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Looking ahead to the 2022 football season at Ohio State, we knew it would be a special one with unique opportunities. We would be opening the season at home against a top non-conference opponent, Notre Dame, and closing the eight home game season at home against rival, Michigan. We haven't had eight home games since 2012.

With conference game alignments and some schedule adjustments as a result of the 2020 COVID season, the uniqueness of the 2022 home season got a little more interesting. We would now have FIVE home games in a row. Three home games? No problem, we do that often. Four home games? Sure, it's been 10 years but we know we can handle it. But FIVE?! That hasn't been done since 2003 and before that, 1999. Very few people on staff were around then and the landscape of gameday

operations certainly has changed drastically since then.

I remember Gene Smith approaching me with this potential situation one evening before a men's basketball game in February. He asked me, "What does this mean for us?" At first, I laughed, but then realized he was serious with this potential situation and (more importantly) his question. Without hesitation, I told him this would be hard on our staff. Not just the part-time staff but our full-time staff as well.

We, just like the rest of the nation, were still feeling the strains of post-COVID and finding part-time staff to work events, let alone multiple weeks in a row. We had a relatively good idea of the challenges we would be facing with part-time staff. We didn't quite know how our full-time staff would respond. We needed to be more creative than the "atta-boy" or pat-on-the-back congratulatory comments.

From August 1 through October 8, two things were top of mind: Calling it what it is (HARD), and encouraging our unit managers to create time for their staff. During that time, not only did we host five home games, we also hosted 37 athletics events (two of which were out-of-season sport tournaments) and five

concerts in the Schottenstein Center. Two of those shows conducted week-long rehearsals in the building prior to their event day. We needed to create space for our staff to have time for themselves. Whether it be a day to work from home or staff luncheons/happy hours/outings, we encouraged everyone to make that time and to respect one another in those moments.

The five-home game streak is in the rearview mirror and we are continuing to look ahead to what remains: two more home games to round out the regular season and hopefully some post-season events for our fall teams. There is an energy from all that we conquered this fall: we are walking tall, our heads held high (with a slight glazed over look), anxiously awaiting those quieter weeks of events.

I hope that everyone can look back with a sense of pride, and in a few years, probably bewilderment.



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As our organization's Academic All-America® Awards program enters its 70th year as the premier recognition for outstanding student-athletes, we are proud to debut exciting enhancements for the 2022-23 awards.

For the past seven decades, outstanding student-athletes in college sports have been recognized with the prestigious title of Academic All-America. As the program opens in late fall, it includes significant enhancements that broaden its scope and increase opportunities.

Sponsored by College Sports Communicators (CSC, formerly CoSIDA) since 1952, the retooled awards program will add two new sports across our four divisions (NCAA Division I, II, III and NAIA), increase the required grade point average (GPA) and grant academic all-district recognition for all eligible nominees. We also

have a separate at-large program for two-year schools and Canadian institutions.

The update of the awards criteria and selection and strengthening of several key components of the association's signature program guarantee recognition for more deserving student-athletes. Each year, CSC recognizes close to 5,000 student-athletes as Academic All-District winners and 1,500 as Academic All-America winners. Throughout the program's history, many of the winners were also recognized as NCAA Elite 90 winners, NCAA Woman of the Year candidates and National Football Foundation William V. Campbell Trophy award recipients.

Highlights for 2022-23 include:

- Academic All-District recognition for all eligible nominees.
- An increase in the minimum GPA to nominate to 3.5 (from 3.3).
- The addition of men's swimming & diving and women's swimming & diving as sport-specific contests in the winter (previously, they were included in the At-Large program).
- The addition of men's tennis and women's tennis as sport-specific contests in the spring (previously included in the At-Large program).
- Later nomination periods to include more

complete season data.

Current dues-paying members of CSC nominate student-athletes for Academic All-District and Academic All-America honors. The goal of these changes is to maintain the strength of the Academic All-America program, increase the visibility of the brand and strengthen the value of the overall program. One of the biggest positives will be the ability for members to nominate student-athletes deeper into a season, meaning more complete statistics and more awards can be included in the nominations.

All eligible nominees will receive Academic All-District recognition and advance directly to the national All-America ballot after the elimination of district voting. Each student-athlete on the national ballot will be recognized as a CSC Academic All-District team member and have the opportunity to be selected as a first-, second- or third-team Academic All-America.

Not only will these changes continue recognition of the best and brightest student-athletes at all levels of collegiate athletics, they will also provide more institutions the opportunity to have deserving athletes on the teams and afford better opportunities to promote winners.