The number of UTEP-affiliated COVID-19 cases has skyrocketed since Oct. 12 and it consists of the number of positive cases through UTEP’s testing program and the number of people who’ve reported their positive status, the university’s COVID-19 dashboard shows.

From Oct. 12 to Oct. 25, there was a total of 463 positive COVID-19 cases through both the testing program and the number of people who self-reported. In the week of Oct. 12 to Oct. 18, the dashboard reported 191 positive cases through UTEP testing along with 30 self-reported cases. For the week of Oct. 19 to Oct. 25, it was 199 cases through the university’s program along with 23 that were self-reported.

There is a cumulative total of 527 positive cases conducted by the program, and 85 self-reported cases since the university began reporting its COVID numbers Aug. 24.

CARES Act.

A record 13,926 COVID-19 cases has skyrocketed since Oct. 12 which is a cumulative total of 527 positive cases conducted by the program, and 85 self-reported cases since the university began reporting its COVID numbers Aug. 24.

The Prospector
Isaiah Ramirez

More than 400 cases reported within two weeks

Anyone five years old or older with or without symptoms can receive a test which is available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Sunday. Results will be provided via email within three to five days and if residents do not hear back, they will be notified by phone call.

To read the full story please visit www.theprospectordaily.com

The Prospector
Daniela Ramos

“It’s not easy for her to speak out when it involves a colleague or client after a gig and he’ll suddenly start kissing or groping her, “She’s expecting to be handled. It’s not easy for her to speak out when it involves a colleague or client and her reputation at stake.”

“This reality is what gave birth to the global #MeToo movement in 2017, but sexual misconduct and abuse doesn’t just plague Hollywood — it plagues local music scenes too.”

“Imbalance and objectification” Flora Newberry, a long-time musician and UTEP researcher on gender issues in the music industry, said women in the music industry, including herself, constantly have to grapple with sexist attitudes and this power imbalance with abusive authority figures.

Often male producers or directors use their power over female musicians to exploit their image for success or appeal, Newberry explained.

“If you wanted work or to be assigned important parts, you’d have to dress or look sexy,” -Flora Newberry, musician and UTEP researcher

Photograph by Hugo Hinojosa/The Prospector

Musicians call misogyny, abuse in music industry

Designated UTEP line
UTEPS# JazzLine

UTEP has negotiated with the city for the drive-thru site to have a separate line designated for UTEP employee, students, and their family members in the same vehicle. You must show your UTEP Miner Gold Card to have access to the designated line and if you do not have your ID you will be asked to join the general public line. The line is free and no appointment is needed.

Starting Oct. 27, the UTEP line is available Monday through Friday, in the Schuster 5 parking lot between Prospect Street and L WEave from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or until the daily capacity is reached. According to a news release sent by the President’s Office, the wait times averaged in the UTEP lines were 30-40 minutes while the state drive-thru testing lines were an hour-and-a-half.

To help speed up the process

See Cases on page 3

See Musicians on page 3
I’ve never been into politics, but I now stand against Trump

SPEAK YOUR MIND

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SPEAK YOUR MIND

Submit a letter to the editor! Letters will be edited for clarity and brevity. Letters over 250 words are subject to editing. Please include your full name, street address and telephone number and e-mail address, plus major, classification and/or title if applicable.

Address and phone number will be used for verification only. Write to 105 E. Union, prospector@utep.edu, 747-516 or fax 747-8031.

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Cases from cover page
when you arrive at the drive-through site, sign in and fill out the online registration while you are waiting for your turn for testing. The online registration form is not the same as UTEP's Coronavirus Proactive Testing Program. The process is designed to give UTEP an option it gives UTEP students that are taking classes entirely online, and faculty and staff. Students can also be remotely as well as allowing their family members to get tested in a faster line than the general public.

Comparison: universities and cities
New Mexico State University (NMSU) which is in proximity to UTEP reported 64 positive cases since the last cover page cases reported in the last two weeks.

There are 3,585 active cases in Dona Ana County with an average of 151 cases over the last 15 days. Dona Anna County is a New Mexico State. According to the Las Cruces Sun News with the second highest case total among the states.

