

Ohio State Student-Athletes Issue Statement On Big Ten United Letter



Two days after a group of what was said to be “over 1,000 Big Ten football players” issued a letter in The Players Tribune titled #BigTenUnited, which addressed concerns for athletes surrounding the safety protocols put in place to prevent COVID-19, multiple members of the Ohio State football team, as well as some across all Ohio State sports, tweeted out a statement expressing their support for how Ohio State has handled everything in these difficult times.

pic.twitter.com/baC2cZVr1N

— Tuf Borland (@Tuf_Borland) August 7, 2020

“To the college athletics community,” the letter starts, “In response to the #BigTenUnited Letter written by College Athlete Unity, The Ohio State University student-athletes would like to give our thoughts on conference and university COVID-19 protocols and safety efforts. We believe our institutions is providing the proper structure and organization for safety. Here at Ohio State, we #SetTheStandard for what college athletics should look like amid COVID-19.

“First, we appreciate that the #BigTenUnited letter was intended to protect and voice concerns of Big Ten student-athletes. However, we do not think it represents the efforts and actions of Ohio State adequately. While there are still plenty of questions to be answered and plans to be made in order to compete this fall, we believe that our safety has been at the forefront of our institutions efforts for return to play models. We feel comfortable and trust that the decisions by (athletic director) Gene Smith, (head physician) Dr. (James) Borchers, our coaches, and health and safety professionals are made in our best interest.

“It has been said that college athletes are being ‘exploited’ not only in the stated letter but also in the media. We recognize that there are risks, but we have all chose to be here and want the chance to play this fall. We know that there is still a long way to go as plans continue to change everyday, but we have a consistent voice in the discussion.

“CDC and state guidelines have been the foundation of our protocols. Our university has been

transparent in their goals and process as information is gathered. Testing, wearing masks, hand washing, and proper social distancing have become the new normal at Ohio State. As Buckeyes, we want this to be the standard across all Big Ten universities for the safety and well-being of our fellow student-athletes.

“Every day we recognize the privilege of being a student-athlete at The Ohio State University. We have been reassured across many levels that we can opt out of playing this year if we feel unsafe or uncomfortable. We embrace the inherent risks that come with competing at a collegiate level. Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we choose to represent our teams and the Big Ten at practices, during competition and in the community.

“We respect these thoughts about safety and protocols may not be shared by all student-athletes across the country, but as Ohio State Buckeyes, we stand with the decision of our athletic department and conference.”

In his virtual conference with the media on Thursday, Ohio State head coach Ryan Day said he was unaware of any of his players that were involved with the Big Ten United letter, but also said that he did not pry to find out that information.

Among the players that shared out the letter were linebacker Tuf Borland, offensive linemen Wyatt Davis and Josh Myers and defensive end Jonathon Cooper, all of which were named captains earlier this week.

No Ohio State players have currently opted out of the 2020 football season.

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