

Red Sox pitcher Eduardo Rodriguez confirms he's dealing with heart issue stemming from COVID-19 infection

Rodriguez will be shut down for at least a week with the hope that his heart inflammation goes away

By R.J. Anderson

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Earlier this week, the Boston Red Sox shut down left-handed pitcher Eduardo Rodriguez's throwing program after discovering health complications stemming from his bout with COVID-19. On Sunday, Rodriguez confirmed a report from WEEI's Rob Bradford that his "complication" is myocarditis, or "an inflammation of the heart muscle," per the Mayo Clinic.

Rodriguez, 27, told reporters he was "still scared" about the condition after learning more about it in recent days, but that he doesn't intend to opt out of playing at some point this season. "I want to be pitching yesterday, the day before, or today," he said, according to Bradford. "I want to be out there every time I can, so I'm never thinking of getting out of the season. I feel bad every time I see a game happening and I'm not even in the dugout."

The current plan for Rodriguez entails him taking the week off before undergoing another MRI. At that point, doctors will determine if the inflammation has subsided and he can resume activity. Otherwise, Rodriguez may not get his wish of pitching in a game anytime soon.

Myocarditis can affect the "heart's ability to pump and causing rapid or abnormal heart rhythms," according to the Mayo Clinic, and is usually caused by a viral infection. Although COVID-19 is considered a respiratory disease, it has been linked to myocarditis frequently enough to merit further scientific study. A sports cardiologist explained to CBS Sports the potential impact of COVID-19 on the heart before the season resumed.

Rodriguez's story is a reminder that the calculus for playing sports during the global pandemic is not simple. Rather, there is a spectrum of largely unknown side effects -- such is the nature of a novel virus -- that could have long-term ramifications, especially for professional athletes whose livelihood depends on them performing at their physical peak.