Over the last seven days Rice University reported 37 positive test results in Texas conducted 4,768 tests with five positive reported tests. Since Aug, 1, Rice University has reported 55 tests with 49 reported positive cases.

NSMU and Rice University's COVID-19 testing program is similar to UTEP in that it is voluntary, and its purpose is to find asymptomatic individuals who will be on campus during the fall semester. El Paso currently has a daily average of 500 to 600 hospital reports over the past seven days which is the highest reported average in the State of Texas.

The El Paso County Judge Richard Sannogoimanosed a curfew Oct 25, 2020 to theEl Paso, and the Valle Verde Campus, 919 Hunter
rate in the entire University of Texas location.

UTEP's ADA parking fee for the 2019-2020 school year was the highest amongst such as the institution's parking

President Heather Wilson, Vice President for Business Affairs Mark McGurk, Director of Parking and Transportation Jerri Herrers. The next highest ADA parking prices, according to the petition, stemmed from the University of Texas at Arlington with prices ranging from $20 to $273. The lowest fee came from The University of Texas of the Permian Basin with $35. UTPB first responded to the petition in an interview conducted by KTSM Channel 9, where McGurk said the parking price is not the only fee for services such as the institution's parking garages and shuttle services.

McGurk added, "I'm the Prospector a faculty or staff member of the university. Though UTEP's percentages matched the average for institutions across the UT system by reporting 6%, 13%, 23%, and 14%, respectively, they were still alarming. 

"Even one case of sexual harassment or assault is too many," said Edens. "UTEPS vice president for student affairs, told the El Paso Times in March 2017. The results of these questionnaires let UTEP officials and leaders know students currently speak up when being victim of any of these offenses, considering only 11% of victims considered a UTEP faculty or staff member, according to Edens.

"We want to make sure that students are comfortable coming forward, it is an open and safe environment to report anything that has happened," Edens said. In 2017, according to UTEPs 2018 annual security report, five cases of rape were reported on campus property, along with one case of fondling, one case of domestic violence, and 16 cases of stalking. The reported cases saw a low percentage of victims e that those on the survey, indicating the vast issue of sexual harassment, and 16 cases of stalking. The reported cases saw a low percentage of victims e that those on the survey, indicating the vast issue of sexual harassment, and 16 cases of stalking. The reported cases saw a low percentage of victims e that those on the survey, indicating the vast issue of sexual harassment, and 16 cases of stalking.

"It's hard to realize that you don't have to deal with it, you don't have to be treated this way," said Valdez. "It usually goes away once you find your voice, but some people never do."

Culture of machines and abuse
Through her personal experiences, Newberry said El Paso has been approving and embracing of female leaders in music. "This is a very difficult conversation to have in El Paso, and it is even more difficult for me, as a woman musician," Newberry said. "But I think all of this has been a very much different point in my career, since I have heard from young women that they have had more issues or pushback when trying to break into the music business."

Newberry is a band director and music teacher and plays in a local band with her husband. "I haven't run into any machismo while playing, but I think it's because my time performing here in El Paso has always been alongside my husband," Newberry said. "Other musicians need you if you are a man."

If women are not bothered or harassed by other men when then the woman is in his company, then this brings for the question of who are they really respecting?

"It's important to note the environments in which abuse, harassment, and violence, take place. There are usually settings with young crowds and young musicians. I think that's why machismo in the El Paso music scene".

"You have to be much better than the female musician just to get people to listen, you have to steal their attention by being extraordinary for your music," Newberry said. "But I think it's because I'm at a certain institution, and that environment is very supportive to me as a music teacher and plays in a local music teacher and plays in a local orchestra, and in a university.

However, it's important to know how to deal with it, you don't have to be treated this way," said Valdez. "It usually goes away once you find your voice, but some people never do."

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Entrepreneurship challenge promotes green energy

Isaiah Ramirez
The Prospector

A new grant-funded initiative at UTEP is set to promote sustainability, green energy and entrepreneurship — all at the same time.

The “Green Energy Entrepreneurship Challenge” is a three-day bootcamp that will consist of a green energy business pitch competition where UTEP students will participate as part of the curriculum for certain courses. They can also earn prizes at the end of the competition.

