletes on campus, participants were surveyed if their sport team was either in season or training during the spring 2021 academic semester. From this sample, forty athletes responded. Of those forty participants, three participants did not complete the full survey. The final data includes responses from thirty-seven study participants. Participants were asked to respond to twelve questions related to alterations in mood and motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic using either a Likert scale or yes/no response. All responses were in reference to the previous three months. Participants selected one of five possible responses to each question; never, rarely, sometimes, very often, and always. Likert scale answers were coded 1-5, respectively. Yes/no answers were coded 1-2, respectively. **RESULTS:** Participant mood was most affected by the stress of being a student athlete during the pandemic (3.43 ± 1.09). Participants reported “rarely” experiencing increased stress due to lack of resources (2.56 ± 1.06) or fear of becoming out of shape due to lack of resources (2.29 ± 1.12). Participant sport motivation was mostly affected by the feeling of being overwhelmed (3.13 ± 1.33). 24 out of 37 participating collegiate athletes reported an inconsistent schedule led to decreased sport motivation. Participants also reported a lack of sport motivation due to isolation (2.75 ± 1.36). **CONCLUSION:** The COVID-19 Pandemic forced student-athletes to isolate, limit training time, and shift classroom learning online. These factors combine to increase stress in the lives of division two collegiate athletes. Future research should follow-up with this population to monitor mental health and sport motivation over the coming sport seasons. Specifically, questions related to diagnosis of mental health conditions need to be answered, and perhaps followed up with counseling and general wellness coaching.