

Benedictine Terminates Division II Transition

Mike Santarelli | Sports Writer

Interim President of Benedictine University, Charles Gregory, emailed all faculty and staff on Friday to inform them that the school will no longer be transitioning to the NCAA Division II.

The email stated the university's Board of Trustees met to discuss the transition, and ultimately unanimously voted to "...discontinue the process of reclassifying the University as a Division II athletic program," Gregory wrote.

This vote came less than a year after the same board voted unanimously to make the transition to the NCAA Division II under former Benedictine University President Michael Brophy.

"I'm surprised that the other president stepped down two weeks before school began, and now we're dropping back down to Division III... and I wonder if they're related," said Alexis Taglia, a junior at Benedictine University, "Many athletes were upset about not being able to compete because of going up to Division II, but now they're not going into Division II and they still may be unable to compete on a Division III level."

The major conflict that came with the initial transition was the university's ineligibility to compete in the 2018 and 2019 school years playoffs. While this transition has stopped, and Benedictine technically never entered the NCAA Division II, the athletic department's playoff status for the current school year remains unknown.

"We are in continued conversations with the NCAA and the conference," said Mark McHorney, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, "We are pleased with the direction of these conversations and will provide a complete update when we have definitive resolution with the NCAA and the [NACC] Northern Athletics Collegiate Conference."

"The NCAA Division III philosophy better aligned with our priorities on the overall quality of the educational experience.... We are confident this decision better serves our athletic department in promoting its core values of service, opportunity, accountability, and respect," stated Gregory.

Jordan Johnson attributed his departure from Benedictine to the university's inability to compete in the playoffs for the 2018-2019 school year. Johnson, a highly decorated track and field athlete for the university, was named Benedictine's "Male Athlete of the Year" in the spring of 2018. Johnson received multiple All-American honors and won a National Championship during his three-year tenure at Benedictine University.

"I've been going to NCAA's [National Championships] every year since I was a freshman. We were starting to make a name for ourselves and to not finish our final year how we wanted was disappointing," said Johnson, who is now spending his final year at Grand Valley State University.