The initiative is being spearheaded by Hadjimarcou, Ph.D., associate professor of instruction in the department of history, and was one of the individuals that worked with the TMU to create the petition believes the ADA community should have been consulted prior to initiation of the parking projects.

"It is very unfair to charge certain sectors of the population without first asking them if they feel that it is a cost that is willing and able to pay," Chew said.

Several individuals took to social media to express their opinion on UTEP’s ADA parking prices.

One Twitter user named Lydia O’Dell said, "You have to pay to park in their ADA spots! I got having a parking permit in general but whole area for students who are a student with ADA?" Chew said.

According to UTEP’s parking website, disabled parking areas are enforced 24 hours a day. A 'Class H' which is a UTEP ADA parking permit, allows the holder to park in any ADA space in the color zone designated by the permit, except for spaces specifically marked as reserved. Annual permit fees are assessed based on the zone requested. ADA parking projects.

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The Prospector
Exodus Ward

Leyendas keep folklore alive

The legend of La Llorona (“The Crying Woman”) can be familiar names from the 1960s, when a young woman grew up hearing scary stories in the border land. “Though it seems as though the celebration becomes an event, there are four original chandeliers, accompanied by accented walls with red and gold trimmings. In the lobby there is a 10-foot bronze statue of the famous Mexican General Pancho Villa welcoming the U.S. General John J Pershing. There is also 30,000 square feet of space for events, host meetings, events, and special celebrations.

The three restaurants located in the hotel have a distinct culinary region. They serve enchiladas made of handmade tortillas from Sabor, hand cut steaks from 1700 degrees Steak House and homemade gelato with freshly baked items from Dulce.

The rooms have a southern western motif and offer views of the Franklin mountains, Juarez, and downtown El Paso. Other new lavish amenities include the 10th floor rooftop pool, boutique, cigar bar, fitness center, and upcoming spa with a state-of-the-art salt water system. According to a Paso del Norte Hotel’s newsletter the early 20th century, guests would celebrate with drinks while watching the Mexican revolution from the hotel’s 10th floor.

The Paso del Norte hotel was originally scheduled to open in 2018 but was delayed due to construction issues and COVID-19 business restrictions. However, the hotel is now open for safe travel and dining. It is among one of the world’s first hotels to open with a virus-killing air filtration system throughout the property. Its state-of-the-art plasma air system can kill 99% of bacteriophage in the air after 10 minutes of use.

The hotel opened its doors on Oct. 8, and hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on Oct. 11.

For more information about the hotel one may visit its website at www.hotelpdn.com.

Alyson Rodriguez can be reached at prospector@utep.edu @alyson_rod1127 on Twitter.

Hotel reopening reveals multi-million-dollar renovation

The recently reopened El Paso hotel has undergone a multi-million-dollar renovation. The building, originally designed by Trout & Trost, was envisioned to be a first-class hotel that would attract people to the Southwest.

Some of the features of the hotel include the distinguished dome bar, which stands at 25 feet in diameter, with a mosaic art mural covering the top of the black and white marble bar. From the high ceilings cascading down to the floor are four original chandeliers, accompanied by accented walls with red and gold trimmings. In the lobby there is an 18-foot bronze statue of the famous Mexican General Pancho Villa welcoming the U.S. General John J Pershing. There is also 30,000 square feet of space for events, host meetings, events, and special celebrations.

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Leyendas keep folklore alive

Excelsior World

The Prospector

“La Llorona,” El Cucuy” and “El Chupacabras” may be familiar names from the 1960s, when a young woman grew up hearing scary stories in the border land. “Though it seems as though the celebration becomes an event, there are four original chandeliers, accompanied by accented walls with red and gold trimmings. In the lobby there is an 18-foot bronze statue of the famous Mexican General Pancho Villa welcoming the U.S. General John J Pershing. There is also 30,000 square feet of space for events, host meetings, events, and special celebrations.

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As the human species, we’re part of a much larger whole. There are a number of shared experiences that unite us, and one of those is facing the pandemic. It’s a time when we’re all dealing with the same challenges: health, economic, social, and psychological. We’re all in this together, and that shared experience is what connects us.

The adjustment period for quarantine was rough for many of us. We went on Spring Break last semester and never returned to in-person lectures. Nothing could’ve prepared me for the return that this year would go. As we prepare for our potential second lockdown, I thought about how I managed to stay sane the first time. Here’s what I read, watched and played during lockdown.

