

A new way to play

By: Jacob Shaffer @JacobShaffer_18

COVID-19 has taken a lot from everyone during 2020, but the one thing the virus can't kill is the indomitable American spirit, and the only thing more American than ignoring mask mandates is football. At every level, from professional all the way to high school, there were a lot of questions about whether or not there would be a football season with the virus. While the pandemic may still be in full effect, many safety precautions and considerations for athletes have been made so the sport can continue to be played, even while the coronavirus is still rampaging throughout the globe.

With the devastating windstorm having destroyed the stadium, plus new safety regulations for the virus, this season will be a memorable one. Weston Horak, senior, has been playing football for the Marion Indians since middle school and isn't going to quit no matter how strange the season may be. Safety has to be the number one priority during this season, and COVID precautions have had some negative effects on training. During practice, every player must social distance and stay six feet apart, which makes 1:1 drills much harder to do. Also, a lot of summer prep was completely lost due to the school shutdown. Compared to other schools, however, Coach Hewitt, said Marion has taken just as many precautions as other schools. "To be honest, I don't really know what other schools are doing, what I do know is we're doing pretty much the same with sanitizing balls and distancing players at all times," said Hewitt.

If any player were to test positive for COVID or had to quarantine for two weeks, the whole football program shuts down essentially. The whole team has to quarantine for two weeks and



The Marion football team watches film while social distancing in the auditorium.

everything would shut down during that time period, practice included. The new regulations have affected the players outside of football as well. "The coaches are very strict about who we hang out with after school," Horak said. "No one wants to be the reason the season shuts down." Fortunately, no major changes have been made to the actual game. The only major difference is frequent two-minute breaks to sanitize the balls to reduce the chances of the virus spreading.

If COVID didn't make things complicated enough, the derecho added even more problems to the season. Now,

with the Marion football field out of commission, home games must be played away from home at the Linn-Mar stadium. "The stadium is what messes with people the most. A lot of players lost a lot of motivation after the first few games because of no home field," Horak said. Despite a loss of morale, this year's season is still looking better than last year's. "This season is 100 times better. Last year was honestly shameful,"

Horak said. Coach Hewitt also shares some of his player's enthusiasm for the new season. "It's different, better with success and win/loss ratio, but with every precaution needed to be taken has made it difficult," Hewitt said.

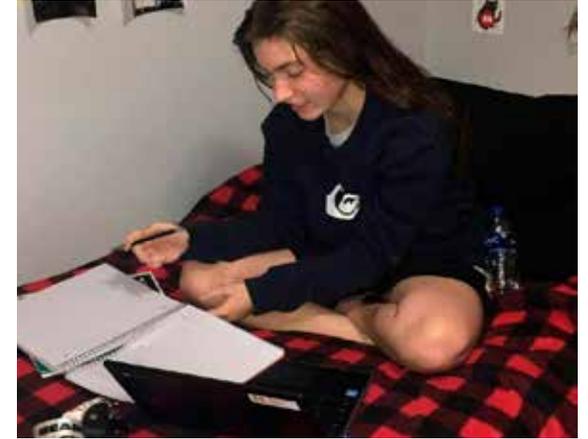
Hopes are still high for other sports to take place this year, even with the virus and destroyed gyms. The school is using the football season as a sort of groundbreaker for other school programs, testing what works and doesn't work so athletes of every sport can compete this year. "Definitely a lot of trial and error in football for winter sports, they're trying a lot of stuff that may happen for the other sports," Horak said. Sports can persevere, even through a global pandemic, and make the terrible year that is 2020 just marginally better.

Online vs. in-person

By: April Lawyer @ApLawy

With the COVID-19 pandemic comes changes. Specifically, the way people learn has changed drastically. This year, the school offered the ability for students to take all of their classes online. This was for people who did not feel comfortable coming into school due to possible COVID-19 risks. Learning in-person and learning online are clearly different in terms of how one learns. Learning off of campus is surely a big change for people, but the way that students are learning in-person is different from how it was before. Some students, like McKaylee Duffy, freshman, have decided to take the option of learning in-person. "I think in-person is a lot easier personally, because if you need help you can talk to your teachers in-person, while online it's harder to communicate with other people," explained Duffy. She plans to do her schooling in the building for the rest of the year, though understands and agrees with the guidelines set in place. "I think they're good," said Duffey, though she does find it a bit harder to socialize now, "I can't talk to my friends or get as close, which has been a little bit difficult because it's been hard to socialize with people."

While some people feel comfortable learning in-person, there is a small amount of students who feel it is safer to take their learning



Skylar Bailey, senior, has a study session on her bed as part of her online learning routine.

to the internet. Learning right next to other students can increase the chance of contracting COVID-19, making places like schools a petri-dish for the virus. Some, like Skylar Bailey, senior, find that learning online isn't all that bad. "I wasn't planning on it, but I enjoy it for the most part. I also find that I learn more material online than in-person schooling." She's found that learning from home has been a choice well made, and thinks that it's a good step towards keeping people safe beyond the guidelines at school. "By requiring masks it does

keep things a little safer, but with covid in general, any type of public schooling isn't completely beneficial towards anyone's health." Bailey said. As of now she plans to remain online until the 3rd quarter when she will come back so that she can finish off the rest of the school year in the building.

Whether you learn online or at school, education is still a big part of our lives during this pandemic. You might take your tests at a desk or sitting on your living room sofa. No matter where you learn, it's important that we are learning.

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