OLYMPICS
With Simone Biles out, ROC wins team gymnastics gold
Page 24

MILITARY
Biden announces end of US combat mission in Iraq
Page 3

FACES
Leon Bridges opens up about his musical evolution
Page 14

VA implements coronavirus vaccine mandate for medical staff » **Page 6**

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MOLLY CRAWFORD/U.S. Navy

The destroyer USS Barry conducts operations in the South China Sea in November 2020. The U.S. military was crippled during a classified October 2020 war game, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John Hyten said recently.

'It failed miserably'

US military vulnerabilities were exposed during classified war game, top general says

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military was crippled during a classified war game last year that exposed vulnerabilities the Pentagon is trying to fix, should it ever face off against a sophisticated adversary like China, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said this week.

Hyten

"Without overstating the issue, it failed miserably," Gen. John Hyten said of the battle plan during the October exercise, which he detailed Monday at the Emerging Technologies Institute in Washington.

The biggest problem occurred when communication networks came under attack. During the drill, a Pentagon "red team" playing the enemy role "ran rings around us," Hyten said. "They

SEE FAILED ON PAGE 5

RELATED
Defense Secretary Austin takes aim at China during visit to Singapore
Page 5

North and South Korea reopen lines of communication

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

Communication channels between South and North Korea, severed for more than a year, were restored Tuesday to promote "mutual trust" and "reconciliation," according to separate statements from both countries.

Communication was suspended in June 2020, after North Korea described the South as its "enemy" and said it would "completely shut down all contact … with South Korea and get rid of unnecessary things."

The lines were restored at 10 a.m. Tuesday after a system test in which leaders from both countries "communicated about the reestablishment of inter-Korean relations," Park Soo-hyun, a senior South Korean government official, told reporters in Seoul.

Park said South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un have exchanged letters on numerous occasions since April.

"This restoration of the communication line between South and North Korea is expected to do good to the improvement and development of inter-Korean relations in the future," Park said.

North Korea's state-run news agency also confirmed that communication had been restored.

"The whole Korean nation desires to see the North-South relations recovered from setback and stagnation as early as possible," the Korean Central News Agency said in a statement Tuesday. "In this regard, the top leaders of the North and the South agreed to make a big stride in recovering the mutual trust and promoting reconciliation."

North Korea cut off its communi-

SEE LINES ON PAGE 4

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Frito-Lay workers end 19-day strike in Kan.

The Washington Post

Hundreds of Frito-Lay employees are returning to work in Kansas, ending a 19-day strike with the weekend ratification of a two-year contract that guarantees them at least one day off each week and raises wages.

Workers at the Topeka plant had called on the snack food giant to end forced overtime and 84-hour workweeks, saying they had been pushed to the brink as the factory revved up operations during the pandemic, according to the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union Local 218. Many staffers worked as much as 12-hour shifts with as little as eight hours in between, according to a statement the union's international president, Anthony Shelton, issued earlier this month.

"They are forcing the current workforce to work double and triple shifts," Shelton said. "Workers do not have enough time to see their family, do chores around the house, run errands or even get a healthy night's sleep."

The company had called the union's claims "grossly exaggerated." An earlier Frito-Lay offer was voted down, which the company said illustrated that union leadership was "out of touch" with workers' concerns.

Frito-Lay said the union accepted a contract that addressed some of its concerns, according to a statement released Saturday. In addition to the day-off guarantee, the deal will give the union more input on staffing and overtime decisions, and raise wages 4% over two years.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (July 28)	$1.15
Dollar buys (July 28)	0.8249
British pound (July 28)	$1.35
Japanese yen (July 28)	108.00
South Korean won (July 28)	1,120.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3769
Britain (Pound)	1.3815
Canada (Dollar)	1.2583
China (Yuan)	6.5046
Denmark (Krone)	6.2965
Egypt (Pound)	15.7192
Euro	.8466
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7814
Hungary (Forint)	304.23
Israel (Shekel)	3.2558
Japan (Yen)	109.90
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3007
Norway (Krone)	8.8745
Philippines (Peso)	50.43
Poland (Zloty)	3.89
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7502
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3604
South Korea (Won)	1,154.07
Switzerland (Franc)	.9148
Thailand (Baht)	32.94
Turkey (New Lira)	8.5642

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.05
30-year bond	1.92

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE

THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup 11
Classified 13
Comics 16
Crossword 16
Faces 14
Opinion 15
Sports 17-24

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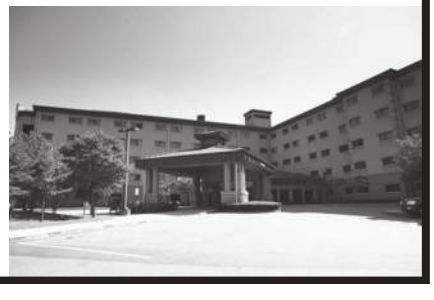

MILITARY

Biden orders end of US combat mission in Iraq

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

President Joe Biden has ordered the end of the combat role for American troops in Iraq in the coming months, a move that will retain U.S. service members in the country as advisers for now, he announced Monday at the White House.

"Our role in Iraq will be … just to be available, to continue to train, to assist, to help and to deal with ISIS as it arises, but we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat zone," Biden said alongside Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, according to a White House pool report.

The two leaders spoke briefly to reporters before entering an Oval Office meeting.

The Iraqi prime minister, who has faced internal political pressure over the presence of foreign troops in his country, welcomed the development Monday. It is a change that al-Kadhimi has sought in recent months as his forces continue to fight remnants of Islamic State, which has remained capable of attacks in Iraq. ISIS, for example, claimed responsibility for the bombing one week ago of a market in a Baghdad suburb that killed 30 people.

Al-Kadhimi thanked the United States for its enduring security support in endorsing the changes to come.

"Today, our nation is stronger than ever," al-Kadhimi said about ending the American combat role in his nation.

The announcement comes just months after Biden's announcement in April of the formal withdrawal of nearly all American troops from Afghanistan, as the president looks to disentangle the U.S. military from its two-decade focus on counterterrorism operations ushered in by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. American troops have nearly completed their pullout from Afghanistan, where some 600 service members will remain past August to secure the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, U.S. officials have said. It was unclear Monday, however, what impact the mission change in Iraq will have on the U.S. military presence there.

Susan Walsh/AP

President Joe Biden speaks to Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi during their meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, D.C., on Monday.

Some 2,500 U.S. troops remain in Iraq, where they have been primarily focused for years on training and advising Iraq's security forces, in a mission that will continue into the future, according to Biden and al-Kadhimi.

American forces will no longer officially be labeled "combat troops" under the agreement outlined Monday, though they will remain armed and continue to have the right to defend themselves, a defense official said. While the Pentagon has reported few attacks by ISIS on U.S. forces in Iraq in recent years, American troops have faced regular attacks via Shia militias with ties to Iran who have sought their withdrawal, including several since Biden's inauguration.

Biden did not disclose Monday whether he intended to remove any troops from Iraq in the coming months. A senior administration official, speaking to reporters on the condition of anonymity on Friday, also declined to provide information about any troop withdrawals related to the announcement.

Biden and others on Monday did not say when a full withdrawal of American forces from Iraq could occur. The senior administration official said, for now, U.S. troops would continue supporting Iraqi forces with "logistics, intelligence [and] advisory capacity building."

The official said the shift marked a "significant evolution" in the American military's role in Iraq, though the U.S. mission there has focused almost exclusively on advising and training Iraqi troops since December 2017, when Iraq's government declared ISIS militarily defeated in its country.

It could mean a lesser role for special operations troops in Iraq, who have quietly continued occasional operations against ISIS, typically alongside the Iraqi commandos who they have continued to train.

The Biden administration and Iraq agreed in April to work toward a drawdown of combat troops from Iraq, but they did not put a timeline on such an announcement at the time.

The Pentagon signaled last week that it would seek to downgrade the rank of the top commander overseeing American and coalition forces in Iraq from a three-star general to a two-star general.

In a routine announcement of general officer assignments released Thursday, the Pentagon announced that Maj. Gen. John W. Brennan Jr. had been assigned to take command of the U.S.-led Operation Inherent Resolve coalition as a two-star. Operation Inherent Resolve is the official name for the international effort to fight ISIS in Iraq and Syria, including American-led training missions of Iraqi troops and Kurdish militia fighters.

The coalition has been commanded by three-star Army generals since its establishment in 2014, when President Barack Obama approved a return of U.S. troops to Iraq as ISIS rapidly gained ground across the country where Obama had ordered forces removed just three years earlier. Operation Inherent Resolve's commander now is Army Lt. Gen. Paul T. Calvert.

Brennan, a Green Beret, leads the Army's 1st Special Forces Command, overseeing the service's seven Special Forces groups, its two psychological operations groups and other special operations units at Fort Bragg, N.C. Before that, he served as the No. 2 general for the secretive Joint Special Operations Command.

Officials on Monday did not say what, if any, impact the forthcoming changes in Iraq could have on its related but separate mission in Syria, where almost 1,000 American troops remain in the country's east to prevent a return of ISIS there. The Pentagon has long ferried troops and supplies between Iraq and Syria.

The senior Biden administration official who spoke Friday said no adjustments were imminent in Syria. The Biden administration is now undertaking a global posture review, a traditional assessment of the American military around the world conducted at the outset of a new presidential administration. The results of that review could lead to changes in troops levels in Syria and other locations, Pentagon officials said last month.

"In Syria, we're supporting Syrian Democratic Forces in their fight against ISIS," the officials said. "That's been quite successful, and that's something that we'll continue."

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Former DOD acquisitions chief confirmed as USAF secretary

By Caitlin Doornbos
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Former Pentagon acquisition chief Frank Kendall was confirmed as Air Force secretary during a Senate voice vote on Monday.

The Army veteran will now serve as the top civilian in charge of the Air Force and Space Force and work alongside Air Force veteran and military adviser Gina Ortiz Jones, who was sworn in Monday as undersecretary of the Air Force.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Tuesday in a statement that Kendall's "decades of expertise and impact in service to our national security and defense make him an unmatched asset for the challenges we face today."

Kendall

"Frank has led the department's acquisition efforts to equip our warfighters with the latest capabilities and cutting-edge weaponry for the battlefield, educated our next generation of leaders at [the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.] and served as a human rights lawyer," Austin said. "Frank understands firsthand the commitment and sacrifice our troops give day in and day out."

The Senate vote was unanimous Monday after Sens. Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, both Michigan Democrats, held up Kendall's vote for about a month to secure promises by the Air Force and Pentagon to support their state's Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Defense News reported Monday.

Peters and Stabenow were concerned Air Force officials chose Arkansas's Ebbing Air National Guard Base over Selfridge to host an international F-35 Joint Strike Fighter training center, but were assured Selfridge would "remain a hub for the A-10 for at least the next 10 years, as well as future tanker aircraft," Air Force Times reported Tuesday.

With Kendall's confirmation, Carlos Del Toro — President Joe Biden's pick for Navy secretary — is the only outstanding military branch secretary nomination. Army Secretary Christine Wormuth swore into her job in May.

Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said in a statement Monday that it is "crucial for the United States to have its military leaders in place as we work to fend off rising threats posed by foreign adversaries like China, Russia and Iran."

"I look forward to working with Secretary Kendall on North Dakota's Air Force priorities of advancing nuclear modernization, supporting intelligence capabilities and getting our Air National Guard members the resources they need," Cramer said.

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MILITARY

Lightning strikes 2 F-35Bs over Japan

By Matthew M. Burke and Mari Higa
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A pair of state-of-the-art F-35B Lightning II stealth fighters recently met their match in the form of actual lightning in the skies over Makurazaki in Japan's Kagoshima prefecture.

Both aircraft, assigned to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, landed safely after the strike and neither pilot was injured.

The incident occurred during a routine flight on July 13, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing spokesman Maj. Ken Kunze wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes on Tuesday. The F-35Bs, which are capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings, were en route to Okinawa when they were struck.

The incident is considered a Class A mishap because the combined projected repair cost is expected to exceed $2.5 million, Kunze said. Class A mishaps involve repair costs exceeding $2 million or the death or permanent disability of a service member.

"We are currently conducting an investigation into the mishap and will incorporate the lessons learned into future flight operations," Kunze said. "The safe operation of our aircraft and the readiness of our squadrons are vitally important to us in order to continue supporting our allies, partners, and joint forces in the region."

Kunze said that each U.S. aircraft is "meticulously inspected" for safety prior to any flight operations.

Lightning strikes on aircraft are fairly common and can severely damage critical and essential systems, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. However, they rarely result in catastrophic effects, according to NTS, an Anaheim, Calif., industrial technology firm.

The F-35 is the costliest weapon system in Defense Department history, the Government Accountability Office declared in an April report. Estimated costs over the life of the program exceed $1.7 trillion. Critics call the program unsustainable and the Air Force, which fields the conventional F-35A variant, is seeking alternatives.

Precautionary landing

In an unrelated incident Tuesday, a U.S. military helicopter landed in a field due to an in-flight emergency.

No injuries or damage were reported after the AH-1Z Viper assigned to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma landed at 8:44 a.m. Tuesday in Kushima, Miyazaki prefecture, on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu, Kunze said in a separate email Tuesday. The pilot set the attack helicopter down after identifying a possible mechanical issue.

The wing is sending a team to inspect the aircraft and determine the best method of recovery, Kunze said.

Joseph Abrego/U.S. Marine Corps

An F-35B Lightning II lands at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, in 2017. Two Iwakuni F-35Bs were struck by lightning July 13.

"The aircraft systems performed as designed and notified the pilot of the issue," he wrote. "The aircrew performed as trained and chose the safest option, landing the aircraft in accordance with standard procedures out of an abundance of caution."

The Viper was one of a pair that had just departed the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's Nyutabaru Air Base for MCAS Futenma when the issue arose, Kyodo News reported Tuesday. The helicopters had been at the air base since Sunday due to bad weather, a Kyushu Defense Bureau spokesman told Stars and Stripes.

Kunze said the landing was precautionary.

"We remain committed to ensuring the safety of our aircrews, the community and the airworthiness of all our aircraft," he wrote.

Japan's Ministry of Defense on Tuesday asked the U.S. military to quickly determine the cause of the incident and to take preventative measures, the spokesman said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
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Andrea Rumple/U.S. Navy

U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Andrew Knowles, left, and members of the Djiboutian coast guard train in Djibouti in 2019. Cutlass Express 2021, a two-week exercise, kicked off in Djibouti on July 25.

Improving allied navies drives 15-nation Cutlass Express '21 exercise in Djibouti

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A 15-nation exercise designed to offer mostly African countries U.S. support in developing their navies and fighting piracy, trafficking and illegal fishing kicked off this week in Djibouti.

Cutlass Express 2021, a two-week exercise sponsored by U.S. Africa Command and led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet, includes maritime forces from Comoros, Djibouti, Georgia, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The U.S. Navy is emphasizing outreach and partnerships in Africa, as China gains economic resources and looks to enlarge its military footprint on the continent. Beijing already has an East Africa base near the U.S. installation in Djibouti, and is looking to build another naval base in West Africa that would give it ready access to the Atlantic Ocean, AFRICOM chief Gen. Stephen Townsend told The Associated Press in May.

The exercise is designed, among other objectives, to improve information sharing and promote security in East Africa, a Naval Forces Europe-Africa and 6th Fleet joint statement said.

Cutlass Express incudes in-port training, at-sea scenarios and a senior leadership symposium.

No U.S. Navy ships or other military assets are participating in the exercise, said Lt. Joelle Schmitz, Cutlass Express spokeswoman. The exercise ends Aug. 6.

Lines: Communication channels are 'bargaining chips,' US analyst says

FROM PAGE 1

cation channels with Seoul last year, as it accused South Korean activists of "hostile acts" for floating anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border. Diplomatic rows between the two countries have prompted Pyongyang to shut off, and then restart, its communications lines throughout the years.

The lines are "merely symbolic" and "serve as effective bargaining chips," according to Soo Kim, a policy analyst for Rand Corp. and an adjunct instructor at American University.

"The importance of the communication lines hinges on the follow-through and consistency of the two Koreas," Kim told Stars and Stripes in an email Tuesday. "Unfortunately, the follow-through and consistency have been the hiccups."

Kim questioned the timing behind restoring communication.

"The Moon administration left the door open to talks with North Korea and has proven quite tolerant of the Kim regime's antics, but Pyongyang has consistently rebuffed and disdained Seoul's extension of the olive branch," Kim added. "Given the abrupt nature of the announcement — not to mention, its timing — we should be asking, 'Why now?' "

The restoration comes nearly a month after North Korea fired several senior officials for their handling of COVID-19 measures in the country. Pyongyang refused to accept vaccines offered by other countries and has yet to publicly respond to an offer from neighboring Russia.

"Pyongyang has consistently rebuffed and disdained Seoul's extension of the olive branch."

Soo Kim
Rand Corp. policy analyst

North Korea, which has not acknowledged the existence of an outbreak in the country, also continues to experience a food drought as severe weather affects the peninsula. In a voluntary assessment provided to the United Nations in June, the North blamed international sanctions and "severe natural disasters" for conditions in the country.

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MILITARY

JONATHAN ERNST/AP

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, arrives to board a plane Monday at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., traveling to New Delhi, India and Kuwait City, Kuwait.

Blinken's visit to India puts human rights, China on table

BY SHEIKH SAALIQ
Associated Press

NEW DELHI — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was en route to India on Tuesday to discuss strengthening Indo-Pacific engagement, seen as a counter to China, as well as New Delhi's recent human rights record and other issues.

Blinken's visit includes meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and senior officials on Wednesday, and comes just days after his No. 2 diplomat, Wendy Sherman, was in China for face-to-face talks.

Washington has long viewed India as a key partner in efforts to blunt increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region. The United States and India are part of the Quad — a group that also includes Japan and Australia — allies in the region helping deal with China's growing economic and military strength.

While the Biden administration has indicated it wants a more civil relationship with Beijing, its shown no sign of softening the Trump administration's confrontational measures on trade, technology and human rights.

The rights record of India, the world's biggest democracy, will also be on the agenda, according to comments last week from Dean Thompson, acting assistant secretary for South and Central Asia.

Opponents of Modi's ruling Hindu nationalist party have accused it of squashing dissent and introducing policies aimed at refashioning a multifaith democracy into a Hindu nation that discriminates against Muslims and other minorities.

Modi has also been accused of trying to silence voices critical of his administration's handling of the massive pandemic wave that tore through the country in April and May.

India routinely denies criticism of its human rights record, and has rejected criticism by foreign governments and rights groups that say civil liberties have shrunk in the country.

Failed: US looking to update its fighting methods to keep up with growing China

FROM PAGE 1

knew exactly what we were going to do before we did it."

Unlike in conflicts of the past 30 years, dating to the first Gulf War when the U.S. military had "information dominance," the force found itself stifled from the get-go during the October war game.

"Well, what happens if right from the beginning that information is not available? And that's the big problem that we faced," Hyten said.

The military is now updating its Joint Warfighting Concept with the new "Expanded Maneuver" strategy that seeks to transform how it fights over the next decade.

Part of the plan calls for joint all-domain command and control, which links information into a fully connected "combat cloud" that commanders can access at any time to make fast battlefield decisions, Hyten said.

Should the cloud be cut off by an enemy, plans must be in place so leaders can operate in a more decentralized environment, he said.

Other aspects of the new concept deal with "contested logistics," which the United States hasn't faced since trying to get forces to Europe and the Pacific during World War II.

"Contested logistics has been an area of rich study, rich conversation, and we're changing our entire logistics approach because of it," he said.