To read

* * *

“Staying in” by Sally Hew

Back from her brief stay in the psych ward, journalist Camille Pererak returns to her small hometown to get the story of two young girls who were murdered. For years, Camille has avoided speaking to her hypochondriac mother and her seemingly perfect half-sister. Back in her Victorian-styled mansion, Camille finds herself reliving the victims. Camille must deal with the psychological puzzle of her past to get to the truth.

This one threw me for a loop. Not only did it grab me from the beginning, it kept me hooked. The book is loaded with memorable characters and dark twists. Even when you think you’ve figured something out, there’s more every time you read it. I was sure I knew how the book would end and in the last five pages, I was pleasantly surprised. I will recommend this book to fans of mysteries.

*The Sinister gift* by Jeannette Walls

*The Glass Castle* is a memoir of Jeannette Walls’ vibrant childhood. When her parents, traveling entertainers, were away, her mother was an equally intelligent, charismatic woman. Her mother was an equally flighty parent, they all grew up to be successful people. I have a few flighty parents, they all grew up to be successful people. I have a few

The Sims 4, a life simulation game that gives power to create and control people. The Sims 4 has vibrant artist, who didn’t want to be a mathematician. The book centers around the Sims 4, a life simulation game that gives power to create and control people. The Sims 4 has vibrant artist, who didn’t want to be a mathematician. The book centers around

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Animal Crossing offers a variety of activities to play with friends. In a world full of deadlines and impending doom, it’s nice to have a space where there’s literally no expectations. Tom Nook will ask you to do certain tasks, but there’s no timetable for them. Recently, I needed to create furniture for the three new villagers that were arriving. I couldn’t at all week but I ended up making the pieces in the evening. I absolutely love that there’s no rush to do anything. I love being in control of when things get done and how quickly they get done.

In Review: Animal Crossing soothes mid-semester anxiety, pandemic apprehension

As the semester drags along, I’ve been looking for new ways to unwind. Down on the homestead is a great game to play. The game is easy to get lost in. With city-wide orders set to stay away from others, it can be a hard. Calling, texting and Zoom calls have exploded in popularity, but, meet-ups in Animal Crossing are too far. It’s not quite the same as visiting friends and family but it’s still fun. With Hallowsen coming up and restrictions set, it can be a fun substitute for traditional trick-or-treating. Even if we can’t mingle in real life, we can mingle in game which almost half as cool.

The tasks are fulfiling

Do you know how fulfilling it is to watch an island come together? If chose where to put my shops and houses. Also, doing the little “chores” for the day are calming. Fishing, gardening, picking fruits and selling goods is a good way to calm the mind. Also, the customization aspect of the game is easy to get lost. The CDC recommends spending time on activities you enjoy to protect your psyche, so I spend a lot of time customizing my island. Most recently, I spent the evening beautifying my orchard and flower garden. It was relaxing.

Time exists, but not really

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The Prospector
Heriberto Perez

Cross Country finishes among top-10 finishers at C-USA XC Championships

The UTEP men’s and women’s Cross-Country team competed Saturday, Oct 31 in Birmingham, Alabama, at the Conference USA (C-USA) Cross Country Championships. Four members of the team finished in the top-10 of the championship. Sophomore Timia Cheruiyot finished in fifth in the men’s 8K competition, junior Rodriguez Korir in sixth. Senior Candace Chepkoosgei finished in seventh at the women’s 6K competition and junior Karoline Dallad in ninth. Cheruiyot, Korir, and Chepkoosgei all earned All-C-USA First Team honors, while Dallad was named ABC-USA Second Team.

Cheruiyot closed in a 24:11.7, earning fifth place, Korir closed 24:22.97 finished in sixth place. For the rest of the team, sophomore Kenneth Talavera finished in 27th place with his personal record (25:37.03), Roza Botik (26:15.83) placed 38th. Juniors Michael Sims (26:41.83) ranked 49th, and Yusuf Mohammed (27:50.84) placed 62nd who also registered best personal records.

