

TAKING BACK CLASS

The CCHS Athletic Department must work with the Georgia High School Association to schedule games in a way that keeps student-athletes in class.



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With every crack of the bat, crunching tackle and swing of the racket, Clarke Central High School student-athletes provide entertainment for the CCHS community. However, in giving fans

the breathtaking plays they love, these athletes are forced to sacrifice their education.

The problem for student-athletes is that there isn't anything protecting them from constantly leaving school early for their chosen sport. The Georgia High School Association Constitution and By-Laws offers some guidance as to when sporting events should be played, but no specific protections are afforded to student-athletes missing class.

For CCHS varsity tennis player Ethan Meskin, a senior, the absences start to add up.

"At least twice a week, we would have a match. (They) would probably start at four, which means I basically missed fourth period every day," Meskin

said. "I missed a lot of stuff that I then had to make up out of school."

Over the course of the season, tennis players have missed more than one-third of their fourth-period class time. With 13 matches scheduled, varsity tennis players are encountering a massive problem with no forthcoming solution.

"(Student-athletes missing class) really is an issue, but if you play athletics, there are certain things you're going to have to sacrifice and there's

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certain things that are gonna be challenges," CCHS Athletic Director Jon Ward said.

Additionally, with Advanced Placement and End-of-Course exams taking place in early May, students are missing class at the worst possible time. If a student-athlete is consistently missing time in a course, it becomes incredibly difficult for them to learn the

material they need to succeed on the exam.

While the lion's share of the disadvantages are for students, teachers -- who already have so much on their plates -- are often called upon to do extra work, as well.

"They're having a problem learning something because they're not here. If they want, they can set an appointment with me and I can give them one-on-one assistance," CCHS foreign language department teacher Dr. Lynne Sparks said. "When I start seeing the failure coming in, I reach out to their parents directly."

When student-athletes miss class, it's hard for both them and their teachers. Because of that added difficulty, it's clear that something needs to be done in order to fix this problem.

Changing the game schedule by playing more evening and weekend games would be one way to make sure student-athletes are able to stay for the

entire school day.

Regardless of the method, coaches must find a way to keep student-athletes in class. After all, they're called student-athletes because they're a student first and an athlete second. **O**



Above: EDUCATIONAL EXIT: A student-athlete is forced to leave their class because of a sporting event. Due to early start times for sporting events, Clarke Central High School student-athletes have missed significant class time which has ultimately harmed their education. "Regardless of the method, coaches must find a way to keep student-athletes in class. After all, they're called student-athletes because they're a student first and an athlete second," Journalism I student Wyatt Meyer student wrote. Illustration by Antonio Starks