One way the military could overwhelm a complex adversary is to enhance its ability to launch precision fires from all domains simultaneously — which may include air, land, sea, space and cyber — so an enemy force doesn't know where to defend, Hyten said.

"That's a purely aspirational requirement, but I hope everybody can see that if you could do that, you would change the equation on any future battlefield," he said.

Against an enemy that also can hit targets with precision, the U.S. military must be able to mass fires across the force under a single command structure that's removed from the threat of attack.

"It allows you to disaggregate to survive," Hyten said.

Now the Pentagon has to figure out how to pay for it all, he said.

The stakes, he said, are high since the U.S. military's edge over China is "shrinking fast."

"To deter war is to be prepared for war," Hyten said.

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'We will not flinch': Austin takes aim at China in Singapore

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday stressed the "strategic imperative of partnership" in confronting challenges in the Indo-Pacific and said the United States and its allies "will not flinch when our interests are threatened" by China.

Austin, in his remarks during the International Institute for Strategic Studies' Fullerton Lecture in Singapore, said regional conflicts are not isolated incidents, and that ensuing conflicts affect the broader global landscape.

"Today, amid this merciless pandemic, we stand together at another hinge moment, and we face another choice between the power of partnership and the dangers of division," he said. "I am confident that — through our collective efforts — the Indo-Pacific will again rise to the challenge. And America will be right at your side, just as an old friend should."

The defense secretary said he believed the success of countries in Southeast Asia depend upon "common principles," which include "a profound commitment to transparency" and "a dedication to freedom of the seas."

Austin, taking aim at China, said "this region has witnessed actions that just don't line up with those shared principles."

Referring to territorial clashes in the South China Sea and the Senkaku Islands, Austin said: "Unfortunately, Beijing's unwillingness to resolve disputes peacefully and respect the rule of law isn't just occurring on the water.

"We have also seen aggression against India, destabilizing military activity and other forms of coercion against the people of Taiwan, and genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang."

President Joe Biden's administration has prioritized the economic and political threats posed by China, which he described in March as having an "overall goal to become the leading country in the world, the wealthiest country in the world and the most powerful country in the world."

At the time, Biden said, "that's not going to happen on my watch, because the United States is going to continue to grow and expand."

The Defense Department adhered to Biden's policy goal through the creation of a special China Task Force in June to reassess the U.S. military strategy on China and provide classified recommendations to military leaders.

Austin

Following his visit to Singapore, the first trip to Southeast Asia by a Biden Cabinet member, Austin is scheduled to meet with officials in Vietnam and the Philippines.

Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman was in China earlier this week, meeting with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng.

Austin in his speech said the U.S. does "not seek confrontation," but "we will not flinch when our interests are threatened."

"You know, big powers need to model transparency and communication," he said. "And we hope that we can work together with Beijing on common challenges, especially the threat of climate change."

While Austin highlighted some of China's behavior, he placed a greater emphasis on a reassuring message to allies in Southeast Asia, according to Greg Poling, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Austin's speech was "particularly reassuring … in Singapore and Indonesia, who have been most concerned about what they see as a lack of attention from the administration," Poling said in an interview with Stars and Stripes.

Poling noted that many countries in Southeast Asia had been "deeply uncomfortable with the level of tension in the U.S.-China relationship," particularly as it transcended beyond security issues and affected the region's economy.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs appeared to put the U.S. on notice during Austin's tour of Southeast Asia earlier Tuesday.

"The United States shall not even try to obstruct or ever interrupt China's development," the ministry said in several statements on Twitter.

"The United States must not violate China's national sovereignty, let alone undermine China's territorial integrity."

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Vaccine to be mandated for VA medical staff

By Nikki Wentling
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs announced Monday that it will require its hundreds of thousands of medical workers to receive coronavirus vaccines.

The department is the first federal agency to implement a vaccine mandate. Employees have until Sept. 20 to be fully vaccinated, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement.

"Whenever a veteran or VA employee sets foot into a VA facility, they deserve to know that we have done everything in our power to protect them from [the coronavirus]," McDonough said. "With this mandate, we can once again make — and keep — that fundamental promise."

President Joe Biden confirmed news of the mandate while speaking in the Oval Office, where he was meeting Monday with Mustafa al-Kadhimi, Iraq's prime minister.

"Veterans Affairs is going to, in fact, require that all doctors working in facilities are going to have to be vaccinated," Biden said.

The new mandate applies to all Title 38 employees, which includes VA physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, registered nurses, physician assistants and chiropractors, as well as medical workers who visit VA facilities.

As of Monday, 300,099 department employees were vaccinated against the virus. The department employs about 378,000 people, including 367,000 full-time health care professionals.

Since the start of the pandemic, 146 VA workers have died from the coronavirus. Four employees — all of whom were unvaccinated — died in recent weeks. Three of the deaths were attributed to the coronavirus "delta" variant.

The World Health Organization said the delta variant is the most transmissible of the variants identified during the pandemic, and cases are on the rise in the United States. The VA reported 3,787 active cases of the coronavirus Monday, up nearly 200% from earlier in the summer. Overall, 12,679 VA patients have died of the virus since the start of the pandemic.

The VA said Monday that there was an outbreak of the virus among unvaccinated employees and trainees at a VA law enforcement training center.

Shortly before the VA issued its mandate Monday, 57 groups representing doctors, nurses and other health care workers issued a joint letter, calling for mandatory vaccinations of all health care workers in the United States.

"Universal vaccination of health care workers is the single most important step health care institutions can do to stop the spread of [the coronavirus]," Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said in a statement. "It is essential for protecting the health of their workers, the safety of their patients and ultimately the health of their communities."

As cases of the delta variant began to increase last month, McDonough said he was considering a vaccine mandate. At the time, he had just issued a policy offering employees take a half day off from work in exchange for getting vaccinated.

McDonough said then that he had the authority to mandate employees to receive vaccines, but he first wanted to see the outcome of the new policy.

The VA does not have specific data on the numbers of employees vaccinated by location. Anecdotally, McDonough said VA facilities with the highest rates of employee vaccination were about 85% vaccinated. That includes the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System in New Orleans, which was an epicenter of the virus early in the pandemic.

On the lower side, fewer than 60% of staff at some VA facilities were vaccinated, including the St. Cloud VA Health Care System in Minnesota.

"My goal has been that by August, we're in a position to provide more care and benefits than before the pandemic," McDonough said in June. "Our ability to do that is enhanced by getting more of our personnel vaccinated."

AMVETS, a national veterans organization, praised the mandate, calling it a "bold, important step" to improve veterans' safety. Joe Chenelly, the group's executive director, said in a statement that the organization has heard from veterans who are choosing to go without health care for fear of getting infected with the coronavirus at a VA hospital or clinic.

"Every VA employee coming into contact with a veteran should be expected to take every measure possible to ensure they are not endangering veterans who are in VA facilities," he said.

However, Chenelly said he was also concerned about the mandate leading to more staff vacancies across the VA health care system. The workforce grew by 2.6% in 2020, but the department still had about 28,000 vacancies in May, according to publicly available data.

It was unclear Monday about how the department would handle cases in which employees refused to get vaccinated.

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Tokyo posts daily record of 2,848 cases

By Joseph Ditzler
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The Japanese capital, five days into hosting the Olympic Games, reached a new, one-day peak for new coronavirus cases.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government reported 2,848 newly infected people on Tuesday, 328 more than the previous one-day peak of 2,520 on Jan. 7, according to public broadcaster NHK and metro government data.

The new record makes the coronavirus' fifth wave the most extreme in Tokyo since the pandemic began in March 2020. The city of 13.5 million in that time has recorded more than 200,720 cases of COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, and more than 2,725 deaths, according to metro data.

Meanwhile, U.S. military bases across Japan reported 21 new COVID-19 patients Tuesday. Commands in South Korea reported a dozen.

The city is in a state of emergency until Aug. 22 in which restaurants and bars are expected to close early and refrain from selling alcohol, and residents are urged to avoid unnecessary travel.

At the Olympics, 155 people associated with the event have tested positive since July 1, Kyodo News, citing games organizers, reported Tuesday.

Spectators are banned from most Olympic venues. Athletes are discouraged from interacting with anyone outside their bubbles and pandemic restrictions have waylaid the usual international celebration that's a hallmark of the event.

The record high number of new patients Tuesday follows a week of daily case numbers above 1,000 in Tokyo.

As for the U.S. military, Yokosuka Naval Base, homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet 34 miles from central Tokyo, reported nine new patients since Friday, according to a base news release.

One immunized person and one unimmunized person tested positive during medical screenings, and three unimmunized people tested positive after becoming ill with COVID-19 symptoms, according to the release.

Four base employees became ill with COVID-19 symptoms; one was immunized and three were not, according to base. All four tested positive afterward.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, near Hiroshima, and Sasebo Naval Base, on Kyushu island, each reported one new coronavirus case. MCAS Iwakuni's new patient is a recent arrival to Japan, according to a base news release. The individual at Sasebo fell ill with COVID-19 symptoms before testing positive, the base announced on Facebook.

On Okinawa, the Marines reported another 10 people had tested positive, according to a Facebook post Tuesday by Marine Corps Installations Pacific, which did not specify where those cases arose.

Koji Sasahara/AP

People wearing masks walk under the water mist in Tokyo on Monday.

Okinawa prefecture is also under a state of emergency until Aug. 22. Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki on Monday said people ages 20 to 40 are spreading the coronavirus from restaurants and bars to their homes and work.

The prefecture counted 99 new COVID-19 patients on Saturday, and 209 on Sunday, according to its online tracking site.

Tamaki, during a press conference, said another major cause of the rapid increase in new cases is the delta variant, mostly seen in central Okinawa and spread among teens and younger people.

On the upside, he said, vaccinations among the elderly are helping stem the virus' spread in that population.

About 25% of Japan's population is fully vaccinated, according to the Johns Hopkins center.

U.S. Forces Korea announced Tuesday that 12 people affiliated with the command had tested positive for COVID-19 between July 14 and Monday.

Five are active-duty service members — two stationed near the border with North Korea at Camp Casey and three at Osan Air Base south of Seoul — whose infections were discovered after they developed symptoms, according to a USFK news release.

Seven people tested positive between Saturday and Monday after being tagged as direct contacts of a recent patient. USFK identified them as a Defense Department civilian and the family members of two service members and another civilian stationed at either Osan or Camp Carroll, in the southeast.

Stars and Stripes reporter Mari Higa contributed to this report.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Thai patients shipped home to ease burden in the capital

Associated Press

BANGKOK — Authorities in Thailand began transporting some people who tested positive for the coronavirus from Bangkok to their hometowns Tuesday for isolation and treatment to alleviate the burden on the capital's overwhelmed medical system.

A train carrying more than 100 patients and medical workers in full protective gear left the city for the northeast. It will drop off patients in seven provinces, where they will be taken to hospitals.

Medical authorities in Bangkok said Monday that all ICU beds for COVID-19 patients at public hospitals were full and that some of the sick were being treated in emergency rooms.

"We will continue this service until no COVID-19 patients who cannot get beds in Bangkok are left," said Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul. He said buses, vans and even aircraft might be deployed to send people back to less badly affected provinces.

Moderna expanding kids vaccine study

BY MATTHEW PERRONE AND LINDA A. JOHNSON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Moderna said Monday it plans to expand the size of its COVID-19 vaccine study in younger children to better detect rare side effects, such as a type of heart inflammation recently flagged by U.S. health authorities.

The company said it is in talks with the Food and Drug Administration to enroll more study participants under age 12. It had intended to test the vaccine in about 7,000 children, with some as young as 6 months. The Cambridge, Mass.-based company said via email it hasn't decided on how many kids might be added.

The announcement comes as U.S. COVID-19 cases are rising and schools prepare to welcome students back to classrooms. At the same time, regulators continue to review cases of a rare type of heart inflammation called myocarditis that has been reported in a small number of teenagers who got the Moderna or Pfizer shots.

Pfizer said on Monday that if it makes changes to its vaccine testing in children, it will provide an update then. The New York-based company is testing its vaccine in up to 4,500 children in the United States and Europe.

GERALD HERBERT/AP

A worker readies syringes with the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine in Metairie, La., in March. Moderna plans to expand the size of its study in younger children to better detect rare side effects.

The FDA said in a statement it could not comment on its discussions with companies, but added "we do generally work with sponsors to ensure the number of participants in clinical trials are of adequate size to detect safety signals."

The news was first reported by The New York Times.

U.S. officials and independent medical experts said last month the benefits of the vaccines far outweigh the risks of the side effect, which has been reported in several hundred people younger than 30. But any vaccine safety issues could slow uptake, particularly among parents wary of taking any health risk with their children.

Currently, Pfizer has the only U.S. vaccine authorized for children 12 years and up, while Moderna is expecting an FDA ruling on its application in the coming days.

While teens receive the same dose as adults, younger children may need smaller doses. That additional complexity adds time to drugmakers' research and application timelines.

Moderna said Monday it expects to have enough data to apply for FDA authorization in younger kids by late this year or early 2022.

Pfizer has previously said it expects to apply in September for children ages 5 through 11. Results for two younger age groups that began testing a little later should be available by October or November, according to the company.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

Americans seek vaccines amid summer surge

DAMIAN DOVARGANES/AP

Carlos Arrendondo arrives for his vaccination appointment last week, as banners advertise the availability of the Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines at the Eugene A. Obregon Park in Los Angeles.

BY PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

Infections are climbing across the United States, and mask mandates and other COVID-19 prevention measures are making a comeback in some places as health officials issue increasingly dire warnings about the highly contagious delta variant.

But in a possible sign that the warnings are getting through to more Americans, vaccination rates are creeping up again, offering hope that the nation could yet break free of the coronavirus if people who have been reluctant to receive the shot are finally inoculated.

Vaccinations ticked up over the weekend, with about 657,000 vaccines administered Saturday and nearly 780,000 on Sunday, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The 7-day rolling average on Sunday was about 583,000 vaccinations a day, up from about 525,000 a week prior.

The country will need much higher levels of immunity to crush the resurgent virus — probably 85% to 90%, said Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University's School of Public Health. The current level stands at about 67%, counting prior infections.

"So we need a lot more vaccinations. Or a lot more infections" and thus more suffering, he said.

Nearly 57% of the country has received at least one vaccine dose, and about 49% of Americans are fully inoculated. The virus has killed almost 611,000 people in the U.S. since the pandemic started.

Meanwhile, some municipal officials are re-imposing some virus rules meant to slow the spread of the disease.

St. Louis on Monday became the second major city to mandate that face masks be worn indoors, regardless of vaccination status, joining Los Angeles in re-imposing the orders.

In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday that all municipal workers — including teachers and police officers — will be required to get vaccinated by mid-September or face weekly COVID-19 testing, making the city one of the largest employers in the U.S. to take such action.

The nation's top infectious diseases expert said federal officials are considering a nationwide recommendation to resume wearing face masks as the once-rosy outlook for a summer return to normalcy seemed to be at risk.

"We're going in the wrong direction," Dr. Anthony Fauci, who serves as President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser, told CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday. "It is really a pandemic among the unvaccinated, which is the reason why we're out there, practically pleading with the unvaccinated people to go out and get vaccinated."

Jha shared in Fauci's frustration.

"For much of winter, spring, I was VERY optimistic we'd have a great summer with few infections, deaths," he wrote on Twitter. "But (the) situation has clearly turned worse."

He said the nation "hit a wall" in its vaccination effort, with just under 50% of the population fully immunized, and the virus's delta variant proving be even more contagious than expected.

"Super contagious variant, lots of unvaccinated folks and more breakthrough infections sets up a tough few months ahead," Jha said. "We need to break the cycle."

The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases in the country shot up over the past two weeks, from more than 19,000 on July 11 to nearly 52,000 on July 25, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

Also, some prominent conservative and Republican voices that have spent months casting doubt on the vaccination effort have recently started sounding a different tune.

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, a Louisiana Republican, was among the members of the GOP Doctors Caucus who held a press conference at the Capitol late last week imploring their constituents to lay lingering doubts aside.

A week ago, on July 19, Fox News host Sean Hannity declared: "It absolutely makes sense for many Americans to get vaccinated. I believe in science. I believe in the science of vaccinations."

And in Tennessee, the brother of a popular local conservative radio host who had been a vaccine skeptic urged listeners to get vaccinated as his brother was in critical care in the hospital battling COVID-19.

"For those listening, I know if he were able to tell you this, he would tell you, 'Go get vaccinated. Quit worrying about the politics. Quit worrying about all the conspiracy theories,'" Mark Valentine said of his brother, Phil Valentine, Thursday on WWTN-FM in Nashville.

With cases surging, US to keep travel restrictions for now

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The United States served notice Monday that it will keep existing COVID-19 restrictions on international travel in place for now due to concerns about the surging infection rate because of the delta variant.

It was the latest sign that the White House is having to recalibrate its thinking around the coronavirus pandemic as the more infectious variant surges across the U.S. and a substantial chunk of the population resists vaccination.

It was also a reversal from the sentiment President Joe Biden voiced earlier this month when he said his administration was "in the process" of considering how soon the U.S. could lift the ban on European travel bound for the U.S. after the issue was raised by German Chancellor Angela Merkel during her visit to the White House.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said the restrictions would continue for now.

"Driven by the delta variant, cases are rising here at home, particularly among those who are unvaccinated, and appears likely to continue in the weeks ahead," she said.

The rising cases also are causing the administration to take a closer look at policies on wearing masks.

On Monday, the Department of Veterans Affairs became the first first major federal agency to require its health care workers to get COVID-19 vaccines. And over the weekend, U.S. health officials acknowledged they're considering changing the federal government's recommendations on wearing masks.

The delta variant is a mutated coronavirus that spreads more easily than other versions. It was first detected in India but now has been identified around the world. Last week, U.S. health officials said the variant accounts for an estimated 83% of U.S. COVID-19 cases, and noted a 32% increase in COVID hospitalizations from the previous week.

Australian activewear company fined $3.7M over false COVID-19 claims

The Washington Post

Pandemic fear racked Australia last summer. The coronavirus had ripped through nursing homes. A government official warned of more funeral homes and hospitals being overrun. One headline screamed about the virus's deadliest day — a record that stood for four days, until a higher death toll replaced it.

No one knew if virus cases were about to explode.

Amid the uncertainty, an Australian clothing company started trumpeting its "anti-virus activewear." That July, Lorna Jane launched an advertising campaign for apparel covered in a "groundbreaking" spray called LJ Shield that the company claimed would eliminate and repel COVID-19 and other viruses, bacteria and fungus.

"Cure for the Spread of COVID-19? Lorna Jane Thinks So," one advertisement read.

"With Lorna Jane Shield on our garments, it meant that we were completely eliminating the possibility of spreading any deadly viruses," another claimed.

Except there was no scientific evidence Lorna Jane's clothes did any of those things, government regulators said. On Friday, a federal judge ordered the company to pay $3.7 million for violating the country's consumer protection laws, calling the clothing maker's conduct "exploitative, predatory and potentially dangerous."

"This was dreadful conduct as it involved making serious claims regarding public health when there was no basis for them," said Rod Sims, chair of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the regulatory agency that took the company to court.

Lorna Jane admitted it had made several false claims during the peak of the pandemic's second wave in Australia but blamed a supplier for giving it bad information, the Guardian reported. The company won't fight the court's decision, according to BBC News.

NATION

Police detail violence as riot hearings open

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — "This is how I'm going to die, defending this entrance."