For the women in the 6K event, Chepkoosgei recorded 21:38.43 to finish in seventh place, and Dallad registered a personal-best record with 21:39.35 to finish in ninth place. The rest of the team’s times for UTEP were Sophomore Joan Kimaiyo with 22:59.28 finished in 33rd, and Valerie Gonzales with 24:57.72 who recorded her best personal time. Senior Andrea Lucero with 24:43.92 finished in 55th, and Sophomore Jaciellin Orozco recorded her season-best time record with 26:23.38.

The men’s team finished in fifth place in the championship with 125 points due to the suitable individual performances that the athletes had; Charlotte won the team title with 31 points. The women’s finished in seventh place with 175 points; Middle Tennessee won the team event with 31 points. Top of the women’s side was Rico’s Grace Forbes, who recorded 19:54.00, and from the men’s side, the champion was Charlotte’s Nicholas Scudder at 23:36.28.

I’m proud of both the men and women performances at the Conference Championship today,” UTEP Cross Country Head Coach Paul Engre said. “The women managed to place Chepkoosgei and Dallad in top ten, seventh and ninth. Today’s performances shed lots of improvement from the last two months.”

The men’s team also did their best to place Cheruiyot and Korir in first team all conference in fifth and sixth. I believe these performances were a great effort considering all the challenges we faced throughout the whole season due to the pandemic. Overall, I’d like to congratulate both teams for their outstanding commitment and performances.”

Soccer

El Paso Locomotive season in review

The El Paso Locomotive ended up the 2020 USL Championship season in seventh place. The Locomotive was led by their new head coach, Richard Davis. With a total of 16 games played, the border team had a record of nine winnings, two losses, and five draws, with 24 goals scored and 14 against (1.8). Their difference was 8-10.

“From the beginning, we showed an improvement, we showed a different level of toughness. Our coaching staff, Mark Lowry mentioned in a zoom meeting after the last game of the season final. ‘It’s very hard to speak to coaches and many things that we can just use now to be stronger in the next year.’”

This season started in March, but the Locomotive just played one game due to the COVID-19 restrictions. The race of the Locomotive was when they started its championship final. “We’re very modest of this and the stuff that we can use now to be stronger for next year.”

For the Locomotive, the El Paso had four wins in a row against New Mexico State 3-2, San Antonio FC 2-1, Colorado Springs Switchbacks FC 4-2 and the defending champions Real Monarchs SLC 1-0. The Locomotive closed the month with a goalless draw against Colorado and another victory against Real Monarchs 2-1.

September was an excellent month for the Locomotive; the El Paso had four wins in a row against New Mexico State 3-2, San Antonio FC 2-1, Colorado Springs Switchbacks FC 4-2 and the defending champions Real Monarchs SLC 1-0. The Locomotive closed the month with two scoreless draws against New Mexico State and Colorado Springs Switchbacks.

In October, El Paso just had one game as a tie with the Columbus Crew. The Locomotive had its best offensive output of the season that game, scoring four goals in a shutout of the New Mexico State City 4-0. In the playoffs, El Paso faced FC Tulsa first. After finishing regulation tied 2-2, 

The Panthers struggle in the air, along with providing the quarterback, should give the Miners ample opportunity to get pressure on the quarterback. Focusing on the strong Panther running game should give the Miners a blueprint for success in the game.

Giving up over 300 yards to Jacksonville State should play to the Miners offense’s strength with its ability to use multiple backs. A steady dose of freshman Deon Hankins and Ronald Award should be a winning game plan. The FIU run game was and was when they started the 200 yards by Liberty University in its first game of the year. Expect the run early and often against FIU.

Having played twice as many games as the Panthers should be a distinct advantage for the Miners against an inexperienced defense. The Panther line has struggled in pass protection, while UTEP has shown vast improvement at getting to the quarterback.

Precise: Miners 24, Panthers 21

The likelihood of this game going on as scheduled is quite precarious due to the recent COVID-19 spike in cases in El Paso and FIU players testing positive the previous week for any updates on the status of the game.

UTE is scheduled to play FIU at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Sun Bowl in El Paso.

Michael Cuivelo

The Prospector

The UTEP Miners are scheduled to play the Florida International University (FIU) Panthers Nov. 7 of COVID-19 precautions do not derail the matchup.

