

# SPORTS

## Football Practices Back in Action

BY RENE ELIAS

**A**FTER HEARING A CONSTANT silence coming from Seafoam Stadium for such a long time, the sound of whistles, the clashing of pads, and the smell of hard work is refreshing. Football practices for Concordia are back in action. Those familiar fall sounds are welcoming to the ear as much for the people passing by as for the athletes and coaches. The brisk weather rounds out the whole atmosphere.

After much waiting and a lot of uncertainty, practices for the football team are finally allowed to start back up. This fall sport was cancelled in early August due to the pandemic, which left many athletes hurt, longing for a season of competition. Suiting back up for practices brings many mixed emotions. On one hand, each practice is an opportunity to get better, but on the other hand, the loss of a season is felt each time the cleats are laced up for a practice that does not work towards an upcoming game.

Excitement and eagerness are still running high with the knowledge that even practicing is a blessing in such unpredictable times. During practices, the athletes are determined to perfect their craft looking ahead to upcoming seasons. A drill that brings a lot of energy and gets the players excited is the 7v7 drill. During this drill, teammates go up against each other in order to sharpen not only their own skills, but the skills of their teammates as well. This drill provides a competitive environment for the players that won't get to play in any competitive games this fall. It provides a game-like situation to the athletes in order to amplify their competitive edge as well as sharpen their situational play.

The players on the CSP football team want to take the field to play and compete as much as spectators want to fill the stands, but in a time such as now, being able to practice is a win in and of itself. Hopefully, with all of the safety precautions in place, soon, the whistles and pads clashing will be paired with a full stadium of eager fans and competitive play for the athletes.



Football Practice Resuming.

Photo Credit: Rene Elias

## CSP Lifting During Covid

BY ISABELLE D'BURKE

**W**HILE MANY THINGS HAVE changed during the pandemic, CSP athletes are lucky to have the ability to lift. However, that does come with many changes. Upon entering the APC, a staff member waits to check temperatures and make sure the daily screening (a list of questions that ask about COVID symptoms) for each individual is completed. Sports teams have been split into at least four pods, and if the team is too large for four pods, they have to split up into separate time slots as well. Athletes are not allowed to cross between pods, and after every use, the APC staff sprays down bars, plates, benches, the floor, the turf, and washes resistance bands with soap and disinfectant.

Assistant lifting coach Michael Tucker had some valuable comments when asked about the changes. With all the changes that were made, people tend to focus on the present instead of all of the work that was put into getting there. The coaches at the APC had to plan summer lifting a month in advance to make sure training was safe. In response to the summer training, Tucker said, "We had summer procedures, which had flaws, but it was a learning experience. After re-evaluating our procedures before the school year, we're finally in a groove and are doing things correctly." Not only did the changes take time to plan, but the daily work adds on to the coaches' schedules. Tucker explained that "the extra cleaning added five minutes per group, times 10 groups. So, it added 50 minutes to an hour each day. Now we have big sprayers that make it easier to spray and that cuts it down 20 minutes per day. It's just a learning process seeing how to make cleaning more efficient."

As everything in life, this was just another learning experience that took time to really get right and perfect. After hearing Tucker explain all of the procedures and extra time they put into cleaning the facility, it is clear to see how much the coaches care about their athletes. Even though Tucker doesn't think that we will ever go back to "normal," he believes we will get close. Ultimately, Tucker explained that "no matter how you feel about the pandemic, the main goal is to create a safe environment where you can still enhance your performance. This has been a learning experience, but it has By Isabelle D'Burkereally made relationships stronger. This is a great opportunity to become family again." Just like the rest of the staff at CSP, it is clear that amidst the changes, creating an ideal, safe, environment for the students is the APC coaches' number one priority.