Capitol Police Officer Aquilino Gonell told House investigators Tuesday he could feel himself losing oxygen as he was crushed by rioters — supporters of then-President Donald Trump — as he was defending the Capitol during the Jan. 6 insurrection.

Metropolitan Police Officer Michael Fanone, who rushed to the scene, told the new House committee investigating the attack that he was "grabbed, beaten, tased, all while being called a traitor to my country." Doctors later told him he'd had a heart attack.

Daniel Hodges, also a D.C. police officer, said he remembers foaming at the mouth as rioters crushed him between two doors and bashed him in the head with his own weapon, injuring his skull.

"I did the only thing I could do, scream for help," Hodges said.

Capitol Police Officer Harry Dunn said one group of rioters, perhaps 20 people, screamed the n-word at him as he was trying to keep them from breaching the House chamber.

The four officers gave emotional, occasionally angry, accounts of the attack, in which they were beaten and verbally abused as the mob of Trump' supporters overwhelmed them, broke through windows and doors and interrupted the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential win. The new committee is launching its probe with a focus on the law enforcement officers who protected them — an effort by the panel to put a human face on the violence of the day.

Tensions on Capitol Hill have only worsened since the insurrection, with many Republicans playing down, or outright denying, the violence that occurred and denouncing the Democratic-led investigation as politically motivated. Democrats are hoping to win public support for the probe by reminding people how brutal it was, and how the law enforcement officers who were sworn to protect the Capitol suffered serious injuries at the hands of the rioters.

The officers emotionally detailed the horror of their experiences, their injuries and the lasting trauma as they begged the lawmakers to investigate the attack. They wiped away tears and paused to compose themselves as they spoke.

Rebuking Republican lawmakers who have resisted the hearings, Fanone said, "I feel like I went to hell and back to protect them and the people in this room."

Pounding his fist on the table in front of him, he said, "Too many are now telling me that hell doesn't exist or that hell actually wasn't that bad. The indifference shown to my colleagues is disgraceful."

The panel's chairman, Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson played video of the attack and told the police officers: "History will remember your name." He said the rioters "came ready for a fight, and they were close to succeeding."

Thompson added: "There's no place for politics and partisanship in this investigation."

Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, one of two Republicans on the panel, gave opening remarks after Thompson — an effort by Democrats to appear as bipartisan as possible. She expressed "deep gratitude for what you did to save us" and said they would not be forgotten.

"The question for every one of us who serves in Congress, for every elected official across this great nation, indeed, for every American is this: Will we adhere to the rule of law, respect the rulings of our courts, and preserve the peaceful transition of power?" Cheney asked. "Or will we be so blinded by partisanship that we throw away the miracle of America?"

The House Republican leader, Kevin McCarthy, withdrew the participation of other Republicans last week after Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejected two of them, saying their "antics" in support of Trump, and his lies that he won the election, weren't appropriate for the serious investigation. Monday evening, the House voted against a resolution offered by the GOP leader to force his chosen members onto the panel.

McCarthy has stayed close to Trump since the insurrection and has threatened to pull committee assignments from any Republican who participates on the Jan. 6 panel. He has called Cheney and Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger, who is also sitting on the committee, "Pelosi Republicans," which Cheney has dismissed as "childish."

Ahead of the hearing on Tuesday, McCarthy again called the process a "sham" and said Pelosi only wants the questions asked "that she wants asked."

CHIP SOMODEVILLA / AP

From left, U.S. Capitol Police Sgt. Aquilino Gonell, Washington Metropolitan Police Department officer Michael Fanone, Washington Metropolitan Police Department officer Daniel Hodges and U.S. Capitol Police Sgt. Harry Dunn testify before the House select committee hearing on the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol on Tuesday in Washington.

Trump inaugural chair says he's innocent in lobbying case

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The chair of former President Donald Trump's 2017 inaugural committee pleaded not guilty Monday and said he was "100% innocent" of charges that he secretly lobbied the U.S. on behalf of the United Arab Emirates.

Tom Barrack, 74, wearing a black mask to protect against the coronavirus, appeared in Brooklyn federal court for the first time, days after he was freed on $250 million bail following his arrest in California. His lawyer entered his plea for him.

"As you'd expect, the system is working. I think what you'll find is that … over time, you'll all see that I'm 100% innocent," Barrack said as he left the courthouse.

Prosecutors say Barrack used his multidecade friendship with Trump to influence the Republican's policy, starting when Trump was a candidate in 2016 and continuing after he was sworn in as president.

At the time, the UAE was in a tense diplomatic conflict with Qatar. Prosecutors said that, among other things, Barrack provided Emirati government officials with information about how senior U.S. officials viewed the dispute.

Federal authorities say Barrack broke the law by failing to disclose his UAE ties to the U.S. government.

On Friday, a Los Angeles magistrate judge approved a $250 million bail deal. The arrangement required Barrack to give up passports and submit to electronic monitoring. It also imposed a curfew.

Barrack is charged with conspiracy, obstruction of justice and making false statements during a June 2019 interview with federal agents.

Matthew Grimes, 27, an Aspen, Colo.-based former executive at Barrack's company, and Rashid al Malik, 43, an Emirati businessman who prosecutors said acted as a conduit to that nation's rulers, were also charged in the seven-count indictment.

Democrats broaden probe into Trump-era meddling at the CDC

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Congressional investigators expanded their inquiry Monday of political interference at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under President Donald Trump, citing newly obtained documents and additional reports of the administration's meddling in government scientists' work.

The expanded investigation centers on efforts to blunt the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports (MMWRs), which offer public updates on scientists' findings. The reports had been considered sacrosanct for decades and untouchable by political appointees in the past, but Trump appointees pushed last year to edit the findings, worried that they undermined Trump's more optimistic spin on the coronavirus pandemic.

Senior officials also discussed how to respond to a Trump appointee's demand to edit the reports, according to a newly released email obtained by the House's select subcommittee on the pandemic.

The subcommittee is requesting interviews with Anne Schuchat, a former CDC deputy director; Nancy Messonnier, a former senior official who held a variety of leadership roles at the CDC during the pandemic; and six current career staff members at the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The subcommittee also is requesting interviews with former Trump appointees Kyle McGowan, Amanda Campbell and Nina Witkofsky, who served as top political appointees at the CDC last year.

"Our public health institutions must never again be compromised by decision-makers more concerned with politics than keeping Americans safe. It is therefore imperative that the Select Subcommittee's investigations into the prior Administration's response to the pandemic provide full accountings of what occurred," Rep. James E. Clyburn, D-S.C., the subcommittee's chairman, and fellow Democrats wrote in their letters to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky and others.

An HHS spokesperson said the department was reviewing whether to make current staff members available for interviews and would respond directly to the subcommittee.

House Democrats also released a newly obtained email sent by a career CDC official on Aug. 9, 2020, suggesting that senior officials could meet to discuss "next steps" after then-Trump appointee Paul Alexander demanded "an immediate stop on all CDC MMWR reports." Alexander, a deputy of then-HHS spokesman Michael Caputo, had alleged that CDC officials were deliberately working to undermine Trump with the reports, which he claimed offered an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the pandemic.

NATION

Fed to discuss pullback in aid with inflation up

By Christopher Rugaber
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With inflation uncomfortably high and the COVID-19 delta variant raising economic concerns, a divided Federal Reserve will meet this week to discuss when and how it should dial back its ultra-low-interest rate policies.

For now, the U.S. economy is growing briskly in the wake of the pandemic recession, and the pace of hiring is healthy, which is why the Fed's policymakers will likely move closer toward acting soon. In particular, the officials are expected to discuss the timing and mechanics of slowing their $120 billion-a-month in bond purchases — a pandemic-era policy that is intended to keep long-term loan rates low to spur borrowing and spending.

This week's meeting occurs against the backdrop of a risky policy bet by Fed Chair Jerome Powell. Powell is gambling that the central bank can engineer an exceedingly delicate task: To keep the Fed's short-term benchmark rate pegged near zero, where it has been since March 2020, until the job market has fully healed, without fueling a sustained bout of high inflation.

Yet the stakes around that bet are rising, with consumer prices having jumped 5.4% in June from a year ago. Last month's surge marked a fourth straight month of unexpectedly large price increases, heightening fears that persistently higher inflation will erode the value of recent pay raises and undermine the economic recovery.

The main concern is that the Fed will end up responding too late and too aggressively to high inflation by quickly jacking up interest rates and perhaps causing another recession. Last week, Republicans in Congress peppered Powell with questions about inflation, for which they largely blamed President Joe Biden's $1.9 trillion stimulus package, which was enacted in March.

In his testimony, Powell largely stood by his view that higher inflation will prove temporary. His reasoning is that recent high price increases — for things like used and new cars, hotel rooms and airline tickets — have been driven mainly by supply shortages related to the swift reopening of the economy. But he also stated more explicitly than before that the Fed won't hesitate to raise rates should it decide that inflation is getting out of control.

After a period of broad agreement during the pandemic crisis, the Fed's policymakers appear divided over how soon to start reducing — or "tapering," in Fed parlance — its monthly bond purchases.

Powell has said that the central bank wants to see "substantial further progress" toward its goals of maximum employment and price stability before it would consider reducing the bond purchases. To make up for years of inflation remaining below 2%, Powell said, the Fed wants inflation to moderately exceed its 2% average inflation target and to show signs of remaining above it for an unspecified time. In recent months, as consumer demand has exceeded the supply of goods and services in some industries, inflation has topped 2%.

Texas House leader signs 1st warrant for Dem who fled to block voting bill

The Washington Post

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan, a Republican, has signed a warrant for the arrest of a Democratic legislator — the first one he has signed since dozens of Democrats fled the state earlier this month in a bid to prevent Republicans from passing new voting restrictions.

Eric Gay/AP

Empty seats are seen in the House Chamber at the Texas Capitol in Austin on July 13. Democrats left the state to block new election laws.

Phelan signed the warrant Sunday, directing law enforcement to take Rep. Philip Cortez into custody and bring him to the House after Cortez returned to Austin to negotiate with Republicans, then abruptly went back to Washington, D.C.

Although the warrant is unlikely to be carried out, as it is not enforceable outside Texas, the move escalates the showdown between Texas Republicans and Democrats over voting access less than two weeks before the House's special legislative session is scheduled to end.

"This past week I attempted to work with Republican leadership to reach a resolution to HB 3," Cortez said in a statement, referring to the voting bill. "I owe a duty to my constituents to do everything I can to stop this harmful legislation."

Cortez and 56 other House Democrats left Texas two weeks ago to stall the elections legislation by depriving Republicans of the minimum number of legislators necessary to do business in the House. The state Senate has since passed its version of the voting bill, which would eliminate 24-hour and drive-through voting, change the requirements for voting by mail, and allow poll watchers to be close enough to "hear and see" voters.

The Democrats have vowed to remain in Washington until the end of the special session, which can run no later than Aug. 6. But Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has promised to continue calling special sessions until the voting legislation passes, complicating the path forward for Democrats.

The threat of arrest looms over the entire caucus.

On July 13, House lawmakers voted for a "call of the House," in which attendance was taken and the chamber's doors were locked. Members present also voted for their absent peers to "be sent for and arrested, wherever they may be found," a move supported by Abbott, who threatened that legislators would be arrested upon returning to Texas.

But Phelan had not taken the final step of signing an arrest warrant for an individual member until Sunday, after Cortez announced his departure to Washington. The speaker has not yet signed any other warrants, his office said.

Lynne Sladky/AP

Crews work in the rubble of the Champlain Towers South building in Surfside, Fla., on July 13. The 98th and final victim of the condo building collapse has been identified, a relative said Monday.

Family: Last victim ID'd in Fla. condo building collapse

By Kelli Kennedy
Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — The final victim of the condo building collapse in Florida has been identified, a relative said Monday, more than a month after the middle-of-the-night catastrophe that ultimately claimed 98 lives and became the largest non-hurricane related emergency response in state history.

Estelle Hedaya, an outgoing 54-year-old with a love of travel, was the last to be identified, ending what her relatives described as a torturous four-week wait. Her younger brother, Ikey Hedaya, confirmed the news to The Associated Press. A funeral was scheduled for Tuesday.

It comes just days after rescuers officially concluded the painstaking and emotionally heavy task of removing layers of dangerous debris and pulling out dozens of bodies.

"She always mentioned God anytime she was struggling with anything," he said, adding he was drawing strength from God, just as he'd seen his sister do in troubling times.

The site of the June 24 collapse at the oceanside Champlain Towers South has been mostly swept flat, the rubble moved to a Miami warehouse. Forensic scientists and rabbis are still at work, including examining the debris at the warehouse, seeking to recover any additional remains and personal items. In the end, crews found no evidence that anyone who was found dead had survived the initial collapse, Fire Chief Alan Cominsky has said.

Search teams spent weeks battling the hazards of the rubble, including an unstable portion of the building that teetered above, a recurring fire and Florida's stifling summer heat and thunderstorms. They went through more than 14,000 tons of broken concrete and rebar before finally declaring the mission complete.

"For the past 33 days they have searched the rubble as if they were searching for one of their own," Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said during a news conference Monday.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue's urban search-and-rescue team pulled away from the site Friday in a convoy of firetrucks and other vehicles.

The tragedy that befell the tiny town of Surfside prompted an outpouring of love from far and wide where locals donated their homes and apartments to victims, children colored cards for rescuers, piles and piles of food were donated and tens of millions of dollars raised for the victims.

The dead included members of the area's large Orthodox Jewish community, the sister of Paraguay's first lady, her family and their nanny, along with an entire family of four that included a local salesman, his wife and their two young daughters, 4 and 11, who were buried in the same coffin.

Linda March, 58, an attorney and fellow former New Yorker, was close friends with Hedaya. Oddly the two were the last three victims to be identified, along with 24-year-old Anastasia Gromova of Canada.

Leah Sutton, who knew Hedaya since birth and considered herself a second mother to her, said she and March were both "forces to be reckoned with."

"My two beautiful amazing fearless friends saved for last, have to believe there was a reason for them to be last," she said Monday.

Meanwhile, it's unclear what will happen at the collapse site. A judge presiding over several lawsuits filed in the collapse aftermath wants the property sold at market rates, which would bring in an estimated $100 million or more. Some condo owners want to rebuild, and others say a memorial should be erected to remember the dead.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man's walk on water ends short of goal to reach NY

FL BUNNELL — A man in a cylindrical floating contraption washed ashore in Florida in an apparent attempt to walk on water to New York.

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office reported that the man left St. Augustine in the vessel with the goal of reaching New York.

WOFL-TV in Orlando reported the man was trying to raise money for charity.

It wasn't Reza Baluchi's first time trying to cross Atlantic waters in a flotation device. In 2014, the U.S. Coast Guard rescued him while he tried to reach Bermuda from Florida in a homemade "hydro pod."

Man arrested after suspected kidnapping

CA WEST HOLLYWOOD — A man seen carrying an unconscious woman into a white van and driving away was arrested and charged with kidnapping, Los Angeles County sheriff's officials said.

The woman had just left a bar in West Hollywood when witnesses saw a man with gray hair carry her into a 1997 Dodge Ram, said sheriff's Lt. Jose Aguirre.

As the van pulled away, a witness flagged down a passing sheriff's patrol car and reported what he had seen, according to the Los Angeles Times.

When the patrol car began following the Dodge, the driver parked the van and walked away, officials said.

The woman was found disoriented but not hurt inside the van.

Retired professor given Polish medal for WWII

KS LAWRENCE — A retired University of Kansas professor received Poland's Medal of Valor recently more than 75 years after he fought with the Polish resistance against the occupying forces of Nazi Germany during World War II.

Polish Air Force Maj. Gen. Cezary Wisniewski who is based at the Polish embassy in Washington, D.C., visited Jarek Piekalkiewicz's home in Lawrence, Kan., to give him Poland's second-highest combat honor on his 95th birthday.

Wisniewski said the honor was overlooked during the war and then the post-war communist government of Poland refused to honor the country's wartime resistance fighters.

Man cited for killing bear in neighbor's yard

NC ASHEVILLE — A western North Carolina man is facing charges after wildlife authorities said he used a 12-gauge shotgun with buckshot to fatally shoot a bear on his neighbor's property.

The incident occurred in a neighborhood in Buncombe County, northeast of Asheville, the Citizen-Times reported.

Officials with the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission said a man reported that his neighbor shot the bear from across the street. Given that the bear was not aggressive, was not attacking anyone and was on another person's property, officers told the newspaper there was no reason for the shooting in the confines of a neighborhood.

The 70-year-old man faces a minimum fine of $2,000 after being charged with negligent hunting, taking a wild animal and hunting during the closed season.

ANDY NEWMAN, FLORIDA KEYS NEWS BUREAU/AP

Where there's a will, there's a Hemingway

Zach Taylor, center, is surrounded by past winners of the Hemingway look-alike contest, as he hoists a bust of Ernest Hemingway after winning the 2021 contest at Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West, Fla. Past winners include Joe Maxey, left front, the 2019 winner, and 2018 winner Michael Groover, right front, the husband of celebrity chef Paula Deen. The 2021 competition featured 137 contestants and was the cornerstone event of the annual Hemingway Days festival that honors writer Ernest Hemingway, who lived in Key West for most of the 1930s.

Gas station cited after cars break down

NY ONONDAGA — State officials have issued violation notices to a central New York gas station after motorists complained their cars broke down after filling up there.

Syracuse.com reported more than a dozen drivers said their cars broke down after they got gas at B&K Food Mart in Onondaga, and that the number could be higher based on social media posts.

The problems began about two weeks ago. Most of the motorists reported water was found in their gas tanks, and said the repairs cost as much as $1,300. One driver reported a gas tank half-filled with water.

State regulators found a leak when inspecting the station's underground fuel storage tanks, and a leaking recovery valve was repaired. The leak combined with recent heavy rainfalls in the region is considered a possible cause of the problem.

THE CENSUS

2 **The number of school fires northern and southern Maine firefighters had to douse over the weekend.** A fire destroyed one of the two wings of the Dr. Levesque Elementary School in Frenchville, forcing School Administrative District 33 leaders to meet to come up with a plan for the coming school year. Meanwhile, a fire at Westbrook High School was linked to improper use of an extension cord with a window-unit air conditioner, officials said. The school's sprinkler system kept the fire from spreading, but caused damage to several classrooms.

Dilapidated wind farm towers to be cleaned up

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — The owner of a dilapidated Oklahoma Panhandle wind farm has presented plans to clean up the most dangerous of the wind turbine towers.

The plans are to address dangerously broken-down towers and turbines of the 60-tower KODE Novus I and II wind farm near Guymon, Okla., The Oklahoman reported.

Owner Olympia Renewable Platform LLC has hired a contractor to remove broken blades from seven towers and topple a couple of others topped with burned-out generator nacelles. The company assured the repair work could begin next month and take 20 to 30 days to complete, depending on wind conditions.

State using dogs to target alcohol in prisons

MD HAGERSTOWN — The state of Maryland has begun to deploy dogs to sniff out illicit alcohol in correctional facilities.

Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Secretary Robert Green told The Washington Post the new team of canines was created in part after he saw an increase in alcohol-related activities and overdoses during the coronavirus pandemic. Many prisoners were having their meals brought to their cells, increasing the access to ingredients that can be used to make alcohol.

The new team consists of four dogs that work across the state with facilities in Cumberland, Baltimore and Jessup, Hagerstown and the lower Eastern Shore, the Post reported.

Woman to become rare 2-time organ donor

NC WILSON — A North Carolina woman is set to join the elite ranks of two-time living organ donors.

