

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Big Ten Statement on 2020-21 Fall Season**

**ROSEMONT, Ill.** – The Big Ten Conference announced the postponement of the 2020-21 fall sports season, including all regular-season contests and Big Ten Championships and Tournaments, due to ongoing health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In making its decision, which was based on multiple factors, the Big Ten Conference relied on the medical advice and counsel of the Big Ten Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Big Ten Sports Medicine Committee.

“Our primary responsibility is to make the best possible decisions in the interest of our students, faculty and staff,” said Morton Schapiro, Chair of the Big Ten Council of Presidents/Chancellors and Northwestern University President.

“The mental and physical health and welfare of our student-athletes has been at the center of every decision we have made regarding the ability to proceed forward,” said Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren. “As time progressed and after hours of discussion with our Big Ten Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Big Ten Sports Medicine Committee, it became abundantly clear that there was too much uncertainty regarding potential medical risks to allow our student-athletes to compete this fall.

“We know how significant the student-athlete experience can be in shaping the future of the talented young women and men who compete in the Big Ten Conference. Although that knowledge made this a painstaking decision, it did not make it difficult. While I know our decision today will be disappointing in many ways for our thousands of student-athletes and their families, I am heartened and inspired by their resilience, their insightful and discerning thoughts, and their participation through our conversations to this point. Everyone associated with the Big Ten Conference and its member institutions is committed to getting everyone back to competition as soon as it is safe to do so.”

The fall sports included in this announcement are men’s and women’s cross country, field hockey, football, men’s and women’s soccer, and women’s volleyball. The Big Ten Conference will continue to evaluate a number of options regarding these sports, including the possibility of competition in the spring. Decisions regarding winter and spring sports will also continue to be evaluated.

The Big Ten Conference is proud of its 14 world-class research institutions and has leveraged their resources and expertise to address this pandemic over the past five months. The Big Ten Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Big Ten Sports Medicine Committee have engaged in extensive research and sharing of materials and conversations with federal, state and local government agencies, and professional and international sports organizations in order to track and better understand the daily updates surrounding this pandemic. Their advice and counsel have been invaluable as they have worked tirelessly over the past several months in their efforts to create and maintain a safe environment for athletics.

The Big Ten Conference will continue to work with medical experts and governmental authorities to gather additional information, evaluate emerging data and technologies, and monitor developments regarding the pandemic to make the best decisions possible for the health, safety and wellness of our student-athletes.