

Garrett Holmes,
Chair of the Board of Directors,
The Canadian Student-Athlete Association.

July 20, 2020

Mr. Dick White,
Interim Chief Executive Officer,
USports,
45 Vogell Road #701,
Richmond Hill, Ontario.
L4B 3P6

Mr. White,

RE: USports decision to rule that it will not provide an exemption for football players who turn 25 years old prior to the 2021 season, even though they are missing the 2020 campaign due to COVID-19.

The Canadian Student-Athlete Association respectfully asks the USports Board of Directors to revisit their decision to rule that it will not provide an exemption for football players who turn 25 years old prior to the 2021 season, even though they are missing the 2020 campaign due to COVID-19.

In asking that the USports Board of Directors revisit their decision, the Canadian Student-Athlete Association recognizes the complexity of the issue and the difficulty associated with finding a solution that balances health and safety with student-athletes right to play in a COVID-19 environment.

To that end, the Canadian Student-Athlete Association asks that the USports Board of Directors take the following into consideration should it decide to revisit its decision:

- The COVID-19 crisis has fundamentally changed College/University athletics. Suddenly. Forever. New models, new approaches, new innovations are going to be needed to be implemented going forward to deal with this “new reality”.
- In this environment, in revisiting its decision to not provide an exemption for football players who turn 25 years old prior to the 2021 season, **the Canadian Student-Athlete Association urges the USports Board of Directors to grant all players currently on a roster (for the 2020/21 season) an age exemption** should that be an issue facing them in the future due to cancellation of football for the 2020/21 season.
 - o This would address the issue which the USports Board of Directors would face if they reverse their current decision on age eligibility and provide an exemption only for football players who turn 25 years old prior to the 2021 season. The issue in granting an exemption only to that age group is that it is potentially unfair to the age groups that follow (for any player who is on a football team roster for the 2020/21 season).

- As an example, if a player's birthday is on July 9th and on July 9, 2020 that player turned 23, that player will not be playing football in 2020/21 because there is no football, will be playing in 2021/22 when it returns, but that will be their last year due to age eligibility (even if they have "playing" eligibility left). They will have lost one of their "formative" years, when the cohort ahead of them (who you granted an age eligibility exemption to) did not.
 - If however the age limit exemption also applied to them and that player had not used their "playing" eligibility up, they could play in 2022/23 as their last year. The same applies for a person one year younger. It "levels" the playing field for any player who potentially has a current age cap issue facing them in the future due to cancellation of football for the 2020/21 season.
- Alternatively, **the Canadian Student-Athlete Association urges the USports Board of Directors to give consideration to addressing the broader issue of football being the only Canadian university sport with an age cap, by removing that age cap.**
 - This would address the issue which the USports Board of Directors would face if they reverse their current decision on age eligibility and provide an exemption only for football players who turn 25 years old prior to the 2021 season. The issue in granting an exemption only to that age group is that it is potentially unfair to the age groups that follow (for any player who is on a football team roster for the 2020/21 season).

The COVID-19 crisis has had a dramatic impact on the lives of all Canadians. As previously mentioned, the Canadian Student-Athlete Association recognizes that in this difficult environment USports has been faced with making difficult decisions. Perhaps even in these difficult times there is opportunity, in this case an opportunity to address a long outstanding issue (why only football has an age exemption) whose time has come to address. Should the USports Board of Directors deem it is not yet time for such a move, the option to extend an exemption to all players presents a viable and fair alternative.

The Canadian Student-Athlete Association thanks USports for the opportunity to provide our comments and views. I would be pleased to discuss our position on this issue with you or answer any questions at your convenience.

Regards,

Garrett Holmes,
Chair,

The Canadian Student-Athlete Association.
garrett@canadianstudentathleteassociation.ca
289-981-2829
www.canadianstudentathleteassociation.ca