



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 16, 2020

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry 
County Administrator

Re: **Reporting of False Positive COVID-19 Testing by the University of Arizona**

At the September 15, 2020 Board of Supervisors Meeting, Supervisor Ally Miller indicated there was a false positivity COVID-19 rate of 60 percent reported by the University of Arizona. I believe what was reported was that there were a number of cases in the Athletic Department where there were false positives. The false positive percent rate was not reported, which is significantly different than what was represented at the Board meeting.

The reporting of this subject occurred in the *Arizona Daily Star*, *KGUN-9 News* and *KOLD13 News*. (Attached news articles)

As reported by Assistant County Administrator Dr. Garcia at the Board meeting, the antigen testing may have a higher percentage of less reliable results than the COVID-19 PCR testing. At present, the County is conducting exclusively PCR testing; however, we do intend to shift when resources, particularly test medium, is available for antigen testing.

CHH/anc

Attachments

c: Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,
Health and Community Services
Terry Cullen, MD, MS, Public Health Director, Pima County Health Department

https://tucson.com/sports/arizonawildcats/ua-lowers-confirmed-covid-19-positives-in-athletics-from-13-to-2-cites-testing-error/article_d6b3dd50-f09c-11ea-8753-c3d20d0b6160.html

UA lowers confirmed COVID-19 positives in athletics from 13 to 2, cites testing error

Wildcats women's soccer was to be shut down for 14 days; now expected to resume Wednesday

- [Michael Lev](#)
- Sep 6, 2020
- Sep 6, 2020 Updated Sep 8, 2020
-



Dr. Stephen Paul, right, believes his coaching background gives him additional tools to carry out what may be his biggest challenge yet.

Kelly Presnell / Arizona Daily Star

https://tucson.com/sports/arizonawildcats/ua-lowers-confirmed-covid-19-positives-in-athletics-from-13-to-2-cites-testing-error/article_d6b3dd50-f09c-11ea-8753-c3d20d0b6160.html

After reporting 13 positive test results for COVID-19 among student-athletes earlier in the week, the University of Arizona conducted contact tracing and retesting and lowered that number to two.

The UA said in a news release Sunday that the false positives were the result of an instrumentation error. The student-athletes were retested at the behest of Dr. Stephen Paul, Arizona Athletics' director of medical services.

"Of course, I am not pleased that we initially reported false positive tests, but I am proud of the protocols put in place in our testing program that enabled Dr. Paul to uncover this issue," UA president Robert C. Robbins said in a news release.

"As we do more comprehensive testing, both on and off campus, it is incumbent on our team to display the same determination and integrity that led to this result. I also want to acknowledge the student-athletes impacted and apologize to them and their families for this disruption in their lives."

Twelve positive tests of non-athletes also were rerun. Eight came back positive.

"We communicated with all those impacted and apologized for the error," Paul said. "The one positive that has come out of this process has been the reinforcement of our commitment to our contact-tracing protocols. Because of the honesty and engagement of the participants, we were able to determine there was a potential error in our process."

On Thursday, the UA reported 13 positives test results among student-athletes, plus six inconclusive results. Seven of the potential 19 positives were from women's soccer, prompting the school to shut down the program for 14 days.

However, based on the new results, all sports programs, including women's soccer, are expected to resume activities Wednesday.

Earlier in the week, the Pac-12 Conference announced an agreement with Quidel Corporation that will allow for daily, rapid-result testing across the league. That could lead to the return of sports sometime in 2020 after the conference put all events on the shelf because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Contact sports reporter Michael Lev at 573-4148 or mlev@tucson.com. On Twitter @michaeljlev

<https://www.kgun9.com/news/coronavirus/uarizona-covid-19-rerun-tests-reveal-some-student-athletes-others-had-false-positive-results>

UArizona: COVID-19 rerun tests reveal some student-athletes, others had false positive results

The University of Arizona says COVID-19 retesting on some student-athletes and other individuals showed false positives last week.



