

## **Covid-19 stress levels on returning student-athletes**

Sarah Mitchell, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Sharonda Pruitt, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Dean Culpepper, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Lexi Bubenchik, Texas A&M University-Commerce

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every aspect of life globally. Collegiate athletes already have more stressors than traditional students and they were being forced to continue their sport with uncertainty on a routine basis. The purpose of this study was to survey the anxiety levels of collegiate athletes on returning to play during the COVID-19 pandemic. 241 Division I, II, and III athletes completed the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). There were significant gender differences  $F(1, 204) = 16.65, p < .001$  but no differences for school status (e.g. freshman). Division differences were found,  $F(1, 204) = 5.13, p = .025$  with Division III scoring higher (mean = 58.92, sd = 13.19) than Division II (mean = 54.35, sd = 13.37). No other significant differences between divisions were found. Football and volleyball were the only sports where significant differences ( $p = .023$ ) were found,  $[F(9, 172) = 3.05, p = .001, \text{Eta-squared} = .137]$ . The mean of the STAI for the entire sample was extremely high (mean = 58.24, sd = 13.42) which might account for the lack of differences among the groups. On the other hand, it highlighted the extreme anxiety about having to perform in the middle of a pandemic. Athletes are generally considered hardier than the normal population, yet the anxiety exhibited reported was extremely high.