



# GREAT LAKES —JUSTICE CENTER—

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2021

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## PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION GRANTED TO ALLOW ATHLETES TO CONTINUE TO COMPETE AT WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

**Kalamazoo, Michigan** – Federal District Court Judge Paul L. Maloney issued a ruling from the bench this afternoon granting sixteen WMU athletes the right to continue to compete and participate in intercollegiate athletics until further order of the Court. Judge Maloney extended the Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) effective today until he issues an opinion and order to convert the TRO into a Preliminary Injunction. WMU had denied all the athletes a religious liberty accommodation from the school’s vaccine mandate policy. The Preliminary Injunction stops WMU from banning any of the sixteen athletes from participating in intercollegiate sports due to their religious conscience objections to the Covid-19 vaccine.

The Great Lakes Justice Center (GLJC), on behalf of the WMU athletes, filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in Grand Rapids last week challenging WMU’s unlawful denial of their request for religious accommodation from the college’s vaccine mandate to participate in sports. The students represent numerous teams at WMU including the women’s soccer, football, baseball, women’s basketball, dance team, and cross-country programs. WMU recently instituted a requirement for all its athletes in all sports to take the Covid-19 vaccine or forfeit their right to play intercollegiate sports. No similar vaccine requirement exists for any other students at WMU. Other universities, including MSU and U of M, are granting religious accommodations to their athletes.

David A. Kallman, Senior Counsel with GLJC, stated, “We appreciate Judge Maloney’s ruling that will allow all the student-athletes to continue to be part of their teams, be with their teammates, and compete for WMU at the highest level in a safe manner. Judge Maloney upheld the First Amendment religious conscience rights of our clients and demonstrated there is a limit to government exercise of power when it violates fundamental Constitutional rights.”

The Hearing Minutes from today’s court hearing are posted at the Great Lakes website at [www.greatlakesjc.org/cases/dahl\\_v\\_wmu/](http://www.greatlakesjc.org/cases/dahl_v_wmu/).

*The Great Lakes Justice Center is a non-profit organization. To support the Great Lakes Justice Center’s important work to educate on and protect our nation’s first freedoms, please visit them at [www.greatlakesjc.org](http://www.greatlakesjc.org)*