Surgeons in New York will take part of 54-year-old Stephanie Allen's liver and transplant it into her brother, Eric Allen, The Wilson Times reported. Stephanie Allen, a delivery driver and mother of four, previously donated a kidney to her sister in 2006.

"Right now, she is the sunshine in my world," said Eric Allen, whose liver was failing after two years of battling primary sclerosing cholangitis and Crohn's disease.

According to the United Network for Organ Sharing, just 91 people have donated two organs to two people since April 1994.

"Doctors have told me I don't have any more organs to give," Stephanie Allen said. "But if I had one and my other siblings needed it, I'd give it. It is hard to watch someone you love suffer and do nothing."

From The Associated Press

NATION

Man pleads guilty to 4 spa killings

By Kate Brumback
Associated Press

CANTON, Ga. — A man accused of killing eight people, most of them women of Asian descent, at Atlanta-area massage businesses pleaded guilty Tuesday to four of the murders and was handed four sentences of life without parole.

Robert Aaron Long, 22, still faces the death penalty in the four other deaths, which are being prosecuted in a different county. His shooting spree at three different businesses in March ignited outrage and fueled fear among Asian Americans, who were already facing increased hostility at the time linked to the coronavirus pandemic. Many were particularly upset when authorities suggested that Long's crimes were not racially motivated but were instead born of a "sex addiction," which is not recognized as an official disorder.

In comments sure to further frustrate those outraged over Long's apparent targeting of Asian women, a prosecutor reiterated Tuesday that Cherokee County investigators saw no evidence of racial bias. That's at odds with the hate crime enhancement that Long, who is white, faces just miles away in the four deaths in Atlanta.

"This was not any kind of hate crime," District Attorney Shannon Wallace said.

On March 16, Long shot and killed four people, three of them women and two of Asian descent, at Youngs Asian Massage in Cherokee County, according to police accounts. A fifth person was wounded.

Long then drove to Atlanta, where he shot and killed three women at Gold Spa before going across the the street to Aromatherapy Spa and fatally shooting another woman, police have said. All of the Atlanta victims were of Asian descent.

In Atlanta, Long could be sentenced to death if convicted in the four deaths. There, he also faces charges of domestic terrorism in addition to murder, and prosecutors have said they will seek to have the deaths classified as a hate crime.

Wallace explained that Cherokee County prosecutors came to a different conclusion. When Long walked through the first spa "shooting anyone and everyone he saw," Wallace he was motivated by a "sex addiction" and his desire to eliminate sources of temptation at businesses where he engaged in sex acts.

As for gender bias, Wallace said a hate crime enhancement based on hatred of women would not have significantly extended his sentence.

The American Psychiatric Association does not recognize sex addiction in its main reference guide for mental disorders. While some people struggle to control their sexual behaviors, it's often linked to other recognized disorders or moral views about sexuality, said David Ley, clinical psychologist and author of "The Myth of Sex Addiction."

Wallace said prosecutors planned to seek the death penalty if Long didn't plead guilty. All the relatives of the victims that they've been able to contact supported the plea deal in the interest of swift justice, she added.

The prosecutor said the defendant signed a plea deal admitting to all of the charges in Cherokee County, where he was accused of malice murder, felony murder, attempt to commit murder and aggravated assault.

Those killed at the Cherokee County spa were: Xiaojie "Emily" Tan, 49; Daoyou Feng, 44; Delaina Yaun, 33; and Paul Michels, 54. The Atlanta victims were: Suncha Kim, 69; Soon Chung Park, 74; Hyun Jung Grant, 51; and Yong Ae Yue, 63.

Long is scheduled to appear again next month in Fulton County, where District Attorney Fani Willis filed notice that she intends to seek what is called a hate crime sentence enhancement.

The 19-count Fulton County indictment includes charges of murder, felony murder, aggravated assault and domestic terrorism.

Crisp County Sheriff's Office/AP

Robert Aaron Long

Texas shooter dies after being struck with bricks

Associated Press

FORT WORTH — A man who opened fire at a backyard party in Fort Worth early Monday, killing one and injuring three, died after being chased by fellow party-goers who threw landscaping bricks at him, Texas authorities said.

Fort Worth police said the shooter, who was struck multiple times with at least one brick, was pronounced dead at the scene. Police said the medical examiner will determine the cause of death.

Police said the shooter had been attending the small backyard gathering at a home but became upset and left. He then returned and began arguing with other party-goers before shooting and injuring one person, whose injuries weren't life-threatening. As party-goers gave chase, the shooter turned and fired at them.

The party-goers started throwing bricks at the shooter, police said. Police said at some point the shooter either fell or was taken down to the ground, but continued to fire.

Three people were shot during the chase. One person was killed and two others were injured and are expected to survive, police said.

Police said they are continuing to investigate, and that the handgun believed to have been used by the shooter was recovered.

Calif. woman who fought for recognition for women who joined workforce in WWII dies

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Phyllis Gould, one of the millions of women who worked in defense plants in World War II and who later relentlessly fought for recognition of those "Rosie the Riveters," has died. She was 99.

Gould, who lived in Fairfax, north of San Francisco, died on July 20 from complications of a stroke, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

"She wants on her gravestone: 'Mission Accomplished,'" her 95-year-old sister, Marian Sousa, told the paper on Monday. "I think she did it all."

During World War II, the United States created a recruitment campaign for women to fill defense jobs to replace men who were serving in the armed forces. An iconic poster from the campaign showed Rosie the Riveter, a woman in a polka-dotted bandana flexing a muscular arm as she rolls up her sleeve.

Some 6 million women joined the workforce. Gould, a welder, was one of the first six women hired at a shipyard in Richmond in the San Francisco Bay Area for the war effort.

After the war, she became an interior decorator, married and divorced twice, had five children and moved around before settling in Fairfax.

She was "kind of like a hippie, you know, where the wind blows," her sister said.

"She has been an 'I can do it' person all her life, and she passed that on to all of us," said her granddaughter, Shannon Akerstrom of Potter Valley in Mendocino County. "The Rosie thing — that was really her."

"I do welding on my ranch — like grandma did — and so does my daughter," Akerstrom told the Chronicle. "Grandma always thought that was very cool."

Women defense workers received little notice or appreciation after the end of the war, but Gould fought tenaciously to honor them. She helped push for creation of the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, established in 2000.

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WORLD

German chemical blast kills at least 1

Associated Press

BERLIN — An explosion at an industrial park for chemical companies in Germany killed at least one person Tuesday, with 16 injured and four still missing. Fire officials who tested the air said there did not appear to be a danger to nearby residents after authorities initially urged people to shelter inside.

The explosion at the waste management facility of the Chempark site in the city of Leverkusen, near Cologne, sent a large black cloud into the air. It took firefighters almost four hours to extinguish the fire that took hold after the explosion.

Germany's Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance initially classified the incident as "an extreme threat." Later on Tuesday, however, the Cologne fire department tweeted that measurements of the air's pollution "do not show any kind of abnormality." They said the smoke had gone down but that they would continue to measure the air for toxins.

The city of Leverkusen said in a statement that the explosion occurred in storage tanks for solvents. It said four people were hospitalized with severe injuries.

"We are deeply concerned about this tragic accident and the death of our employee," the head of Chempark, Lars Friedrich, said in a written statement.

Currenta, the company operating the chemical park, said the explosion happened at 9:40 a.m. and then developed into a fire.

"Sirens were operated to warn residents and warning alerts were sent," Currenta said in the statement.

OLIVER BERG, DPA/AP

Emergency vehicles of the fire brigade, rescue services and police stand near an access road to the Chempark over which a dark cloud of smoke is rising in Leverkusen, Germany, on Tuesday.

Haiti arrests top official in slain president probe

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Authorities in Haiti arrested a top official who served as general security coordinator when President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated, his attorney told The Associated Press on Monday.

Jean Laguel Civil joins more than two dozen suspects arrested by Haiti National Police as the investigation continues into the July 7 attack at Moïse's private home.

Civil's attorney, Reynold Georges, called his client's arrest politically motivated. It wasn't immediately clear if Civil had been charged with anything.

The arrest comes as more than 1,000 demonstrators gathered around one of Haiti's most notorious gang leaders to commemorate Moïse. The crowd was mostly dressed in white as they cheered on Jimmy Cherizier, a former police officer who now leads "G9," a federation of nine gangs that officials have blamed for a spike in violence and kidnappings in recent months.

"Everyone needs to wait on my order before we respond to the killing of Jovenel Moïse," said Cherizier, who goes by the name of "Barbecue" and whom police say is behind several recent massacres that targeted civilians living in communities run by other gangs.

Guilty verdict in 1st trial of Hong Kong security law

HONG KONG — The first person to be tried under Hong Kong's sweeping national security law was found guilty of secessionism and terrorism on Tuesday.

The Hong Kong High Court handed down the verdict in the case of Tong Ying-kit, 24. He's accused of driving his motorcycle into a group of police officers while carrying a flag bearing the protest slogan "Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times" on July 1 last year.

The verdict was closely watched for indications as to how similar cases will be dealt with in future. More than 100 people have been arrested under the security legislation.

Tong pleaded not guilty to charges of inciting secession, terrorism and an alternative charge of dangerous driving.

He faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, and his lawyers are expected to argue for a lighter punishment at his sentencing hearing Thursday.

From The Associated Press

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

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FACES

Digging in

Grammy winner Leon Bridges hunkers down in hotel to record his third album

BY RAGAN CLARK
Associated Press

"Gold-Diggers Sound" is an apropos name for the third studio album from an artist who struck it rich with his debut LP.

Leon Bridges' music quickly earned him recognition. "Coming Home" was nominated for Best R&B album at the 2015 Grammys. Three years later, his sophomore album's "Bet Ain't Worth the Hand" landed him his first Grammy win.

The fame that came next was an adjustment for Bridges. He lost his anonymity and felt isolated — an experience he details in the song "Blue Mesas."

"When you take an insecure person and put them in a limelight, it's a little hard to deal with that sometimes, you know?" he said in a recent interview.

The story behind the album's name, though, is literal — Gold-Diggers is the name of the hotel where Bridges wrote and recorded his new material.

"I have been working and kind of digging and searching for the right sound over the course of two years," Bridges said.

He wanted an R&B album "grounded with organic elements" and Gold-Diggers was "the perfect place to house all of this music."

Bridges held a Grammys party there in 2019 and after connecting with the space, decided he wanted the album experience to be immersive — he started a residency at the hotel, brought in collaborators and got to work.

As the musicians would jam and improvise, he sang melodies and phrases over top, gradually shaping each song.

He knew he didn't want to replicate the sound of his first two albums.

"With each album, I want to continue reinventing myself as an artist," he said.

In "Coming Home," the influences of gospel music are pervasive. In "Good Thing," Bridges leans on a more retro sound.

"When I first came in the game with 'Coming Home,' I was immediately pigeonholed and placed in a box," says Bridges.

Breaking out of the box is something he knows might have alienated some fans. For any of the fans he lost, though, there were plenty he gained.

"Throughout my career, I've always been scrutinized for my music being essentially whitewashed," he said. "But I can see via social media that there's more Black people engaging in and supporting the music."

LM OTERO/AP

Leon Bridges, pictured in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 21, made a conscious decision to not replicate the sound of his previous two albums on his third, the R&B-forward "Gold-Diggers Sound."

Bridges says it was initially "off-putting" for him to hear criticism of his music, but he doesn't think about it anymore. Rap and hip-hop culture are so inundated in the mainstream that even a Young Thug concert can have predominately white fans, he points out.

He believes artists like Lil Nas X and Lizzo are redefining the boundaries of Black art accepted within the Black community.

"You know, guys like Daniel Caesar, he was kind of on the forefront of that, and it's really beautiful to see artists who don't really fit the mold of what's popular being embraced," he said.

Bridges is content in the direction he's heading and looking forward to the part of the process he enjoys the most — performing.

"Writing is such a tedious and challenging thing," he said. "The last step of getting on the stage and witnessing this, like, collective effervescence in the crowd and putting out the energy and then getting it back, it's a beautiful thing."

WWE, Blumhouse book scripted series

Vince McMahon is bringing wrestling back to the '90s.

The WWE boss is collaborating with Blumhouse Television for a limited scripted series about the steroid trial of the 1990s that threatened to crumble an empire, the company announced Monday.

"The United States of America vs. Vince McMahon" will cover the scandalous affair, which saw McMahon stand trial for illegal steroid distribution after being indicted in the Eastern District of New York in 1993.

McMahon was eventually acquitted on all charges and the sordid tale was hastily forgotten by WWE, except for a brief callback by his daughter, Stephanie McMahon, when she compared the trial to Sept. 11 just days after the attacks.

Other news

■ A representative for **Kanye West** said Monday that the performer planned to remain inside Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium while working on "Donda," his 10th studio album. The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly on the matter. "Donda," which was slated to release July 23, is now due Aug. 6.

■ The NBC soap **"Days of Our Lives"** is getting a spinoff on Peacock. NBCUniversal's streaming service announced Monday that it ordered five episodes of "Days of Our Lives: Beyond Salem."

From wire reports

New this week: 'Jungle Cruise' and music from Prince, Eilish

Associated Press

Here's a collection curated by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists of what's arriving on TV, streaming services and music platforms this week.

Movies

■ Amusement park attractions don't always make great movies, but Disney's "Jungle Cruise" will hope its transition from Disneyland to screen goes more like "Pirates of the Caribbean" than "Tomorrowland." Starring Dwayne Johnson as a riverboat captain and Emily Blunt as a scientist, "Jungle Cruise" is one of the splashier Hollywood spectacles to wade into the pandemic. Originally slated for release last year, the Jaume Collet-Serra-directed PG-13-rated adventure will open simultaneously in theaters and on Disney+ for $30.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

Music

■ Jack Antonoff is one of music's busiest men, producing and songwriting with the pop queens Taylor Swift, Lana Del Rey and Lorde, and he's still managed to find time to put out another Bleachers album. His third album, "Take the Sadness Out of Saturday Night," includes a duet between Antonoff and fellow New Jersey native Bruce Springsteen. On the song "Stop Making This Hurt," Antonoff melds nostalgic '80s new wave with a smashingly fun horn section over top lyrics about the pain of heartbreak.

■ Prince may be gone, but his music is definitely not. Five years after his death, a studio album is set to be released Friday from the artist's material. "Welcome 2 America" is Prince's first posthumous release. Confronting themes of racial justice, equality, big tech and just what it means to be human, the 12-track album was recorded in 2010 but was abandoned. The title track has already been released, a loping, spacey funk song with spoken-word lyrics that feature a withering examination of America: "Land of the free / Home of the slave."

DARKROOM, INTERSCOPE RECORDS/AP

Billie Eilish will release her second album, "Happier Than Ever," on Friday.

■ With a new look and a couple more Grammys on her shelf, anticipation is high for the follow-up to Billie Eilish's instant hit debut record. "Happier Than Ever" is the second studio album from the 19-year-old superstar and is well stocked with 16 songs. With her whispering vocals and emotional lyrics on songs like "NDA" and "Therefore I Am," the dark pop skills of Eilish and her artistic partner and brother Finneas O'Connell are sure to make this one a top album of the year.

— Entertainment Writer Kristin M. Hall

Television

■ Robin Roberts is one busy broadcaster. The "Good Morning America" co-anchor who squeezed in a "Jeopardy!" guest-host stint also made time for a four-episode series in which she engages an array of celebrities in conversation. "Turning the Tables with Robin Roberts," debuting Wednesday on Disney+, promises "heartful and often humorous" back-and-forth between Roberts and guests including Debbie Allen, Jamie Lee Curtis, Mickey Guyton, Melissa Etheridge, Billie Jean King, Betsey Johnson, Tig Notaro and Raven-Symoné.

■ More talk is ahead with "The Demi Lovato Show," among the short-form series acquired by Roku from the short-lived Quibi service and previously unseen. Debuting Friday on the free, commercial-supported Roku Channel, the nine-episode series features Lovato's interviews with guests including Olivia Munn, Jameela Jamil, Lucy Hale and Nikita Dragun. In a promotional video, Lovato called the show "a safe space for honesty and vulnerability." The topics are deep — activism, gender identity and mental health among them — but the episodes are just 10 minutes each.

■ Lily James of "Downton Abbey" is back in a period piece with a far different tone, Amazon's three-episode "The Pursuit of Love." James plays Linda who, with close cousin Fanny (Emily Beecham), dreams of a happily-ever-after. The friends' paths diverge sharply in the comedy-drama set in England between World War I and II and based on Nancy Mitford's 1945 novel. The other boldface name to know here: Emily Mortimer, who wrote and directed the miniseries greeted by U.K. critics as a witty romp with a modern edge. Mortimer ("The Newsroom") also costars with Dominic West and Andrew Scott.

— AP Television Writer Lynn Elber

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OPINION

Arab Spring's success story is at risk

By Bobby Ghosh
Bloomberg Opinion

Amid Tunisia's political upheaval, it is easy to hear echoes of the events in Egypt eight years ago. In the summer of 2013, widespread protests against an unpopular Islamist government allowed Gen. Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to take power in what amounted to a coup.

Tunisia's President Kais Saied may not wear military fatigues, but he's doing a pretty good el-Sissi impression nonetheless: Taking advantage of demonstrations against an unpopular Islamist-backed government, he has suspended the country's elected parliament and sacked the prime minister, effectively assuming dictatorial authority over the country.

Only months ago, Tunisia was being celebrated anew as the only country that remained a democracy in the decade after the Arab Spring. There is a real risk the gains secured then may now be lost, just as they were in Egypt. The task of forestalling that dreadful outcome falls again to the Tunisians who overthrew their dictator in January 2011, and to the two institutions that played pivotal roles back then: the military and the labor unions.

The military had refused the dictator's orders to crack down on the protests, and the labor organizations had ensured a smooth transition to civilian rule — for which four groups, known collectively as the National Dialogue Quartet, were awarded the Nobel Peace Price in 2015.

How will the forces that coalesced during the Arab Spring respond to this summer of discontent? The early signs are not good.

Saied's power grab has been welcomed in the streets by the anti-government protesters. Fed up by the serial failures of the leaders they elected — unemployment, one of the root causes of the Arab Spring, remains rampant — many Tunisians are inclined to give their president the benefit of the doubt. He has portrayed himself as incorruptible and unconnected to the political parties that have let them down. He says he will appoint a new prime minister, but didn't say when. Nor has he indicated when or if parliament would be reconvened.

He also seems to have coopted the military, giving it the crucial responsibility for administering the national vaccination program last week. The generals, having fallen in lockstep behind the president, can expect to be rewarded with even more responsibilities in the days ahead.

The Tunisian General Labour Union, the country's largest, most powerful labor organization and one of the four Nobel winners, has adopted a wait-and-see posture. Better known by its French acronym UGTT, it has issued only a vague statement about the importance of "constitutional legitimacy" and the need for national dialogue.

But all three forces — the protesters, the military and the unions — will face tougher tests in the days ahead. The political forces that dominate parliament have denounced Saied's actions as a coup. It is only a matter of time before Ennahda, the main Islamist party, and secular groups mount demonstrations of their own.

The protesters who celebrated the suspension of democracy will then have to decide whether they will return to the street to defend the president, triggering a faceoff with great potential for violence. If he sticks to the el-Sissi playbook, Saied will order a crackdown against his opponents, putting the military in a familiar quandary of whether to protect the people or the president.

But most likely, the decisive part will be played by the unions. The presence of strong, politically active civil-society institutions was the key differentiator between Tunisia and Egypt in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and it might be decisive again. Much will depend on the disposition of the UGTT, which represents most of the country's civil service and has a demonstrated capacity to bring all of Tunisia to a standstill.

