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The Big Ten Conference Adopts Stringent Medical Protocols; Football Season to Resume October 23-24, 2020

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Competition Task Force, a working group that was established by the COP/C and Commissioner Kevin Warren to ensure a collaborative and transparent process.

The Big Ten will require student-athletes, coaches, trainers and other individuals that are on the field for all practices and games to undergo daily antigen testing. Test results must be completed and recorded prior to each practice or game. Student-athletes who test positive for the coronavirus through point of contact (POC) daily testing would require a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result of the POC test.

“Everyone associated with the Big Ten should be very proud of the groundbreaking steps that are now being taken to better protect the health and safety of the student-athletes and surrounding communities,” said Dr. Jim Borchers, Head Team Physician, The Ohio State University and co-chair of the Return to Competition Task Force medical subcommittee.

“The data we are going to collect from testing and the cardiac registry will provide major contributions for all 14 Big Ten institutions as they study COVID-19 and attempt to mitigate the spread of the disease among wider communities.”

Each institution will designate a Chief Infection Officer (CInO) who will oversee the collection and reporting of data for the Big Ten Conference. Team test positivity rate and population positivity rate thresholds will be used to determine recommendations for continuing practice and competition.

All COVID-19 positive student-athletes will have to undergo comprehensive cardiac testing to include labs and biomarkers, ECG, Echocardiogram and a Cardiac MRI. Following cardiac evaluation, student-athletes must receive clearance from a cardiologist designated by the university for the primary purpose of cardiac clearance for COVID-19 positive student-athletes. The earliest a student-athlete can return to game competition is 21 days following a COVID-19 positive diagnosis.

In addition to the medical protocols approved, the 14 Big Ten institutions will establish a cardiac registry in an effort to examine the effects on COVID-19 positive student-athletes. The registry and associated data will attempt to answer many of the unknowns regarding the cardiac manifestations in COVID-19 positive elite athletes.



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athletes. Our goal has always been to return to competition so all student-athletes can realize their dream of competing in the sports they love,” said Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren. “We are incredibly grateful for the collaborative work that our Return to Competition Task Force have accomplished to ensure the health, safety and wellness of student-athletes, coaches and administrators.”

The Big Ten Conference will use data provided by each Chief Infection Officer (CInO) to make decisions about the continuation of practice and competition, as determined by team positivity rate and population positivity rate, based on a seven-day rolling average:

- Team positivity rate (number of positive tests divided by total number of tests administered):
 - **Green** 0-2%
 - **Orange** 2-5%
 - **Red** >5%
- Population positivity rate (number of positive individuals divided by total population at risk):
 - **Green** 0-3.5%
 - **Orange** 3.5-7.5%
 - **Red** >7.5%

Decisions to alter or halt practice and competition will be based on the following scenarios:

- **Green/Green** and **Green/Orange**: Team continues with normal practice and competition.
- **Orange/Orange** and **Orange/Red**: Team must proceed with caution and enhance COVID-19 prevention (alter practice and meeting schedule, consider viability of continuing with scheduled competition).
- **Red/Red**: Team must stop regular practice and competition for a minimum of seven days and reassess metrics until improved.

The daily testing will begin by September 30, 2020.

Eventually all Big Ten sports will require testing protocols before they can resume competition. Updates regarding fall sports other than football, as well as winter sports that begin in the fall including men’s and women’s basketball, men’s ice hockey, men’s and women’s swimming and diving, and wrestling, will be announced shortly.

The Big Ten Conference is an association of world-class universities whose member institutions share a



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