Both teams are coming off a weekend in which its games were canceled due to pandemic precautions.

North Texas canceled its game at UTEP due to the current spike in El Paso and FIU’s cases had to call off its game at Marshall due to multiple positive tests for the Panthers.

For the season so far, the Miners are 3-3, after winning its first three games, then losing its last three contests. In its past two games, the Miners have played well controlling its games but turnovers and penalties have resulted in losing results.

Currently, the Panthers sit winless at 0-3 while having two games postponed over the season. In its last game played, FIU lost to lower-division opponent Jacksonville State at home 19-10. In that game the Panthers only generated 173 yards of total offense while giving up 444 yards of total offense to the Jacksonville State. Overall, the Panthers are only averaging 275 yards a game while giving up 444.

Offensively for the Panthers have taken a considerable step back, passing the ball to backup quarterback James Morgan left for graduation. For the season, the Panthers have shuffled three quarterbacks in and out of the starting lineup, with freshwater Stone Norton taking most of the snaps. Norton has completed 33% of his passes while throwing three touchdowns and no interceptions. Neither of FIU’s other quarterbacks has thrown a touchdown or constructed over 34% of their pass. One of the few bright spots on offense for the Panthers has been senior running back D’Yonté Price, who has 303 yards rushing with an 8.7 average per rush. Sophomore Shaun Peterson has been a very effective backup running back for FIU with 168 yards on the ground, two touchdowns and a six-rush rushing average. The Panthers have had two runs of over 60 yards for scores this season.

With the struggles at quarterback and the loss of its top four receivers from last season, the reconstructing corps has had its battles to gain valuable experience. Junior Bryce Singleton is the only receiver with over five catches on the season with seven receptions for 99 yards and a touchdown. Junior Sterling Palmer other quarterbacks has thrown a touchdown or constructed over 34% of their pass. One of the few bright spots on offense for the Panthers has been senior running back D’Yonté Price, who has 303 yards rushing with an 8.7 average per rush. Sophomore Shaun Peterson has been a very effective backup running back for FIU with 168 yards on the ground, two touchdowns and a six-rush rushing average. The Panthers have had two runs of over 60 yards for scores this season.

The Panthers return three offensive linemen from a front five that was among the best in the nation the previous year and had the least amount of sacks in Conference USA (C-USA) in 2019 with 14. Unfortunately, the line has already given up 12 sacks in three games this season, as the line has struggled to protect its inexperienced quarterbacks. The line has been consistently good in the run game.

On defense, the Panthers have struggled with little support from the offense at sustaining drives to keep it off the field. FIU lost four of its top four tacklers from last season, including the leader of its defense in linebacker Sage Lewis who led the team in tackles with 93. Last season’s leading pass rusher for the Panthers has only appeared in the first game of the season for FIU and the team sorely misses his pressure from the end spot. Sophomore Daven Strickland has returned from a season-ending injury that forced him to miss the final nine games to lead the team in sacks with two in three games. Senior Jamal Gates leads an understated linebacking corps after being the second leading tackler last season with 85. Gates is currently third on the team in tackles with 19, with fellow senior Tyson Marve also having tackles on the year along with a sack. Senior Josh Powell, the other starter, has 18 tackles on the season.

FIU’s secondary is a deep group even after losing three of its top tacklers from last season. Twin brothers Richard and Richard Dames are two leaders of the Panther secondary. Currently, Richard leads the team in tackles with 23 while his brother has 15 plus an interception. Overall, the secondary has only two interceptions in three games and has allowed 245 yards per game in the air.

One place the Panthers have an advantage over the Miners is in head coaching experience. Butch Davis is in his fourth season with Panthers and has compiled a 23-19 record, including three bowl appearances in three seasons. Davis’s overall college coaching record is 86-62, including stints at the University of Miami and the University of North Carolina. Davis also has NFL coaching experience with two Super Bowl rings as an assistant with the Dallas Cowboys and a head coach at Cleveland.

On paper, this looks like a favorable matchup for the Miners.
Football has second game postponed due to COVID

“Student-athlete infections have been nearly non-existent due to their diligence in following the recommended safety protocols and frequency of testing.”