By: [Maria Arey](#)

Posted at 5:24 PM, Sep 06, 2020

and last updated 5:21 PM, Sep 07, 2020

TUCSON, Ariz. — The University of Arizona says COVID-19 retesting on some student-athletes and other individuals showed false positives last week.

On Thursday, after Arizona Athletics reported a single-day of high positive COVID-19 test results, and conducting contact-tracing, the medical director requested rerun test samples, stating that the contact tracing history did not uphold the positive results, according to UArizona.

The retest displayed that false positive results were previously reported due to inconsistent information, which urged the additional testing Arizona Athletics Director of Medical Services Dr. Stephen Paul said.

On Sep. 3, the athletics department reported 13 positive test results for athletes, after a rerun of those tests, two came back positive. According to the university, in addition, there were 12 positive tests of non-athletes collected at Campus Health, after rerun of those, eight came back positive.



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<https://www.kgun9.com/news/coronavirus/uarizona-covid-19-rerun-tests-reveal-some-student-athletes-others-had-false-positive-results>

The lab attributes the incorrect results to an instrumentation error and will perform a full audit of testing processes.

"Of course, I am not pleased that we initially reported false positive tests, but I am proud of the protocols put in place in our testing program that enabled Dr. Paul to uncover this issue," said University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins, who is also a cardiothoracic surgeon. "As we do more comprehensive testing, both on and off campus, it is incumbent on our team to display the same determination and integrity that led to this result. I also want to acknowledge the student-athletes impacted and apologize to them and their families for this disruption in their lives."

On Tuesday, Arizona Athletics samples will be re-collected for retesting.

Student-athletes and the athletics staff have been advised of this error, according to UArizona. Based on confirmation of the rerun tests -- sports programs, including women's soccer, will resume normal reentry activities on Wednesday.

The 12 individuals who tested positive at Campus Health will go through an additional antigen test to establish their results.

"We communicated with all those impacted and apologized for the error," Arizona Athletics Director of Medical Services Dr. Stephen Paul said in a statement. "The one positive that has come out of this process has been the reinforcement of our commitment to our contact-tracing protocols. Because of the honesty and engagement of the participants, we were able to determine there was a potential error in our process. This also demonstrates the commitment by the student-athletes to the protocols is working."

<https://www.kold.com/2020/09/03/arizona-athletics-confirms-covid-cases-among-student-athletes-staff/>

Arizona Athletics confirms 13 COVID-19 cases among student-athletes, staff

Athletics department suspends all women's soccer team activities for 14 days



The University of Arizona Athletics Department confirmed 13 positive COVID-19 test results. (Source: KOLD News 13)

By [Joshua Morales](#) | September 3, 2020 at 5:49 PM MST - Updated September 3 at 5:49 PM

TUCSON, Ariz. (KOLD News 13) - Arizona Athletics has been executing an exclusive COVID-19 testing and safety screening protocol with student athletes and staff on campus, as part of its re-entry process.

On Sep. 3, The University of Arizona Athletics Department confirmed 13 positive test results. In addition, there are six results that classify as inconclusive positives, and will need to be further validated.

Seven of the potential 19 positives were from the women's soccer program and three were from staff members on the medical services team.

The remaining nine positives were spread over eight separate teams.

As a result, Arizona Athletics is suspending all women's soccer team activities for the next 14 days.

All scheduled activities in athletics are suspended until next Tuesday to allow for appropriate contact tracing to be completed. This may result in additional testing.

“Out of an abundance of caution, we are going to suspend all activities until we can effectively determine whether there is further spread of the virus,” said Director of Medical Services for Arizona Athletics Dr. Steven Paul.

Arizona Athletics' testing results are reported separately from the campus-wide reporting of results on its COVID-19 homepage.

For more information on Arizona Athletics' Re-Entry Planning, visit ArizonaWildcats.com/ReEntry.