This gives it the power, if it is so minded, to prevent Saied from fully reprising el-Sissi's repression of the political opposition. That's why Ennahda's leader, Rachid Ghannouchi, in his first reaction to Saied's announcement, appealed to the UGTT's secretary general, Noureddine Taboubi, "to restore democracy."

To do so would require exercising some muscle memory. Since it was ennobled in 2015, the UGTT has receded into its role as a union. More often than not, it has been a hindrance to progress in Tunisia, standing foursquare against much-needed economic reforms such as paring down the civil service and selling off state enterprises.

But its leadership takes great pride in its history as an anti-colonial force before Tunisia's 1956 independence from the French, and in its more recent function as a check on government power. As one top leader told me two years ago: "UGTT is different from any union in the world. We fight not just for bread and clothing, but for national dignity."

It's time for the UGTT to suit up for that fight again.

Bloomberg Opinion columnist Bobby Ghosh writes on foreign affairs, with a special focus on the Middle East and Africa.

First test for the weight of a Trump endorsement

By Henry Olsen
Special to The Washington Post

Tuesday's special runoff election for Texas's 6th Congressional District has been billed as the first test showing former President Donald Trump's influence within the Republican Party. It could prove just the opposite.

The race is between two Republicans for a seat south of Dallas and Fort Worth that became vacant because of the untimely death of its incumbent, Rep. Ron Wright, R, of COVID-19. His widow, Susan Wright, picked up the most votes in the special election on May 1 after receiving Trump's late endorsement. The fact that she did much better after Trump's blessing than she did in early voting was touted as evidence that his word still carried weight.

That weight wasn't all that heavy, however, as she received only 19% of the vote. More tellingly, she received about 31% of all votes cast for Republicans. That's not a strong showing, considering that, in addition to Trump's backing, she had some residual name identification from being the former incumbent's widow. Her poor fundraising — she raised a paltry $740,000 for the whole election as of July 7 — also indicates weakness.

These factors give her GOP opponent, state Rep. Jake Ellzey, some hope of pulling off an upset. He finished second with 13.8% of the total vote and has a base of support in his home county, Ellis. He raised $1.7 million for the whole cycle, allowing him to vastly outspend Wright, especially in digital advertising. The conservative Club for Growth has run ads on Wright's behalf, with a new one attacking Ellzey for allegedly missing votes as a state representative and supporting a tax hike. Trump's PAC is also spending on last-minute television ads for Wright, and Trump held a tele-rally Monday night for her.

So far, however, all of this effort has not produced much interest. Only 20,534 people had cast ballots by Friday, when early voting ended. This abysmally low turnout follows low voting levels in the first round, when about 78,000 people voted, including more than 45,000 early ballots. Last November, the district attracted more than 344,000 votes. Wright's own pollster stated that a low turnout favors its candidate, but it's still telling that a Trump endorsement isn't generating much interest in the race.

Widows tend to do well when running to succeed their late husbands. At least 47 women in history have won election to the House or Senate following their spouse's passing. That doesn't include Rep. Julia Letlow, R-La., who won a March race to succeed her late husband, Luke Letlow, who won election last year but died of COVID-19 before he could take office. That factor complicates an assessment of Trump's impact on the outcome, although Wright's weak fundraising suggests she might not have the strength other widows have displayed.

Ellzey's hope rests on winning Ellis County by a large margin and losing the most populous county in the district, Tarrant, by 10 points or less. On election night, watch the early returns: If Ellzey breaks 62% in Ellis and 45% in Tarrant, he has a shot. Anything less, and Wright will probably win.

Those assessing Trump's influence, however, should look more to the turnout than to the result. If Wright wins but turnout remains extremely low, that suggests — at best — that Trump's word is influential among a small but devoted band of base voters. That's not unimportant, but it's far from the deep influence many observers think he has. Far from being able to make or break careers with his gaze, it's possible that all Trump can do is motivate a small percentage of the Republican base to do his bidding. If that's true, anyone with conservative views and a base of support can stand against him and win.

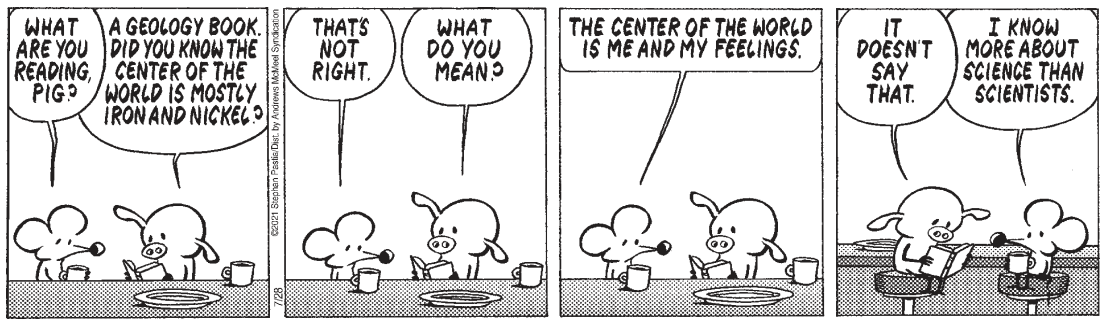
No single race can fully assess a national trend. Local factors always matter in intraparty primaries, and the timing of this election for early August always augured a lower than normal turnout. Tuesday's outcome will nonetheless be parsed for its greater meaning. Anything less than a big Wright win with a larger than expected turnout suggests Trump isn't as strong as many think.

Henry Olsen is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

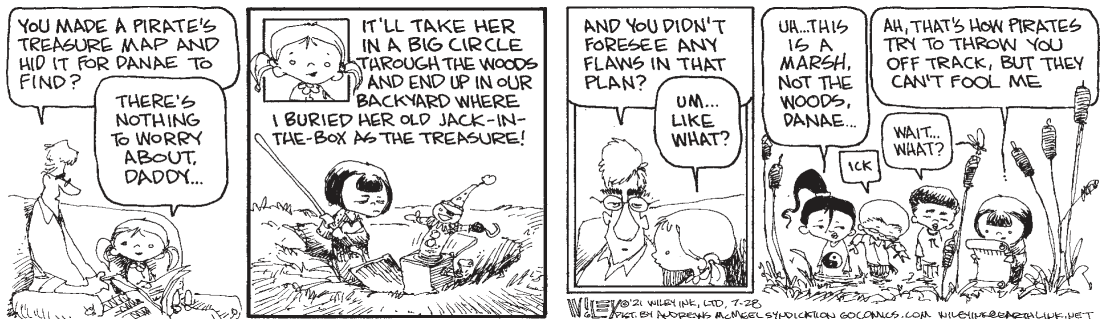
Frazz

Dilbert

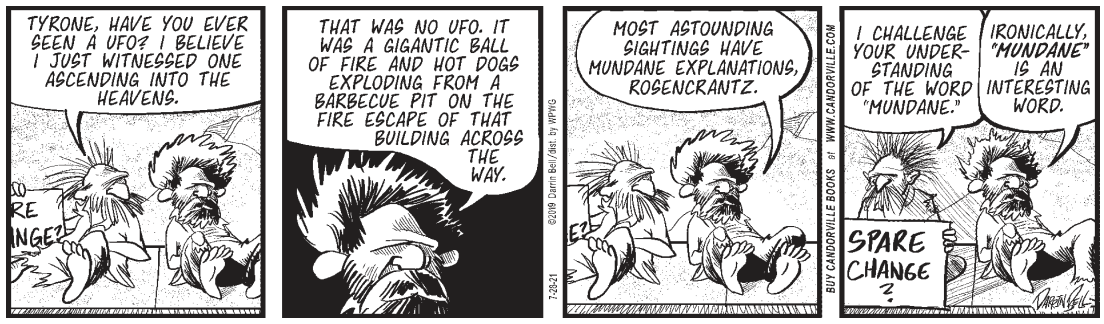
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur

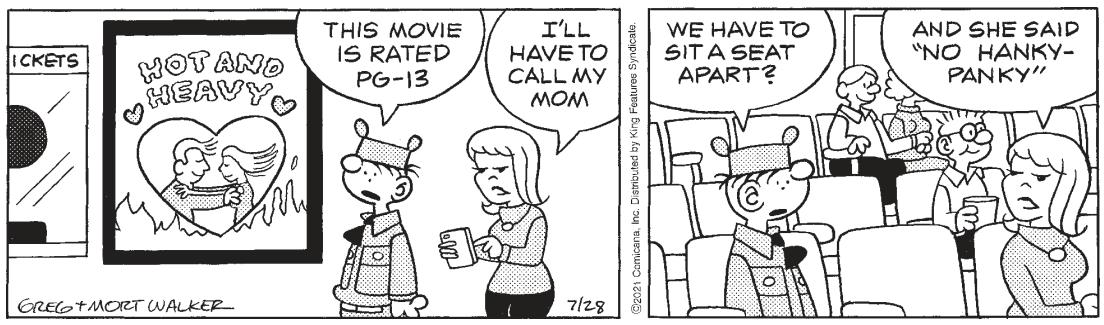


Candorville



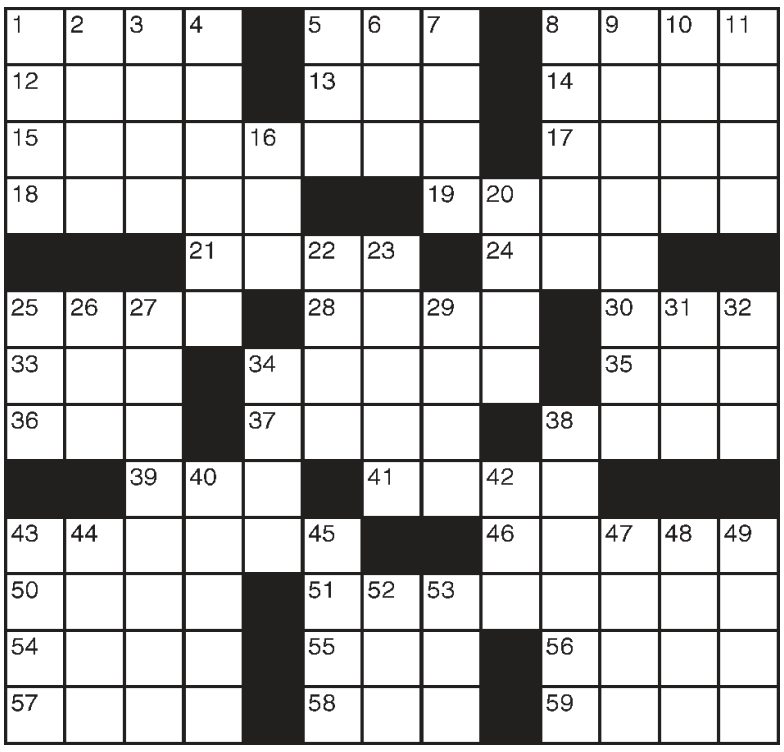
Carpe Diem

Beetle Bailey



Bizarro

Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

1 Vipers
5 Short do
8 Notion
12 Fall into a soft chair
13 Carnival city
14 Fashion line?
15 "The Color of Money" setting
17 Wash
18 Lukewarm
19 Swaps
21 Coagulate
24 Little rascal
25 Hourly pay
28 Commotion
30 — pro nobis
33 Scrape (out)
34 March honoree, for short
35 Reaction to fireworks
36 Prohibit
37 Furnace fuel
38 552, in old Rome
39 — de cologne
41 Tubular pasta
43 Esteem
46 Makeup mogul Lauder
50 Oodles
51 Billiard sticks
54 "Scram!"
55 Actress Longoria
56 Web addresses
57 Has a bug
58 Listening device
59 Terrier type

DOWN

1 Calendar entry (Abbr.)
2 — gin fizz
3 Inside info
4 Do a film editor's job
5 Bikini half
6 Peanut product
7 Piece of hardware
8 Imam's faith
9 Ryan Reynolds title role of 2016
10 Roof overhang
11 Iowa city
16 "Good" cholesterol
20 Mob scene
22 "Beetle Bailey" dog
23 November birthstone
25 Spider's creation
26 Rap sheet abbr.
27 DNA source
29 Surrealist Salvador
31 King, in Cannes
32 Sushi fish
34 Rabbit's tail
38 Decathlon event
40 Road runners
42 Business card no.
43 Tabula —
44 K thru 12
45 Duel tool
47 Ankara resident
48 Slithery
49 Being, to Brutus
52 Eggs
53 Crew tool

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	L	A	B		T	E	A		T	A	L	E
G	O	G	O		A	N	I		I	B	E	T
T	W	O	T	I	M	E	R		C	L	A	D
			T	O	P		F	A	K	E	R	S
H	O	P	O	N		R	O	L	L			
O	R	E	M		T	H	R	E	E	W	A	Y
O	E	R		P	R	I	C	E		R	O	E
F	O	U	R	L	A	N	E		P	E	N	N
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G	U	L	A	G	S		M	E	T			
A	B	U	T		F	I	V	E	I	R	O	N
R	E	N	E		E	S	P		O	A	H	U
B	R	A	D		R	M	S		S	P	O	T

7-28 CRYPTOQUIP

E X C D I G O D C C K Q G Q X G A G O H X W I Y W C F D F A G F Z Q P D H Z J P Q , K G I G O Q X P D N I G O Y G O W K O Z C F Z N C E C A P D H J F K ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINGER WITH THE VERY REMARKABLE ABILITY TO DRINK A GASOLINE ADDITIVE HARMLESSLY: ETHYL WATERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals N

SCOREBOARD/SPORTS BRIEFS

PRO SOCCER

MLS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New England	10	3	3	33	30	19
Nashville	6	1	8	26	24	14
Orlando City	7	4	4	25	23	19
Philadelphia	6	4	6	24	20	16
Columbus	6	3	6	24	16	12
NYCFC	7	5	2	23	26	15
CF Montréal	6	5	4	22	20	18
D.C. United	6	7	2	20	21	18
New York	5	6	3	18	18	17
Atlanta	2	5	8	14	14	18
Toronto FC	3	8	4	13	20	32
Cincinnati	3	7	4	13	17	29
Chicago	3	9	3	12	17	27
Inter Miami CF	2	8	3	9	10	23

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	9	2	5	32	25	12
Sporting KC	9	3	3	30	28	17
LA Galaxy	8	6	1	25	23	26
Colorado	7	4	3	24	21	16
LAFC	6	5	4	22	20	17
Minnesota	6	5	3	21	15	17
Real Salt Lake	5	4	5	20	24	16
Portland	6	7	1	19	18	22
Houston	3	4	8	17	17	20
FC Dallas	3	7	5	14	18	23
San Jose	3	7	5	14	17	25
Vancouver	3	7	5	14	16	25
Austin FC	3	7	4	13	10	15

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday's games

Austin FC at Vancouver
Minnesota at Los Angeles FC

Friday's games

Columbus at New York City FC
Atlanta at Orlando City
Portland at LA Galaxy

Saturday's games

San Jose at Seattle
New England at New York
D.C. United at Cincinnati
CF Montréal at Miami
FC Dallas at Sporting Kansas City
Real Salt Lake at Houston
Colorado at Austin FC
Minnesota at Vancouver

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	7	3	1	22	17	7
Gotham FC	5	1	4	19	12	6
Washington	5	3	3	18	14	11
Chicago	5	5	2	17	12	17
North Carolina	5	4	2	17	15	8
Houston	5	5	1	16	13	12
Orlando	4	4	4	16	14	15
Reign FC	4	6	1	13	10	13
Louisville	3	5	2	11	7	15
Kansas City	0	7	4	4	5	15

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday's games

Orlando at North Carolina
Louisville at Reign FC

TENNIS

Charleston 125

Monday
At Family Circle Tennis Center
Charleston, S.C.
Purse: $115,000
Surface: Red clay
Women's Singles
Round of 32

Jamie Loeb, United States, def. Whitney Osuigwe, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (3).

Hanna Chang, United States, def. Ellie Douglas, United States, 6-3, 6-4.

En Shuo Liang, Taiwan, def. Katarina Jokic, Serbia, 6-2, 0-6, 6-4.

Alexa Glatch, United States, def. Quinn Gleason, United States, 6-2, 6-2.

Tori Kinard, United States, def. Whitley Pate, United States, 6-2, 6-4.

Rebecca Marino, Canada, def. Catherine Harrison, United States, 6-4, 6-4.

Han Na-lae, South Korea, def. Tatjana Maria (5), Germany, 6-2, 6-4.

Women's Doubles
Round of 16

Maria Mateas and Whitney Osuigwe, United States, def. Katarina Jokic, Serbia, and Ellie Douglas, United States, 3-6, 6-1, 10-4.

Sophie Chang and Emma Navarro, United States, def. Madison Brengle and Sachia Vickery, United States, 2-6, 6-2, 10-4.

Belgrade 125

Monday
At Novak Tennis Center
Belgrade
Purse: $115,000
Surface: Red clay
Women's Singles
Qualification

Jessika Ponchet (1), France, def. Elena Milovanovic, Serbia, 6-0, 6-2.

Camilla Rosatello (4), Italy, def. Tamara Curovic, Serbia, 6-3, 7-6.

Ekaterina Yashina, Russia, def. Shalimar Talbi (2), Belarus, 6-4, 4-6, 6-1.

Tara Wurth, Croatia, def. Zuzana Zlochova (3), Slovakia, 6-0, 6-1.

Women's Singles
Round of 32

Anna-Karolina Schmiedlova, Slovakia, def. Jana Fett, Croatia, 6-1, 6-2.

Ulrikke Eikeri, Norway, def. Lesia Tsurenko, Ukraine, 6-3, 1-6, 6-4.

Susan Bandecchi, Switzerland, def. Olga Govortsova, Belarus, 7-6 (2), 6-3.

Rebecca Sramkova, Slovakia, def. Tereza Mrdeza, Croatia, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.

Varvara Gracheva (3), Russia, def. Iva Sepa, Serbia, 6-1, 6-1.

Atlanta Open

Monday
At Atlanta Station
Atlanta
Purse: $555,995
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Men's Singles
Round of 32

Bjorn Fratangelo, United States, def. Andreas Seppi, Italy, 7-5, 7-6 (5).

Jordan Thompson, Australia, def. Lloyd Harris (8), South Africa, 7-6 (2), 1-6, 6-2.

Steve Johnson, United States, def. Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Men's Doubles
Round of 16

Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela, Mexico, and Marcelo Arevalo-Gonzalez, El Salvador, def. Keshav Chopra and Andres Martin, United States, 6-1, 6-4.

Reilly Opelka, United States, and Jannik Sinner, Italy, def. Jonathan Erlich, Israel, and Santiago Gonzalez (2), Mexico, 6-2, 6-2.

Generali Open

Monday
At Tennis Stadium Kitzbuhel
Kitzbuhel, Austria
Purse: Euro 419,470
Surface: Red clay
Men's Singles
Round of 32

Jozef Kovalik, Slovakia, def. Jaume Munar (9), Spain, 6-4, 6-4.

Carlos Taberner, Spain, def. Thiago Seyboth Wild, Brazil, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Mikael Ymer, Sweden, def. Pablo Cuevas, Uruguay, 6-3, 7-5.

Pedro Martinez, Spain, def. Lucas Pouille, France, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-4.

Jiri Vesely, Czech Republic, def. Ernests Gulbis, Latvia, 6-4, 6-1.

Men's Doubles
Round of 16

Andrei Vasilevski, Belarus, and Rafael Matos, Brazil, def. Stefano Travaglia and Marco Cecchinato, Italy, 6-3, 7-5.