-Jim Senter, UTEP’s Athletic Director

UTope Graduating Seniors

The Prospector wants to celebrate your accomplishments. Send us your farewell message along with your grad photo and we will publish it in our special Graduation Issue. This special digital issue will be available at theprospectordaily.com on November 24.

All graduating seniors who submit their messages will participate in a raffle for a UTEP diploma frame.

Email your message to: prospectordads@utep.edu

Messages must be no longer than 50 words.

Deadline to email messages: November 13, 2020.

The Prospector reserves right to edit any messages it deems inappropriate.

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Michael Cuvello
The Prospector

For the second time this season, the UTEP Miners football team had a football game canceled due to COVID-19 concerns. The Oct. 31 game against North Texas was canceled Tuesday, Oct. 27 by North Texas, citing the spike in El Paso’s coronavirus cases. Previously, the University of Southern Mississippi canceled its game due to multiple players on its team testing positive for the virus. Currently, El Paso has peaked in its COVID-19 cases with almost daily records for highs in new cases. As of this recording, El Paso had 1187 daily new cases and over 15,000 active cases. ICUS in El Paso area hospitals were being maxed out with 232 people in ICU and 939 people hospitalized due to COVID-19.

The total active cases in the Sun City exceed over 20 state total cases for their entire population.

In a news release, North Texas President said that he was worried about his athletes’ health and safety due to the El Paso outbreak.

Not since August has UTEP announced that any football players have tested positive for COVID-19. During the month of August, UTEP had a total of six football players test positive but were asymptomatic.

Since the season started, UTEP has not announced any failed COVID tests. North Texas had three positive tests within its athletic department Oct. 26, including one athlete, most likely a football player.

UTEP athletic director released a statement after the North Texas cancellation announcement. “Student-athlete infections have been nearly non-existent due to their diligence in following the recommended safety protocols and the frequency of testing. While we believe that our department and our fans have followed all of the best practices to ensure a safe experience, the disease is at very high levels around us. We understand El Paso’s desire to encourage people to stay home this weekend.”

UTEP President Heather Wilson also released a statement addressing the canceled game. “We are disappointed that North Texas has chosen not to come to El Paso for the football game this weekend. We have a safe place to play and no players who are sick or in isolation, and North Texas has not indicated that any of their players are ill. We made the decision earlier today not to allow fans in the stadium. We are proud of the diligence that our student-athletes, coaches and staff have shown to put us in a position to play every week. We look forward to further discussions with Conference USA and North Texas on whether or when this game will be rescheduled.”

To further complicate the issue, El Paso county judge Ricardo Sammings has ordered a two-week shutdown for the city of El Paso and recommended that residents of the country stay home if possible. The Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton is hostily contending Sammings order as unconstitutional and not valid. This order has no power over school districts, collegiate or professional sports, so those individual entities will have to make those decisions.

The Canutillo, El Paso, and Socorro school districts have suspended play for the next two weeks while UTEP made an early week decision not to have fans present at the North Texas game before its cancellation.

At this time, UTEP has a home game scheduled for Nov. 7 against Conference USA opponent Florida International University, who also had last weekend’s game canceled due to COVID 19 concerns.

Florida International had to call off the game due to a lack of available scholarship players due to positive COVID tests. Florida International also has one other game canceled this season against Charlotte for similar reasons.

So, with the current rate of infection in the El Paso region and Florida International’s current level of athletes testing positive, there is a distinct possibility that the game could be in serious jeopardy of not being played.

Conference USA recently pushed back its Championship game to allow an additional two weeks to use for postponed games. Divisional Games will be a priority, so the Florida International game would likely not be rescheduled. Both North Texas and Southern Mississippi are divisional opponents, so those games would be the priority for being made up.

With the UTEP football team’s continued improvement, further postponement or cancellations will be quite a blow to Dimel and UTEP players. Unfortunately, the current pandemic has only worsened as the year has gone on for the El Paso area and many sections of the country.

We are currently experiencing a much higher level of infection and hospitalization than we have at any point of the pandemic, so much more remains in limbo.

As it stands now, the season could very much be in jeopardy if infection rates do not subside in the region. At this point, there are way more questions than answers for El Paso and the UTEP football team.

Michael Cuvello may be reached at prospector@utep.edu

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