



News from the Firebirds Nest | Edition #1 | December 14, 2020

Free State Community -

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family healthy and enjoying the holidays! In the busyness of the season, I had the opportunity to (virtually) attend the National Athletic Directors Conference this past weekend. The conference provides an opportunity for athletic directors across the nation to engage in professional development workshops to learn and grow professionally. I have been blessed to attend five national conferences during my six years serving as an AD and, every year, I have implemented ideas learned that have had a direct impact on student-athletes and coaches. On the first day of this year's conference, an AD in New York shared with the group his "weekly newsletter" that he shares with his community to celebrate, inform, and update members of the community on all-things athletics. Although I create and publish the "Free State Firebirds Update" each week, I thought publishing a weekly newsletter would be another great tool to communicate with those invested in Free State Athletics. My goal is to publish "News from the Firebirds Nest" every Monday. While some editions will be shorter than others, I am committed to providing the community with pertinent updates and the schedule for the week.

Mental Health of Student-Athletes

As we continue to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 (positive cases, the inconsistency quarantines present, anxiety/worry the health of loved ones etc.) and the seasonal stress the holidays can bring to families, I think it is important that I reshare the KU's [Beak the Stigma](#) Campaign presentation Mrs. Kristie Baumchen, Student-Athlete Wellness Coordinator at the University of Kansas, presented to the S.A.L.T. of the Firebirds last month. Mrs. Baumchen spent time speaking about the importance of mental wellness, overcoming adversity, and steps to take to try and manage the stress of uncertainty. Although it can be an awkward, uncomfortable, and sometimes difficult discussion to have, I implore you to speak with your student-athlete about their mental wellness. If you need access to additional resources, please reach out to me.

Spectators at Winter Athletic Events

The district is still working on formal communication regarding spectators at home athletic events. I will share the finalized document at the start of the new year.

Free State Firebirds Update

Please click here this week's edition of the [Free State Firebirds Update_12.14.20](#).

As we begin to welcome spectators back to athletic events, I would love for parents to share pictures with me to be included in the Free State Firebirds Update - especially for our sub-varsity teams. If you have pictures that you are willing to share with me, please email them to me prior to 11am on Sunday for them to be included in the following week's edition.

Free State Athletics Website

Over the last 2.5 years, I have spent time overhauling the [Free State Athletics website](#), and it serves as my primary mode of communication with our community. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to spend time exploring the website (the "More" tab on the main page contains a myriad of information) and make sure you click the two links below.

- [Communication from the Firebird Athletic Department](#)
- [Meet the Free State Coaching Staff](#)

If you have suggestions for other items you would like to see included on the website, please let me know.

Calendar of Events | December 14-19, 2020

Please click the following link for a calendar of this week's events, created by Ms. Ashley Dunning, Athletics Administrative Assistant. [Weekly Calendar](#)

As we begin this final week prior to Winter Break, I would like to personally wish each and every one of you and your families a great week full of health, rest, and happiness!

Go Firebirds!

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Let's Go State!