Guillermo Duran, Argentina, and Ariel Behar (4), Uruguay, def. Denys Molchanov, Ukraine, and Radu Albot, Moldova, 6-1, 6-7 (4), 13-11.

Igor Zelenay, Slovakia, and Andre Begemann, Germany, def. Aleksandr Nedovyesov, Kazakhstan, and Romain Arneodo, Monaco, 6-3, 7-6 (5).

Hugo Nys, Monaco, and Andrea Vavassori (2), Italy, def. Tristan-Samuel Weissborn and Neil Oberleitner, Austria, 7-6 (6), 6-2.

AP SPORTLIGHT

July 28

1928 — The Summer Olympics open in Amsterdam and the Olympic flame is lit for the first time.

1929 — The Chicago Cardinals become the first NFL team to train out of state, holding camp in Michigan.

1972 — The American Basketball Association announces that San Diego will receive a franchise and the NBA's Buffalo Braves relocate to San Diego and are renamed the San Diego Clippers.

1972 — The Dallas Cowboys beat the College All-Stars in Chicago 20-7.

1984 — The Summer Olympics open in Los Angeles with a record 140 nations competing. The Soviet Union and 13 Communist allies, including Cuba and East Germany, boycott the games.

1987 — Laura Davies shoots a 1-under 71 to defeat Ayako Okamoto and JoAnne Carner in an 18-hole playoff to win the U.S. Women's Open.

1991 — Dennis Martinez pitches a perfect game for the Montreal Expos, who beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 2-0.

1992 — American Mike Barrowman sets a world record in winning the 200-meter breaststroke, and Russian Evgueni Sadovyi becomes the Summer Olympics' first triple gold medalist, also smashing a world record in the men's 400-meter freestyle.

1994 — On the night baseball players set an Aug. 12 strike date, Kenny Rogers of the Texas Rangers pitches a perfect game for a 4-0 victory over California.

2000 — Blaine Wilson, America's preeminent gymnast, wins his fifth straight championship in St. Louis. He becomes the first gymnast to win five straight national titles since George Wheeler did it from 1937-41.

2013 — Brek Shea scores less than a minute after entering the game as a second-half substitute, giving the United States a 1-0 victory over Panama in the Gold Cup final. It's the fifth Gold Cup title for the Americans but their first since 2007.

DEALS

Monday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball
American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Sent LHP Bruce Zimmermann to Florida Complex League (FCL) on a rehab assignment.

BOSTON RED SOX — Agreed to terms with RHP Yonfi Rodriguez on a minor league contract.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Optioned 3B Jake Burger to Charlotte (Triple-A East). Reinstated LF Eloy Jimenez from the 60-day IL.

CLEVELAND INDIANS — Claimed LHP Alex Young off waivers from Arizona. Transferred RHP Aaron Civale from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

DETROIT TIGERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Dylan Smith on a minor league contract.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Reinstated 2B Aledmys Diaz from the 10-day IL. Optioned 2B Robel Garcia to Sugar Land (Triple-A West). Sent 3B Alex Bregman to Sugar Land on a rehab assignment.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Sent RHP Clarke Schmidt to Florida Complex League (FCL) on a rehab assignment. Acquired RHP Clay Holmes from Pittsburgh in exchange for INFs Diego Castillo and Hoy Park.

OAKLAND ATHLETICS — Agreed to terms with OF Denzel Clarke, SS Zack Gelof and C C.J. Rodriguez on minor league contracts.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Selected the contract of LHP Kirby Snead. Designated RHP Jacob Barnes for assignment.

National League

ATLANTA BRAVES — Recalled RHP Bryse Wilson from Gwinnett (Triple-A East).

CINCINNATI REDS — Optioned 2B Alejo Lopez to Louisville (Triple-A East). Reinstated LHP Amir Garrett from the paternity list.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Optioned 2B Sheldon Neuse to Oklahoma City (Triple-A East). Reinstated 1B Max Muncy from the paternity list. Sent RHP Corey Knebel to Oklahoma City on a rehab assignment.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Agreed to terms with OF Tristan Peters and RHP Carlos Rodriguez on minor league contracts.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Acquired INF/OF Adam Frazier and cash considerations from Pittsburgh in exchange for INF/OF Tucupita Marcano, RHP Michell Miliano and OF Jack Suwinski.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Reinstated RHP Joe Ross from the 10-day IL. Optioned OF Yadiel Hernandez to Rochester (Triple-A East).

FOOTBALL
National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Signed OL Marcus Henry and CB Daryl Worley to one-year contracts.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Signed OL Jason Spriggs and LB Emmanuel Ellerbe. Waived RB Tony Brooks-James.

CHICAGO BEARS — Signed TE Jesse James.

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Signed WR Reece Horn.

DENVER BRONCOS — Placed S Jamar Johnson and CB Kary Vincent on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Placed OT Marcus Cannon and G Lane Taylor on the physically unable to play (PUP) list. Waived LS Mitchell Fraboni. Acquired WR Anthony Miller via a trade with Chicago.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Named Kevin Rogers director of player personnel, Brian Decker director of team development, John Park director of football research, Jon Shaw director of pro scouting, Anthony Coughlan area scout, Mitch Chester college scouting coordinator/travel coordinator, Andrew Hoyle and Kasia Omilian scouting assistants, Kyle Davis associate athletic trainer and Thomas Byrd, Andrew Dees and Ty McKenzie coaching fellows.

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Signed DE Alex Okafor and LS Drew Scott. Waived WR Chris Finke with an injury designation. Placed LS James Winchester on reserve/COVID-19 list.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Placed WR Tutu Atwell on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed P Corliss Waitman. Waived K Dominik Eberle.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed TE Hunter Long to a four-year contract. Signed TE Carson Meier. Waived TE Jibri Blount with an injury settlement.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Signed WRs Dede Westbrook and LB Chazz Surratt, G Wyatt Davis and DE Patrick Jones II. Waived DT Jaylen Twyman. Placed K Riley Patterson on the PUP list.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Placed WR Michael Thomas on the PUP list. Placed OL Derrick Kelly on the non-football injury list. Signed WE Chris Hogan and LB Kendall Donnerson

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Signed OL Landon Dickerson to a four-year contract.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Signed CB Ambry Thomas to a four-year contract. Released DL Daeshon Hall.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Signed DLs Kyle Peko and Anthony Rush. Waived DL Bruce Hector.

WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM — Signed DL Jonathan Allen to a four-year contract extension.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Signed D Frederic Allard to a one-year, two-way contract.

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Acquired D Christian Jaros on a one-way, two-year contract from San Jose in exchange for F Nick Merkley.

JED JACOBSOHN/AP

The Memphis Grizzlies' Jonas Valanciunas shoots against the Golden State Warriors' Kevon Looney during a May 21 game. According to a report, the Grizzlies have agreed to trade Valanciunas to the New Orleans Pelicans in exchange for center Steven Adams, guard Eric Bledsoe and an exchange of first-round choices in this week's draft.

BRIEFLY

Source: Pelicans, Grizzlies, agree to multiplayer trade

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — The Memphis Grizzlies have agreed to trade center Jonas Valanciunas to the New Orleans Pelicans in exchange for center Steven Adams, guard Eric Bledsoe and a swap of multiple draft choices, a person familiar with the situation said.

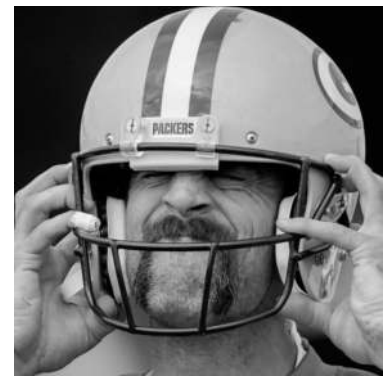
The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity on Monday because no trade can become official until Aug. 6.

The trade, first reported by ESPN, sends New Orleans' 10th and 40th overall draft choices to Memphis for the Grizzlies' 17th and 51st overall picks this year.

Memphis also will receive a protected 2022 first-round choice from New Orleans.

The deal comes on the heels of New Orleans' decision to hire Willie Green, their third head coach in three seasons, as the franchise faces mounting pressure to inspire confidence in star forward Zion Williamson after missing the playoffs his first two NBA campaigns.

Rodgers arrives at Packers' training camp



MORRY GASH/AP

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers arrived in Green Bay, Wis., on Tuesday in advance of training camp.

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Aaron Rodgers has made it to Green Bay on the eve of the Packers' first training-camp workout.

Rodgers was seen arriving at Lambeau Field on Tuesday morning, the day after NFL Network and ESPN reported the reigning MVP was closing in on a deal that would keep him with the Packers this season. The Packers later tweeted a photo of Rodgers at Lambeau Field — wearing oversize sunglasses and a novelty T-shirt referencing "The Office."

The Packers open training camp Wednesday. Under terms of the collective bargaining agreement, Rodgers would have been subject to a $50,000 fine for every day he held out during camp.

Rodgers didn't participate in organized team activities this spring — a change from his usual offseason routine — and skipped the Packers' mandatory minicamp.

His future with the Packers had seemed tenuous after ESPN reported in the hours leading up to the draft that he didn't want to return to Green Bay. Rodgers has spent his entire career with the Packers, who selected him with the 24th overall pick in the 2005 draft.

When the NFL's only publicly owned team held its shareholders meeting Monday, Packers president/CEO Mark Murphy said he was hopeful the two sides could resolve their differences and added that they'd been "in constant communication."

MLB

Scoreboard

American League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	62	39	.614	_
Tampa Bay	60	40	.600	1½
New York	51	47	.520	9½
Toronto	49	47	.510	10½
Baltimore	34	64	.347	26½

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	59	41	.590	_
Cleveland	49	48	.505	8½
Detroit	47	55	.461	13
Kansas City	43	55	.439	15
Minnesota	43	58	.426	16½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	61	40	.604	_
Oakland	56	45	.554	5
Seattle	55	46	.545	6
Los Angeles	50	49	.505	10
Texas	35	65	.350	25½

National League

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	53	45	.541	_
Philadelphia	50	49	.505	3½
Atlanta	49	51	.490	5
Washington	45	54	.455	8½
Miami	43	57	.430	11

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	58	42	.580	_
Cincinnati	51	49	.510	7
St. Louis	50	50	.500	8
Chicago	50	51	.495	8½
Pittsburgh	38	61	.384	19½

West Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	62	37	.626	_
Los Angeles	61	40	.604	2
San Diego	58	44	.569	5½
Colorado	43	57	.430	19½
Arizona	31	70	.307	32

Monday's games

Boston 5, Toronto 4
Kansas City 4, Chicago White Sox 3
Minnesota 6, Detroit 5, 10 innings
L.A. Angels 6, Colorado 2
Seattle 11, Houston 8
Atlanta 2, N.Y. Mets 0, 7 innings, 1st
N.Y. Mets 1, Atlanta 0, 7 innings, 2nd
Philadelphia 6, Washington 5
Chicago Cubs 6, Cincinnati 5
L.A. Angels 6, Colorado 2

Tuesday's games

Miami at Baltimore
N.Y. Yankees at Tampa Bay
St. Louis at Cleveland
Toronto at Boston
Arizona at Texas
Chicago White Sox at Kansas City
Detroit at Minnesota
Colorado at L.A. Angels
Houston at Seattle
Oakland at San Diego
Milwaukee at Pittsburgh
Washington at Philadelphia
Atlanta at N.Y. Mets
Cincinnati at Chicago Cubs
L.A. Dodgers at San Francisco

Wednesday's games

Detroit (Peralta 3-2) at Minnesota (Happ 5-5)
St. Louis (Kim 6-5) at Cleveland (Plesac 5-3)
Houston (Odorizzi 3-5) at Seattle (Kikuchi 6-5)
Oakland (Manaea 7-6) at San Diego (Snell 4-3)
Miami (TBD) at Baltimore (Lopez 2-12)
Yankees (Cortes 0-0) at Tampa Bay (Wacha 2-2)
Toronto (Matz 8-5) at Boston (Houck 0-2)
Arizona (Bumgarner 4-6) at Texas (TBD)
Chicago White Sox (Giolito 8-7) at Kansas City (Bubic 3-4)
Colorado (Gonzalez 3-6) at L.A. Angels (Heaney 6-7)
Milwaukee (TBD) at Pittsburgh (TBD)
Washington (Corbin 6-9) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 6-5)
Atlanta (Fried 7-6) at N.Y. Mets (Megill 1-0)
Cincinnati (Mahle 7-3) at Chicago Cubs (Davies 6-6)
L.A. Dodgers (Buehler 10-1) at San Francisco (DeSclafani 10-4)

Calendar

Aug. 12 — New York Yankees vs. Chicago White Sox at Dyersville, Iowa.
Aug. 22 — Los Angeles Angels vs. Cleveland at Williamsport, Pa.
Dec. 1 — Collective bargaining agreement expires, 11:59 p.m. EST.
Dec. 15 — International amateur signing period closes.

PHOTOS BY TED S. WARREN/AP

Above: The Mariners' Dylan Moore, left, is greeted by Tom Murphy, center, and Jarred Kelenic after Moore hit a grand slam during the eighth inning. Below: Moore watches his slam in an 11-8 win Monday over the Houston Astros in Seattle.

Moore slam completes Mariners' 7-run rally

Seattle stuns Houston 11-8 after trailing 7-0 through the fourth inning

BY DAIMON EKLUND
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Dylan Moore hit a grand slam in the eighth inning to lift the Seattle Mariners to an 11-8 comeback win against the Houston Astros on Monday night.

Houston scored six runs in the first and led 7-0 in the fourth before Seattle started to rally. The seven-run deficit is the most the Mariners have overcome this season, and the largest cushion the AL West-leading Astros have lost.

In the eighth, Seattle loaded the bases with two outs down 8-7. Moore launched reliever Brooks Raley's 1-1 pitch into the left field second deck for his fourth homer of the season to complete the comeback.

"It's hard to describe. It boils down to the best baseball moment of my career so far," Moore said.

After giving up Moore's slam, Raley hit J.P. Crawford in the back with a 3-1 pitch and was ejected. Crawford had three hits and scored twice.

Kendall Graveman (4-0) pitched a scoreless eighth, and Paul Sewald earned his fourth save with a perfect ninth.

"It's tough when you get down like that, and certainly against a team that's leading the division with one of the best records in baseball," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "You're in a situation where we're at in the standings fighting for something against the first-place team, so this one's pretty darn special."

Ryne Stanek (1-2) took the loss.

Six straight Houston batters scored in the opening inning against rookie Darren McCaughan, making his first career start. Martin Maldonado added a solo homer in the fourth.

Seattle made it a game with a three-run double by Cal Raleigh in the fourth and a three-run homer from Kyle Seager in the fifth.

"This hurts a lot. We made some mistakes, we walked some hitters," Astros manager Dusty Baker said. "We couldn't put the horse back in the barn and we didn't score anymore. We know their bullpen has been pitching great lately."

Houston starter Luis Garcia allowed career highs of six runs, five earned. He gave up six hits and a walk while striking out nine.

The start for McCaughan came after he pitched five no-hit innings in his major league debut against the Rockies last Wednesday.

McCaughan got leadoff hitter Jose Altuve for his first career strikeout but gave up his first hit to the next batter when Michael Brantley's comebacker deflected off his glove. The Astros just kept hitting, with six runs scoring before McCaughan got a second out. Kyle Tucker's three-run homer was the biggest blow, followed by a solo shot from Abraham Toro.

ROUNDUP

Red Sox rally, extend their lead over Blue Jays

Associated Press

BOSTON — Alex Verdugo hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning and the AL East-leading Boston Red Sox rallied late for the second straight game, beating Toronto 5-4 on Monday night in the opener of an important series for the Blue Jays.

Boston star Rafael Devers added a solo homer on the four-year anniversary of his first major-league shot.

Bo Bichette hit a two-run homer for fourth-place Toronto, which fell 10½ games behind in the East.

Adam Ottavino (3-3) worked a scoreless inning for the win. Matt Barnes got the final three outs for his 22nd save.

Blue Jays starter Thomas Hatch made just his second big-league start after being sidelined with a shoulder impingement since spring training. The 26-year-old right-hander gave up three runs on seven hits in 3⅔ innings. Trevor Richards (1-1) took the loss.

Angels 6, Rockies 2: Shohei Ohtani pitched seven strong innings and hit an early RBI single as host Los Angeles beat Colorado.

Ohtani (5-1) gave up one run and five hits with five strikeouts.

Jack Mayfield added a two-run homer for the Angels. Raisel Iglesias worked a scoreless ninth for his 22nd save in 26 chances.

Phillies 6, Nationals 5: Andrew McCutchen hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning to give host Philadelphia a victory over sinking Washington.

Rhys Hoskins also had a three-run homer for the second-place Phillies, who are 3½ games behind the New York Mets in the NL East.

Braves 2-0, Mets 0-1: Jeff McNeil laced his second go-ahead hit in two days when his RBI double in the fifth inning sent host New York to a victory over Atlanta and a doubleheader split.

Kyle Muller threw five sharp innings to earn his second big league victory in the opener, a win for the Braves.

The Mets have split nine of their 11 doubleheaders this season and swept the other two.

Royals 4, White Sox 3: Jorge Soler hit two home runs for the second straight game and Kansas City extended its winning streak to six games with a win over visiting Chicago.

Mike Minor (8-8) gave the Royals their fifth quality start in the last six games. He allowed two runs on three hits over six innings. He walked two and struck out seven. Scott Barlow worked the final two innings and picked up his sixth save.

Twins 6, Tigers 5 (10): Max Kepler's RBI single in the bottom of the 10th inning against All-Star closer Gregory Soto gave Minnesota a win over visiting Detroit.

Soto walked the bases loaded in the ninth before striking out Willians Astudillo on three pitches. Soto had two outs in the 10th, but walked Andrelton Simmons and then gave up Kepler's ninth career game-ending hit.

Cubs 6, Reds 5: Pinch-hitter Javier Báez hit a bases-loaded single in the bottom of the ninth inning to give host Chicago a win over Cincinnati.

Anthony Rizzo homered in his second straight game for the Cubs. Willson Contreras also homered.

