

Wisconsin QB Graham Mertz Tests Positive For COVID-19 A Second Time, Per Report, Must Sit Out 21 Days



Graham Mertz, Wisconsin's redshirt freshman quarterback, had his initial positive COVID-19 test confirmed with a second test, per CBS Sports.

Mertz, who set multiple Badger records in his starting debut, will miss Wisconsin's game against Nebraska and must sit out 21 days per Big Ten protocol for positive COVID-19 tests.

The second-year signal caller connected on 17 straight completions to begin his first start. Mertz finished with 248 yards and a school-record five touchdowns, completing 21 of 22 passes for a school record 95.2 completion percentage in the Badgers' 45-7 victory against Illinois.

In addition to being required to sit out for three weeks, according to the coronavirus protocols instituted by the Big Ten, Mertz will also have to undergo extensive cardiac testing to investigate any long-term conditions that could arise from COVID-19 including myocarditis. Myocarditis is the inflammation of the heart muscle, which has been linked to COVID-19.

Wisconsin did not give any specifics about tests over the weekend, but the statement said no players in the game against Illinois tested positive prior to the matchup nor reported any symptoms.

"Wisconsin Athletics continues to conduct daily antigen testing for the student-athletes, coaches and selected support staff associated with the Badger football program," the statement read. "Individuals who receive a negative antigen test result continue to participate in team activities. Individuals who receive a presumptive positive antigen test result are removed from team activities and are required to take a PCR test to confirm positivity."

In his press conference Monday, Wisconsin head coach Paul Chryst made it clear he would not speak specifically about COVID-19 testing.

"I will not, cannot and should not, therefore, comment about anything dealing with our testing and coronavirus," Chryst said.

With Mertz out and senior Jack Coan recovering from foot surgery, redshirt sophomore quarterback Chase Wolf was expected to take his place as the starter; however, Wolf also reportedly tested positive for COVID-19 and is awaiting confirmation of that test.

Fourth-year junior quarterback Danny Vanden Boom is expected to be the next man up if Wolf's positive test is confirmed. Vanden Boom has thrown just one pass for a three-yard touchdown in his career,

giving him a 455.2 passer rating. The Badgers only other signal caller on the roster is 6-foot-8 freshman Daniel Wright, a walk on.

Following the matchup at Nebraska, Wisconsin will host Purdue and travel to No. 13 Michigan.

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