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SEPT. 20, 2012 | 128-12

Laurier suspends varsity baseball team for hazing

WATERLOO — Wilfrid Laurier University today announced the immediate suspension of the varsity baseball team for a minimum four games — with the possibility of suspending the team for the remainder of the season — as the result of hazing activity that violated the university's Student Athlete Code of Conduct.

The baseball team has been offered an opportunity to contemplate the serious detriments associated with hazing and to provide a meaningful rationale for why the team should be permitted to complete the season. Should the team accept this offer, it will be invited to make a presentation to the university's athletic director and interuniversity athletics co-ordinator Sunday evening. Based on this presentation, the university will decide whether or not to suspend the team for the remainder of the season.

"Our Student Athlete Code of Conduct makes it clear that Laurier will not tolerate any form of hazing among our varsity athletes," said David McMurray, vice-president of Student Affairs. "While a full-season suspension is justifiable based on an investigation of the incident, we believe it is important to offer these student athletes the opportunity to engage in a more meaningful learning opportunity that, in addition to tangible consequences, encourages reflection and accountability."

"If teams defy the university's zero-tolerance policy on hazing, then they will be denied the privilege to play for the Golden Hawks," said Peter Baxter, Laurier's director of Athletics and Recreation. "It is a tough lesson that must be learned but a necessary one so that we ensure the culture of hazing is eradicated."

All Laurier varsity athletes are educated about the university's Student Athlete Code of Conduct through an orientation session with their respective teams every year. During this session, an emphasis is placed on the department's Hazing Policy to ensure the student athletes have a complete understanding of what hazing entails and the consequences should they fail to abide by the policy. Each student athlete, as well as their head coaches, are then required to sign off on the two-page policy, indicating that they will abide by the policy, prior to their participation in league competition. Members of the Laurier baseball team completed their orientation session and signed off on the Hazing Policy on Aug. 27, 2012.

The baseball team will forfeit the four games it was scheduled to play Sept. 22 and 23 against the Western University Mustangs and the University of Waterloo Warriors. The university has notified the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) conference and the two opposing teams.

Laurier's varsity baseball team has a 4-4 record over eight games so far this season. There are 12 games remaining in the team's regular season.