

Ohio State To Keep All 36 Sports Through COVID-19 Pandemic Despite \$107 Million Deficit



Ohio State announced in a statement Wednesday their details for the athletic department's 2021 fiscal year, which included that the athletic department is facing a \$107 million deficit due to COVID-19, but that the university will continue to keep all 36 sports programs intact moving forward.

"The Ohio State University Department of Athletics today announced details of an FY'21 budget that includes department-wide budget cuts, furloughs and reductions in force, and focuses on mitigating a projected \$107 million deficit as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," the statement read. "Ohio State's 36-sport program will remain intact and student-athletes will continue to have a fully funded grant-in-aid program, support services, and resources in the \$180 million budget."

The statement says that coronavirus has caused "significant budgetary challenges for the university," and that Ohio State has "engaged in rigorous and responsible fiscal planning in response, including a hiring pause, travel freeze and operational efficiencies."

"Our student-athletes are our primary responsibility," athletic director Gene Smith said in a statement. "They have and will continue to come first. We have put together a responsible and conservative budget for this fiscal year, which assumes full support for our student-athletes. In the midst of this devastating pandemic, we remain committed to providing a safe and excellent academic and athletic experience for all of our student-athletes."

In order to help mitigate these losses, the athletic department had to take some serious measures, with the statement saying that "virtually every employee in the department will be affected."

Among the changes includes 84 staff members that will go on a 60-day furlough or redeployment, 47 contracted staff that are being asked to take a 5 percent pay cut from the beginning of October until the

end of June, and “a permanent reduction in force will eliminate 25 full-time athletics positions.”

“Like our colleagues in the Big Ten, and across the country, intercollegiate athletics at Ohio State will have to significantly adjust as the pandemic will have a long term impact,” Smith said. “We will implement a long term deficit recovery plan but will continue to focus on serving our student-athletes at the highest level.”

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