OLYMPICS SCOREBOARD

Medals Table

40 of 40 events
132 of 132 total events

Nation	G	S	B	Tot
United States	9	7	8	24
China	9	5	7	21
Japan	10	3	5	18
ROC	7	7	4	18
Britain	4	5	3	12
Italy	1	5	6	12
South Korea	3	2	5	10
Australia	3	1	5	9
Canada	2	3	3	8
France	2	2	3	7
Taiwan	1	2	3	6
Brazil	1	2	2	5
Switzerland	1	2	2	5
Germany	1	0	3	4
Serbia	1	1	1	3
Slovenia	1	1	1	3
Netherlands	0	3	0	3
Spain	0	2	1	3
Mongolia	0	1	2	3
Kazakhstan	0	0	3	3
Ukraine	0	0	3	3
Kosovo	2	0	0	2
Hungary	1	1	0	2
Tunisia	1	1	0	2
Austria	1	0	1	2
Croatia	1	0	1	2
Estonia	1	0	1	2

Tuesday's medalists

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL
Softball

GOLD—Japan (Yukiyo Mine, Saki Yamazaki, Yuka Ichiguchi, Yu Yamamoto, Nodoka Harada, Sayaka Mori, Hitomi Kawabata, Eri Yamada, Mana Atsumi, Minori Naito, Yamato Fujita, Yukiko Ueno, Nayu Kiyohara, Haruka Agatsuma, Miu Goto)
SILVER—United States (Aubree Munro, Ali Aguilar, Ally Carda, Amanda Chidester, Kelsey Stewart, Haylie Mc Cleney, Janie Reed, Monica Abbott, Michelle Moultrie, Valerie Arioto, Rachel Garcia, Dejah Mulipola, Cat Osterman, Bubba Nickles, Delaney Spaulding)
BRONZE—Canada (Kelsey Harshman, Natalie Wideman, Erika Polidori, Joey Lye, Jenn Salling, Victoria Hayward, Janet Leung, Danielle Lawrie, Sara Groenewegen, Emma Entzminger, Jen Gilbert, Larissa Franklin, Jenna Caira, Lauren Regula, Kaleigh Rafter)

CANOE SLALOM
Women's Kayak

GOLD—Ricarda Funk, Germany
SILVER—Maialen Chourraut, Spain
BRONZE—Jessica Fox, Australia

DIVING
Women's Synchronised 10m Platform

GOLD—China (Yuxi Chen, Jiaqi Zhang)
SILVER—United States (Delaney Schnell, Jessica Parratto)
BRONZE—Mexico (Alejandra Orozco Loza, Gabriela Agundez Garcia)

EQUESTIRAN
Dressage Team
Grand Prix Special

GOLD—Germany (Dorothee Schneider, SHOWTIME FRH; Isabell Werth, BELLA ROSE 2; Jessica von Bredow-Werndl, TSF DALERA), 8178.0.
SILVER—United States (Adrienne Lyle, SALVINO; Steffen Peters, SUPPENKASPER; Sabine Schut-Kery, SANCEO), 7747.0.
BRONZE—Britain (Carl Hester, EN VOGUE; Charlotte Fry, EVERDALE; Charlotte Dujardin, GIO), 7723.0.

FENCING
Women's Épée Team

GOLD—Estonia (Julia Beljajeva, Katrina Lehis, Erika Kirpu, Irina Embrich)
SILVER—South Korea (Injeong Choi, Hyein Lee, Young Mi Kang, Sera Song)
BRONZE—Italy (Federica Isola, Rossella Fiamingo, Mara Navarria, Alberta Santuccio)

GYMNASTICS
Women's Team

GOLD—ROC (Liliia Akhaimova, Viktoriia Listunova, Angelina Melnikova, Vladislava Urazova)
SILVER—United States (Simone Biles, Jordan Chiles, Sunisa Lee, Grace Mc Callum)
BRONZE—Britain (Jennifer Gadirova, Jessica Gadirova, Alice Kinsella, Amelie Morgan)

JUDO
Men -81 kg

GOLD—Takanori Nagase, Japan
SILVER—Saeid Mollaei, Mongolia
BRONZE—Shamil Borchashvili, Austria
BRONZE—Matthias Casse, Belgium

Women -63 kg

GOLD—Clarisse Agbegnenou, France
SILVER—Tina Trstenjak, Slovenia
BRONZE—Maria Centracchio, Italy
BRONZE—Catherine Beauchemin-Pinard, Canada

MOUNTAIN BIKE CYCLING
Women's Cross-country

GOLD—Jolanda Neff, Switzerland
SILVER—Sina Frei, Switzerland
BRONZE—Linda Indergand, Switzerland

SHOOTING
10m Air Pistol Mixed Team

GOLD—China (Ranxin Jiang, Wei Pang)
SILVER—ROC (Vitalina Batsarashkina, Artem Chernousov)
BRONZE—Ukraine (Olena Kostevych, Oleh Omelchuk)

10m Air Rifle Mixed Team

GOLD—China (Qian Yang, Haoran Yang)
SILVER—United States (Mary Carolynn Tucker, Lucas Kozeniesky)
BRONZE—ROC (Yulia Karimova, Sergey Kamenskiy)

SURFING
Men

GOLD—Italo Ferreira, Brazil
SILVER—Kanoa Igarashi, Japan
BRONZE—Owen Wright, Australia

Women

GOLD—Carissa Moore, United States
SILVER—Bianca Buitendag, South Africa
BRONZE—Amuro Tsuzuki, Japan

SWIMMING
Men's 100m Backstroke

GOLD—Evgeny Rylov, ROC
SILVER—Kliment Kolesnikov, ROC
BRONZE—Ryan Murphy, United States

Men's 200m Freestyle

GOLD—Tom Dean, Britain
SILVER—Duncan Scott, Britain
BRONZE—Fernando Scheffer, Brazil

Women's 100m Backstroke

GOLD—Kaylee McKeown, Australia
SILVER—Kylie Masse, Canada
BRONZE—Regan Smith, United States

Women's 100m Breaststroke

GOLD—Lydia Jacoby, United States
SILVER—Tatjana Schoenmaker, South Africa
BRONZE—Lilly King, United States

TAEKWONDO
Men +80kg

GOLD—Vladislav Larin, ROC
SILVER—Dejan Georgievski, Macedonia
BRONZE—Rafael Yunier Alba Castillo, Cuba
BRONZE—Kyo Don In, South Korea

Women -67kg

GOLD—Matea Jelic, Croatia
SILVER—Lauren Williams, Britain
BRONZE—Ruth Gbagbi, Ivory Coast
BRONZE—Hedaya Malak, Egypt

Women +67kg

GOLD—Milica Mandic, Serbia
SILVER—Dabin Lee, South Korea
BRONZE—Althea Laurin, France
BRONZE—Bianca Walkden, Britain

TRIATHLON
Women

GOLD—Flora Duffy, Bermuda
SILVER—Georgia Taylor-Brown, Britain
BRONZE—Katie Zaferes, United States

WEIGHTLIFTING
Women's 59kg

GOLD—Hsing-Chun Kuo, Taiwan
SILVER—Polina Guryeva, Turkmenistan
BRONZE—Mikiko Andoh, Japan

Women's 64kg

GOLD—Maude G Charron, Canada
SILVER—Giorgia Bordignon, Italy
BRONZE—Wen-Huei Chen, Taiwan

Women's 3x3 basketball

Country	W	L	Pts
United States	6	1	12
China	5	2	10
Japan	5	2	10
ROC	5	2	10
France	4	3	8
Italy	2	5	4
Romania	1	6	2
Mongolia	0	7	0

Saturday, July 24

ROC 21, Japan 18
China 21, Romania 10
ROC 19, China 9
Japan 20, Romania 8
Italy 15, Mongolia 14
United States 17, France 10
United States 21, Mongolia 9
France 19, Italy 16

Sunday, July 25

Japan 19, Mongolia 10
Italy 22, Romania 14
ROC 21, Mongolia 5
China 22, Italy 13
United States 22, Romania 11
Japan 19, France 15
China 20, France 13
United States 20, ROC 16

Monday, July 26

China 15, Japan 12
Romania 22, Mongolia 14
ROC 21, Romania 12
Japan 22, Italy 10
France 22, Mongolia 18
United States 17, Italy 13
United States 21, China 19
France 17, ROC 14

Tuesday, July 27

Japan 20, United States 18
China 21, Mongolia 9
France 22, Romania 12
ROC 17, Italy 9
China 19, Italy 13
France 16, Japan 14

Wednesday, July 28
Semifinals

United States vs France
ROC vs China

Gold medal, bronze medal

Teams TBD

Women's volleyball

Group A

Country	W	L	Pts
Serbia	2	0	6
Brazil	2	0	5
Japan	1	1	3
South Korea	1	1	3
Dominican Republic	0	2	1
Kenya	0	2	0

Group B

Country	W	L	Pts
Italy	2	0	6
United States	2	0	6
ROC	1	1	3
Turkey	1	1	3
Argentina	0	2	0
China	0	2	0

Sunday, July 25

Italy 3, ROC 0 (25-23, 25-19, 25-14)
United States 3, Argentina 0 (25-20, 25-19, 25-20)
Serbia 3, Dominican Republic 0 (25-18, 25-12, 25-20)
Turkey 3, China 0 (25-21, 25-14, 25-14)
Japan 3, Kenya 0 (25-15, 25-11, 25-23)
Brazil 3, South Korea 0 (25-10, 25-22, 25-19)

Tuesday, July 27

ROC 3, Argentina 0 (25-19, 25-15, 25-13)
United States 3, China 0 (29-27, 25-22, 25-21)
Serbia 3, Japan 0 (25-23, 25-16, 26-24)
Italy 3, Turkey 1 (25-22, 23-25, 25-20, 25-15)
Brazil 3, Dominican Republic 2 (25-22, 17-25, 13-25, 25-23, 12-15)
South Korea 3, Kenya 0 (25-14, 25-22, 26-24)

Thursday, July 29

Italy vs Argentina
South Korea vs Dominican Republic
Serbia vs Kenya
China vs ROC
Japan vs Brazil
United States vs Turkey

Saturday, July 31

Dominican Republic vs Kenya
United States vs ROC
Argentina vs Turkey
Serbia vs Brazil
Japan vs South Korea
China vs Italy

Boxing

Tuesday
Men
Welter (63-69kg)
Round of 16

Pat McCormack, Britain, def. Aliaksandr Radzionau, Belarus, 5-0.
Bobo-Usmon Baturov, Uzbekistan, def. Rohan Polanco Emiliano, Dominican Republic, 4-0.
Aidan Walsh, Ireland, def. Albert Mengue Ayissi, Cameroon, 5-0.
Merven Clair, Mauritius, def. Zeyad Eishaih Hussein Eashash, Jordan, 3-2.
Roniel Iglesias, Cuba, def. Sewonrets Quincy Mensah Okazawa, Japan, 3-2.
Delante Johnson, United States, def. Ablaikhan Zhussupov, Kazakhstan, 4-1.
Eskerkhan Madiev, Georgia, def. Shadiri Bwogi, Uganda, 3-1.
Andrei Zamkovoi, ROC, def. Steven Zimba, Zambia, 4-1.

Heavy (81-91kg)
Round of 16

Muslim Gadzhimagomedov, ROC, def. Abdelhafid Benchabla, Algeria, 5-0.
Ammar Riad Abduljabbar, Germany, def. Jose Maria Lucar Jaimes, Peru, 5-0.
Uladzislau Smiahlikau, Belarus, def. Ato Leau Plodzicki-Faoagali, Samoa, 4-1.
David Nyika, New Zealand, def. Youness Baalla, Morocco, 5-0.
Hussein Eishaish Hussein Iashaish, Jordan, def. Julio Cesar Castillo Torres, Ecuador, 4-0.
Abner Teixeira, Brazil, def. Cheavon Clarke, Britain, 4-1.
Julio la Cruz, Cuba, def. Elly Ajowi Ochola, Kenya, 5-0.
Enmanuel Reyes Pla, Spain, def. Vassiliy Levit, Kazakhstan, KO.

Women
Light (57-60kg)
Round of 32

Rebecca Nicoli, Italy, def. Esmeralda Falcon Reyes, Mexico, 4-1.
Caroline Dubois, Britain, def. Donjeta Sadiku, Kosovo, 5-0.
Sudaporn Seesondee, Thailand, def. Maria Jose Palacios Espinoza, Ecuador, 5-0.
Wu Shih-Yi, Taiwan, def. Agnes Alexiusson, Sweden, 4-1.
Mira Marjut Johanna Potkonen, Finland, def. Maiva Hamadouche, France, 3-1.

Welter (64-69kg)
Round of 16

Busenaz Surmeneli, Turkey, def. Karolina Koszewska, Poland, 5-0.
Anna Lysenko, Ukraine, def. Oumayma Bel Ahbib, Morocco, 5-0.
Lovlina Borgohain, India, def. Nadine Apetz, Germany, 3-2.
Chen Nien-Chin, Taiwan, def. Angela Carini, Italy, 3-2.
Oshae Jones, United States, def. Brianda Tamara Cruz Sandoval, Mexico, 3-2.
Maria Altagracia Moronta Hernandez, Dominican Republic, def. Myriam da Silva, Canada, 5-0.
Alcinda Helena Panguana, Mozambique, def. Elizabeth Akinyi, Kenya, stopped by referee.

Beach volleyball scores

Tuesday
Men
Pool A

ROC (Ilya Leshukov; Konstantin Semenov), def. Spain (Adrian Gavira Collado; Pablo Herrera Allepuz), 21-19, 22-20.
Norway (Anders Berntsen Mol; Christian Sandlie Sorum), def. Australia (Christopher McHugh; Damien Schumann), 21-18, 18-21, 15-13.

Pool D

Netherlands (Alexander Brouwer; Robert Meeuwsen), def. United States (Philip Dalhausser; Nicholas Lucena), 21-17, 21-18.
United States (Philip Dalhausser; Nicholas Lucena), def. Brazil (Alison Cerutti; Alvaro Morais Filho), 24-22, 19-21, 15-13.
Netherlands (Alexander Brouwer; Robert Meeuwsen), def. Argentina (Julian Amado Azaad; Nicolas Capogrosso), 21-14, 21-14.

Pool C

Qatar (Ahmed Tijan; Cherif Younousse), def. Switzerland (Adrian Heidrich; Mirco Gerson), 21-17, 21-16.
United States (Tri Bourne; Jacob Gibb), def. Italy (Adrian Ignacio Carambula Raurich; Enrico Rossi), 21-18, 21-19.

Pool F

Italy (Daniele Lupo; Paolo Nicolai), def. Japan (Yusuke Ishijima; Katsuhiro Shiratori), 21-19, 21-16.
Germany (Julius Thole; Clemens Wickler), def. Poland (Piotr Kantor; Bartosz Losiak), 22-20, 21-16.

Pool E

Brazil (Evandro Goncalves Oliveira Junior; Bruno Oscar Schmidt), def. Morocco (Mohammed Abicha; Zouheir Elgraoui), 21-14, 21-16.
Poland (Michal Bryl; Grzegorz Fijalek), def. Chile (Esteban Grimalt; Marco Grimalt), 21-17, 21-18.

Women
Pool A

Canada (Melissa Humana-Paredes; Sarah Pavan), def. Netherlands (Raisa Schoon; Katja Stam), 21-16, 21-14.
Switzerland (Joana Heidrich; Anouk Verge-Depre), def. Germany (Karla Borger; Julia Sude), 21-8, 21-23, 15-6.

Pool F

Switzerland (Nina Betschart; Tanja Huberli), def. Germany (Margareta Kozuch; Laura Ludwig), 23-25, 22-20, 16-14.
Germany (Margareta Kozuch; Laura Ludwig), def. Japan (Miki Ishii; Megumi Murakami), 21-17, 22-20.

Pool C

China (Xia Xinyi; Wang Fan), def. Canada (Heather Bansley; Brandie Wilkerson), 18-21, 21-15, 15-11.
Canada (Heather Bansley; Brandie Wilkerson), def. Argentina (Ana Gallay; Fernanda Pereyra), 22-20, 21-12.
China (Xia Xinyi; Wang Fan), def. Brazil (Agatha Bednarczuk; Eduarda Santos Lisboa), 21-18, 21-14.

Pool B

United States (Alix Klineman; April Ross), def. China (Wang Xinxin; Xue Chen), 21-17, 21-19.
Spain (Elsa Baquerizo McMillan; Liliana Fernandez Steiner), def. Netherlands (Sanne Keizer; Madelein Meppelink), 19-21, 21-18, 16-14.
United States (Alix Klineman; April Ross), def. Spain (Elsa Baquerizo McMillan; Liliana Fernandez Steiner), 21-13, 21-16.
China (Wang Xinxin; Xue Chen), def. Netherlands (Sanne Keizer; Madelein Meppelink), 19-21, 31-29, 15-13.

Pool E

ROC (Svetlana Kholomina; Nadezda Makroguzova), def. Italy (Marta Menegatti; Viktoria Orsi Toth), 21-18, 21-15.

Pool D

Brazil (Rebecca Silva; Ana Patricia Silva Ramos), def. Kenya (Brackcides Khadambi; Gaudencia Makokha), 21-15, 21-9.

Tennis

Tuesday
Men's Singles
Round of 32

Stefanos Tsitsipas (3), Greece, def. Frances Tiafoe, United States, 6-3, 6-4.
Diego Schwartzman (8), Argentina, def. Tomas Machac, Czech Republic, 6-4, 7-5.
Jeremy Chardy, France, def. Aslan Karatsev (11), ROC, 7-5, 4-6, 6-3.
Karen Khachanov (12), ROC, def. James Duckworth, Australia, 7-5, 6-1.
Liam Broady, Britain, def. Hubert Hurkacz (7), Poland, 7-5, 3-6, 6-3.
Ilya Ivashka, Belarus, def. Mikhail Kukushkin, Kazakhstan, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-3.
Ugo Humbert (14), France, def. Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 4-6, 7-6 (5), 7-5.
Kei Nishikori, Japan, def. Marcos Giron, United States, 7-6 (5), 3-6, 6-1.

Women's Singles
Round of 16

Marketa Vondrousova, Czech Republic, def. Naomi Osaka (2), Japan, 6-1, 6-4.
Garbine Muguruza (7), Spain, def. Alison van Uytvanck, Belgium, 6-4, 6-1.
Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (13), ROC, def. Sara Sorribes Tormo, Spain, 6-1, 6-3.
Belinda Bencic (9), Switzerland, def. Barbora Krejcikova (8), Czech Republic, 1-6, 6-2, 6-3.
Elina Svitolina (4), Ukraine, def. Maria Sakkari (14), Greece, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4.
Paula Badosa, Spain, def. Nadia Podoroska, Argentina, 6-2, 6-3.
Camila Giorgi, Italy, def. Karolina Pliskova (5), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2.
Elena Rybakina (15), Kazakhstan, def. Donna Vekic, Croatia, 7-6 (3), 6-4.

Men's rugby

Group A

Country	W	L	T	Pts
New Zealand	3	0	0	6
Argentina	2	1	0	4
Australia	1	2	0	2
South Korea	0	3	0	0

Group B

Country	W	L	T	Pts
Fiji	3	0	0	6
Britain	2	1	0	4
Canada	1	2	0	2
Japan	0	3	0	0

Group C

Country	W	L	T	Pts
South Africa	3	0	0	6
United States	2	1	0	4
Ireland	1	2	0	2
Kenya	0	3	0	0

Monday, July 26

Fiji 24, Japan 19
Britain 24, Canada 0
New Zealand 50, South Korea 5
Argentina 29, Australia 19
South Africa 33, Ireland 14
United States 19, Kenya 14
Britain 34, Japan 0
Fiji 28, Canada 14
New Zealand 35, Argentina 14
Australia 42, South Korea 5
United States 19, Ireland 17
South Africa 14, Kenya 5

Tuesday, July 27

Canada 36, Japan 12
Fiji 33, Britain 7
Argentina 56, South Korea 0
New Zealand 14, Australia 12
Ireland 12, Kenya 7
South Africa 17, United States 12
Ireland 31, South Korea 0
Kenya 21, Japan 7

Quarterfinals

New Zealand 21, Canada 10
Britain 26, United States 21
Argentina 19, South Africa 14
Fiji 19, Australia 0

Wednesday, July 28
Placing

South Korea vs Japan
Ireland vs Kenya
Canada vs United States
South Africa vs Australia

Semifinals

New Zealand vs Britain
Argentina vs Fiji

Women's soccer

Group E

Country	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Britain	3	2	1	0	4	1	5
Canada	3	1	2	0	4	3	4
Japan	3	1	1	1	2	2	3
Chile	3	0	0	3	1	5	0

Group F

Country	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brazil	3	2	1	0	9	3	5
Netherlands	3	2	1	0	21	8	5
China	3	0	1	2	6	17	1
Zambia	3	0	1	2	7	15	1

Group G

Country	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Sweden	3	3	0	0	9	2	6
Australia	3	1	1	1	4	5	3
United States	3	1	1	1	6	4	3
New Zealand	3	0	0	3	2	10	0

Wednesday, July 21

Britain 2, Chile 0
Brazil 5, China 0
Sweden 3, United States 0
Japan 1, Canada 1
Netherlands 10, Zambia 3
Australia 2, New Zealand 1

Saturday, July 24

Canada 2, Chile 1
China 4, Zambia 4
Sweden 4, Australia 2
Britain 1, Japan 0
Netherlands 3, Brazil 3
United States 6, New Zealand 1

Tuesday, July 27

Sweden 2, New Zealand 0
United States 0, Australia 0
Japan 1, Chile 0
Canada 1, Britain 1
Netherlands 8, China 2
Brazil 1, Zambia 0

Friday, July 30

Quarterfinals

Canada vs Brazil
Britain vs Australia
Sweden vs Japan
Netherlands vs United States

Monday, August 2

Semifinals

OLYMPICS

‘A bit much’: Osaka blames pressure in loss

By Andrew Dampf
Associated Press

TOKYO — It wasn’t the ending that Naomi Osaka — nor her multitudes of fans across Japan and worldwide — had expected.

