

The UW Now Livestream: Football in the age of COVID-19

Posted on Wednesday, Oct 21, 2020

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MADISON, WI (October 21, 2020) — On Friday, the Badgers will kick off a football season that seemed out of reach two months ago. In August, the Big Ten announced it would postpone all fall sports due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but in September, the conference changed course. Now, seven weeks after originally scheduled, Badger football games will begin, just in time for Homecoming.

During The UW Now Livestream event on October 20, Mike Knetter — president and CEO of the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association — hosted a conversation about the upcoming season with deputy UW athletic director Chris McIntosh and Matt Lepay, the radio voice of the Badgers. A key part of the conversation was how the pandemic will affect the team this year.

“Minimizing the transmission of COVID gives us the best chance to play next week and the next week and the next week,” said McIntosh, who emphasized the things that the UW and Big Ten have done to keep the virus under control and encourage athletes to stay safe. “There have been advances and resources made available to us that make us confident in our ability to play, allow us to feel confident about our ability for our student athletes to come into our facilities on a day-to-day basis and be able to practice, and that the chances of transmission of COVID are almost eliminated due to our daily testing, rapid turnaround capabilities.”

Lepay talked about the players to watch on this year’s Badger squad and how the team matches up against the opponents on the 2020 schedule. The opening game, he noted, will inspire the UW players due to the upset loss the Badgers suffered in Illinois last year. “They’re playing an Illinois team, and as [McIntosh] said, maybe

these guys owe 'em one," he said.

Lepay and McIntosh each gave a brief presentation and then took questions from viewers who followed the event live on YouTube. Both noted that the return of football is particularly important to the players. "I think we can be proud of the way our student athletes have handled this," said McIntosh. "They've been resilient. Young people are far more resilient than we tend to be ourselves. They've been strong. They've been able to roll with it."

To hear more from Lepay and McIntosh, [you can view a recording of The UW Now](#). The series is offered via YouTube and will continue through the fall.