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Cincy Magazine April/May 2020

## Cincy Sports: 'It's scary to think I might not have a place to play' – 6/10/2020

Uncertainty surrounds local universities, players as athletic programs are slashed

Noah Tong



Photo by: Wright State Athletics

The nation is reeling from the aftermath of COVID-19, and Tristate-based colleges are no exception.

Wright State University eliminated softball, men's tennis and women's tennis last week, marking the latest blow to college athletics. The university cited long-term sustainability and a need to reduce \$2 million from the athletic department budget in its decision. Wright State works with "one of the lowest athletics department operating budgets amongst Division I public universities in Ohio," says Bob Grant, director of athletics.

"I ran to my car and got on [the Zoom call with head coach Laura Matthews], and my initial reaction was just anger and I cried," says Logan Mueller, a former outfielder and recent graduate of Lebanon High School who committed to Wright State back in November. "It caught everyone off guard...

especially this late." Mueller's senior season at Lebanon was cut short prematurely as Ohio responded to the virus outbreak.

In April, the University of Cincinnati discontinued its men's soccer program, unwittingly acting as a harbinger for more schools to reevaluate their athletic departments. Just a week later, Urbana University closed its doors and ceased operations for 19 teams.

Sinclair Community College then announced the suspension for all sports in the upcoming academic year. The move put the future of 88 Sinclair athletes in jeopardy, as they contemplate either transferring schools or waiting for sports to (hopefully) return in the 2021-22 seasons.

"I finished orientation the day before we found out," explains Mueller. "I had my apartment all set up. I was completely ready to move in, and now I have to find a new place to go.

"It's very frustrating," she continues. "It's also scary to think I might not have a place to play."



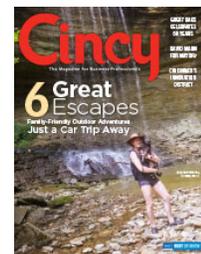
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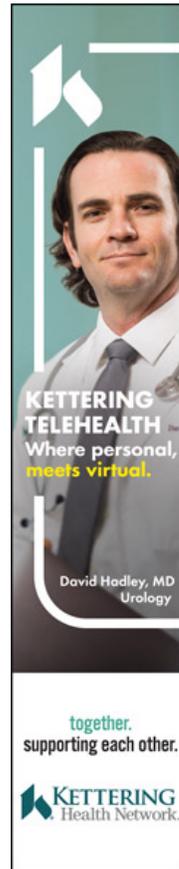


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