



# News Release

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Contact: Liz VanDerBill  
Director of Communications and Marketing  
320-222-6090

Fax: 320-222-5212  
[Liz.VanDerBill@ridgewater.edu](mailto:Liz.VanDerBill@ridgewater.edu)  
[www.ridgewater.edu](http://www.ridgewater.edu)

## **Ridgewater College Suspends 2018-2019 Football Season**

Decreasing Roster Leads to Concerns for Player Safety

WILLMAR and HUTCHINSON, MN – With a player roster that has been substantially depleted since the beginning of the season, Ridgewater College has suspended its Warrior football program for the remainder of the 2018-19 season.

“The safety of our students, including our student-athletes, is our top concern,” said Craig Johnson, president of Ridgewater College. “Given the reduced size of our roster, we are concerned about players being in unfamiliar positions as this could increase the risk of injury. We did not make this decision lightly, but feel that it is in the best interests of our student-athletes.”

Johnson said that a number of factors have contributed to the decrease in the roster since the beginning of the season including personal reasons, students withdrawing from the college, and team suspensions. The Warriors began the season with 54 players and the roster currently stands at 22.

The college is in the process of evaluating the future status of the football program and it will work with the NJCAA to file hardship requests for players who meet their criteria in order to retain another year of eligibility for future seasons. Since the NJCAA does not rule on hardships while a season is in progress, this issue will not be resolved until after the completion of the NJCAA football season.

“Our college appreciates the commitment and effort of our student-athletes who are currently on the team’s roster,” said Johnson. “I know that our players and coaches are all disappointed, and we are working with the coaches, conference officials and college administrators to work through this transition as efficiently as possible.”

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Ridgewater College is a community and technical college with campuses in the central Minnesota communities of Willmar and Hutchinson. The college serves more than 5,000 students through its nearly 100 academic programs and more than 68,000 training hours for individuals and businesses through customized training and continuing

education. The college is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

*Minnesota State includes 30 community and technical colleges and 7 state universities serving approximately 400,000 students. It is the fourth-largest system of two-year colleges and four-year universities in the United States.*

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