The start of the Tokyo Olympics, however, will forever be a bright memory for the tennis superstar.

Osaka herself said after lighting the Olympic cauldron during last week’s opening ceremony that it was “undoubtedly the greatest athletic achievement and honor I will ever have in my life.”

So maybe — just maybe — that will allow Osaka to cope with her unexpected 6-1, 6-4 loss to former French Open finalist Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic in the third round of the Olympic tennis tournament on Tuesday.

Not immediately, though.

“I’m disappointed in every loss, but I feel like this one sucks more than the others,” Osaka said.

As a four-time Grand Slam champion, the highest-paid female athlete in the world and the host country’s poster girl for the Games, the huge expectations were hard to handle.

“I definitely feel like there was a lot of pressure for this,” Osaka said. “I think it’s maybe because I haven’t played in the Olympics before and for the first year (it) was a bit much.”

The second-ranked Osaka, who was born in Japan and grew up in the United States, struggled with her usually reliable groundstrokes while the left-handed Vondrousova produced a series of drop-shot winners and other crafty shots that drew her opponent out of her comfort zone.

“It’s tough for her also playing in Japan and in the Olympics,” the 42nd-ranked Vondrousova said. “It’s so much pressure, I cannot imagine.”

> **“I definitely feel like there was a lot of pressure for this.”**
>
> **Naomi Osaka**
> On her third-round Olympic defeat

Osaka won her opening two matches in straight sets following a two-month mental health break. But conditions were different Tuesday with the roof closed because it was raining outside.

“I’ve taken long breaks before and I’ve managed to do well,” said Osaka, who initially did not comment after her loss, then came back out and met with a small group of reporters. “I’m not saying that I did bad right now, but I do know that my expectations were a lot higher.

“I feel like my attitude wasn’t that great because I don’t really know how to cope with that pressure, so that’s the best that I could have done in this situation.”

The day wasn’t a complete loss for Japan since Kei Nishikori, a bronze medalist in 2016, beat Marcos Giron of the United States 7-6 (5), 3-6, 6-1 to reach the last 16.

Third-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece also defeated an American, Frances Tiafoe, 6-3, 6-4.

And Novak Djokovic added another medal event to his program by entering the mixed doubles draw with Serbian partner Nina Stojanovic.

Seth Wenig/AP

Naomi Osaka, of Japan, above, lost 6-1, 6-4 to Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic in the third round on Tuesday.

Frank Augstein/AP

United States plyers celebrate during a 29-27, 25-22, 25-21 win in a women’s volleyball preliminary round pool B match against China, the defending Olympic champion, on Tuesday in Tokyo.

US women’s volleyball hands China second straight defeat

By Josh Dubow
Associated Press

TOKYO — The expected Olympic showdown between the top two women’s volleyball teams in the world turned out to be a one-sided affair.

The U.S. women swept defending gold medalist China 29-27, 25-22, 25-21 on Tuesday in a pool-play match that left the Americans at the top of Pool B and the Chinese seeking to win their first set of the tournament after two straight sweeps to open the Games.

“When we play them, it’s always a great competition,” U.S. captain Jordan Larson said. “But ultimately, I thought we controlled what we could on our side of the net. I think it put them in a lot of trouble. Really proud of our team for imposing ourselves on them. But we know that the history of China and how they were in Rio, you just never know what could come.”

China was also swept by Turkey in the opener but showed five years ago in Rio de Janeiro how little the pool-play matches can mean after losing three of five of them before rallying to win gold.

That’s similar to what happened in London in 2012 when Brazil finished fourth in its pool before winning gold, as U.S. coach Karch Kiraly was quick to point out.

“It’s not unusual for a team to struggle in preliminary and then catch fire with a key win in the quarterfinals,” he said. “I wouldn’t count China out at all right now. They don’t want to be down 2-0, but that doesn’t mean they’re not capable of doing major damage in this tournament.”

The biggest question for China now is the health of star Zhu Ting. She was subbed out twice in the opening match because of a right wrist injury, the only time Kiraly said he could ever remember the MVP in Rio being a “non-factor” in a match.

She played the entire match on Tuesday with tape on her wrist and led China with 18 points, but it wasn’t nearly enough to overcome an American attack led by first-time Olympian Jordan Thompson.

Stone pursues gold to go with stethoscope

By Jim Vertuno
Associated Press

TOKYO — American rower Gevvie Stone’s goal is to go back to Boston with a new medal to wear with her stethoscope: preferably an Olympic gold medal.

Stone, who won a silver medal in single sculls at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games, has delayed her career as a doctor in emergency room medicine for nearly three years in pursuit of one more chance at Olympic glory.

“I love what I do, but this is it,” a teary-eyed Stone said this week after she and teammate Kristi Wagner rallied late to finish third in a double sculls semifinal to make Wednesday’s medal race. “One more race ... Enjoy every stroke.”

A graduate of Tufts University medical school, the 36-year-old Stone had retired from rowing after the 2016 Games and started her multiyear residency at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. Stone said she loves medicine and the adrenaline rush and chaos of the emergency room that is her calling as a doctor.

But the pull back to the rhythmic speed on the water was too strong to ignore for an athlete with elite rowing in her family history. Her mother was a 1976 Olympian and a two-time medalist at the world championships. So Stone put her residency on hold to get back in the boat.

The decision to keep rowing has meant enduring more aches and pains that came with the rigorous training now that she’s in her mid-30s. And there was some guilt that she wasn’t on the front lines in fighting the coronavirus pandemic that delayed the Tokyo Games for a year.

Stone offered to return to the hospital if needed as the hospitalizations spiked in the spring and summer of 2020. But officials in the residency program, who supported her career pause for the Olympics, didn’t want to risk exposing her to the virus. The American women’s rowing team had already dealt with an outbreak within the team in early 2020.

The Olympics getting postponed for a year also created a time crunch. Stone returns to the residency program on Aug. 9, the day after the Games end. Any more delays and she has to start over.

Stone didn’t make it to Tokyo as originally intended. She was second to Kara Kohler in the single sculls at the U.S. trials in February. Beaten but undeterred in her mission, Stone simply took on a new boat and a new teammate with Wagner.

OLYMPICS

Japan beats US to claim softball gold

Americans settle for silver medal after same result in 2008 Games

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

YOKOHAMA, Japan — Japan won its second straight Olympic softball gold medal, beating the United States 2-0 Tuesday in an emotional repeat of its 2008 victory in Beijing that again left the Americans in tears.

Yukiko Ueno took a one-hitter into the fifth inning, five days after her 39th birthday, and Japan snuffed out an American rally attempt with an acrobatic double play in the sixth inning that will long be replayed.

Japan led 2-0 when Michelle Moultrie singled leading off the sixth off hard-throwing 20-year-old left-hander Miu Goto.

Goto dealt Haylie McCleney her first strikeout of the Olympics with a 69 mph pitch at the hands, then allowed a single to Janie Reed.

With two on and one out, Amanda Chidester lined a rocket to third. The ball bounced off the left wrist of third baseman Yu Yamamoto and ricocheted to perfectly positioned shortstop Mana Atsumi, who stuck out her glove for a backhand spear, then made a Derek Jeter-like jump throw to second baseman Yuka Ichiguchi to double up Moultrie.

Reed then made a leaping catch at the left-field wall to rob Yamato Fujita of a two-run homer in the bottom half.

Ueno (2-0) re-entered in the seventh and retired Valerie Arioto on a flyout, Ali Aguilar on a groundout and Delaney Spaulding on a foul out to the catcher, setting off a celebration.

No. 9 batter Atsumi had a run-scoring infield hit in the fourth inning and Fujita lined an RBI single off Monica Abbott in the fifth in building a 2-0 lead.

MATT SLOCUM/AP

The United States' Ali Aguilar can't get to a single by Japan's Yamato Fujita during their gold medal game Tuesday at the Summer Olympics in Yokohama, Japan.

SUE OGROCKI/AP

Japan celebrate its 2-0 victory after the final out.

Ueno improved to 9-1 in her Olympic career, allowing two hits, striking out five and walking two. Reed tripled off the glove of Eri Yamada and the center-field wall with one out in the first. That was the closest the U.S. came to scoring.

Abbott, relieving a day before her 36th birthday, and 38-year-old U.S. starter Cat Osterman were the last holdovers from the U.S. team that lost to Japan 3-1 in a stinging upset 4,723 days earlier and 1,300 miles distant. Osterman gave up the first two runs of that game and Abbott the last.

While the Americans wore blue shirts and tights in a contrast to the red shirts and shorts of 2008, the result was the same: Japan won its second softball gold rather than the U.S. adding to its victories of 1996, 2000 and 2004.

Ueno allowed two hits, struck out five and walked two in six innings while combining with Goto on a three-hitter.

Osterman, who came out of retirement with the goal of adding a gold medal to the one she earned in 2004, allowed two hits in two scoreless innings. With six straight right-handed hitters due up in the third, U.S. coach Ken Eriksen replaced the left-hander with 28-year-old right-hander Ally Carda (0-1).

Fujita lined a single off the diving attempt of Aguilar at second leading off the fourth inning, was sacrificed to second and took third on a comebacker.

Ichiguchi walked, and Eriksen went to the mound with Atsumi coming up. Carda stayed in, and and Atsumi hit a slow two-hopper to second and slid in ahead of Aguilar's throw as Fujita scored.

Yamamoto singled with two outs in the fifth, and Abbott came in and threw a wild pitch, then allowed Fujita to line a single into right for a 2-0 lead.

No: Biles withdraws after one rotation

"So, I thought it would be better if I took a step back and let these girls go out there and do their job."

Biles spent the final three rotations serving as head cheerleader while Grace McCallum, Sunisa Lee and Jordan Chiles carried on without her. The U.S. drew within eight-tenths of a point through three rotations. The ROC, however, never wavered on floor. And its gymnasts erupted when 21-year-old Angelina Melnikova's score assured it of the top spot on the podium.

The victory came a day after the ROC men's team edged Japan for the top spot in the men's final.

Great Britain edged Italy for bronze.

The U.S. entered the finals hoping to bounce back from a shaky performance in qualifying, when the Americans came in second to the ROC. It marked the first time in 11 years the U.S. found itself looking up at the scoreboard at someone else.

Biles posted on social media Monday that she felt the weight of the world on her shoulders. It affected her practice. It affected her confidence. And when she stepped onto the vault runway, it finally found its way into her performance, too.

Biles was scheduled to do an "Amanar" vault that requires a roundoff back handspring onto the table followed by 2½ twists. Biles instead did just 1½ twists with a big leap forward after landing. She sat down and talked to U.S. team doctor Marcia Faustin, then headed to the back while her teammates moved on to uneven bars without her.

When Biles returned several minutes later, she hugged her teammates and took off her bar grips. And just like that, her night was over.

"It's very uncharacteristic of me," Biles said. "So it just sucks that it happens here at the Olympic Games than have it happen at any other time. But, you know, with the year that it's been, I'm really not surprised."

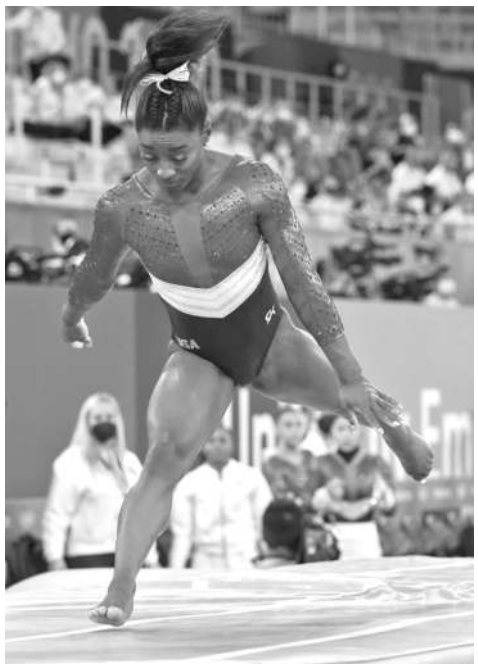
Biles is scheduled to defend her Olympic title in the all-around final on Thursday. She also qualified for all four event finals later in the Games. She said she will regroup on Wednesday before deciding whether to continue.

Biles' abrupt absence forced the Americans to scramble a bit. The finals are a three-up/three-count format, meaning each country puts three of its four athletes up on an apparatus, with all three scores counting.

Chiles stepped in to take Biles' place on uneven bars and balance beam. The 20-year-old who made the team with her steady consistency pulled off a solid bars routine and drilled her balance beam set two days after falling twice on the event.

Thanks in part to a little help from the ROC — which recorded a pair of falls on beam — the U.S. drew within striking distance heading to floor, the final rotation.

Yet the Americans needed to be near perfect to close the gap. It didn't happen. Chiles stumbled to the mat at the end of her second pass, and any chance the U.S. had of chasing down the ROC went right along with it.



GREGORY BULL/AP

Simone Biles takes a big leap foward after landing her vault Tuesday during the women's team finals at the Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

OLYMPICS

ERIC GAY/AP

United States center Brittney Griner grabs a rebound during a women's preliminary round 81-72 defeat of Nigeria on Tuesday in Saitama, Japan. It was the 50th straight Olympic win for the Americans.

US women top Nigeria for 50th straight Olympic win

BY DOUG FEINBERG
Associated Press

SAITAMA, Japan — The U.S. women won, as usual. It just wasn't in the dominant fashion that the Americans are accustomed to.

The winning streak for the world's top-ranked team is now 50 games and counting in Olympic competition. A'ja Wilson scored 19 points and grabbed 13 rebounds in her debut as the Americans beat Nigeria 81-72 on Tuesday in the opener for both teams.

It was the first time that a team had come within single digits of the U.S. since a four-point win over Russia in the semifinals of 2004 Athens Games.

Sue Bird has been a part of the past five Olympics and wasn't too concerned by the final margin.

"You're talking about some of the greatest Olympic teams of all-time," she said of the previous ones that won by double-digits. "I don't know how many teams would beat that Rio team, the London team or the Beijing team. This team is still figuring it out. We'll get there."

The U.S. came to Tokyo coming off two rare exhibition losses in Las Vegas earlier this month. The Americans also beat Nigeria by 31 points in that game.

Diana Taurasi, who was playing in her first game in nearly a month after suffering a hip injury, has competed in the last 33 of those victories to set a record for most games in the Olympics. She showed no ill-effects from the injury that sidelined her for the team's three exhibition games in Las Vegas two weeks ago.

With a roster full of former U.S. college players, Nigeria wasn't intimidated by the Americans. The African country jumped out to an 8-1 lead as the U.S. missed its first four shots and committed four turnovers. The Nigerians were up 20-17 after one quarter and extended the lead to 25-20 before the U.S. took over.

The Americans scored 23 straight points, the first four by Wilson — one of six newcomers on the U.S. roster.

US women draw way to quarterfinals

BY ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

KASHIMA, Japan — The United States did what was necessary to advance at the Tokyo Olympics, it just wasn't exactly the high-flying offensive juggernaut that the Americans are known for.

The U.S. women made it through to the quarterfinals of the women's soccer tournament after a 0-0 draw with Australia on Tuesday in an stadium mainly empty save for a group of Japanese schoolchildren.

The Americans are looking to win a fifth Olympic gold medal in Tokyo. They are also vying to become the first team to win at the Olympics following a World Cup title.

But they've made it hard on themselves at the Tokyo Games. They lost to Sweden 3-0 in their opening match — snapping a 44-game unbeaten streak — before rebounding with a 6-1 victory over New Zealand.

The draw with Australia secured the United States second place in Group G behind Sweden on goal difference. The Americans will face the Netherlands, the top finisher in Group F, in Yokohama on Friday. The game is a rematch of the 2019 World Cup final, which the United States won 2-0.

"It was a tactical decision by (coach Vlatko Andonovski) to shift defensively, a little more conservatively, and really allow them to get impatient, play along and give it back to us," U.S. forward Alex Morgan said.

FERNANDO VERGARA/AP

The United States' Alex Morgan, left, and Australia's Tameka Yallop battle during a 0-0 tie.

Former US Army engineer makes his Olympic rugby debut

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — A former Army specialist made his Olympic debut in a key position for the U.S. rugby team when they took on South Africa on Tuesday.

Cody Melphy, who joined the Army in 2017, was an enlisted bridge engineer and a member of the Army World Class Athlete Program at the start of the year. In February, he finished his enlistment and became a full-time professional rugby player.

The Littleton, Colo., native was only called into the Olympic squad after an injury forced 2016 Olympian Ben Pinkelman to withdraw earlier this month. On July 8, Melphy was named the 13th player in the squad, which meant he could join the team at any time.

That turned out to be the Americans' third pool game against South Africa, the country whose 15-a-side Sprinkboks team won the Rugby World Cup in Japan in 2019.

Running onto the field, the 29-year-old had an "unbelievable feeling of nervousness, adrenaline and, funny enough, calmness," he said after the game.

The playmaker had a big smile on his face when he took the field because, he said, his dreams had officially come true.

"I've trained hard. I knew that I was ready. Just needed to go out and do my job and I'd be all right," he said.

The Americans, who beat Ireland and Kenya on Monday, fell to South Africa 17-12 before narrowly losing their quarterfinal game against Great Britain 26-21.

Melphy's "flyhalf" position is crucial in rugby and akin to a football quarterback.

His role involves receiving the ball from the halfback and distributing it to other backs or moving it upfield himself. At the same time, he must make tackles on defense and kick goals.

Melphy has also become a TikTok sensation since arriving in Japan's capital city. His short videos giving the world an insider's look at the Olympians' lives are garnering millions of views on the social media platform. One video, titled "Things that just make sense in the Olympic Village," had 3.1 million likes, 36,500 shares and 13,600 comments and as of Tuesday evening in Tokyo.

The 5-foot-10, 185-pound back honed his skills while serving in the Army. Melphy didn't deploy to any hotspots during his time in uniform but, in an email before game, said Army life had its challenges.

"I've trained hard. I knew that I was ready."

Cody Melphy
US rugby player and former Army enlisted bridge engineer

"I was able to keep a smile on my face through most it," he said. "Even though I did have to do thousands of pushups for smiling."

The Olympian first played rugby at age 18 after joining a friend's team. He made the All-Army team twice and won "gold" at the U.S. military's multiservice rugby tournament two years in a row.

He was also a member of Life University's Division I national championship winning, 15-a-side team and was selected as an All-American twice in sevens and twice in 15s.

Army service taught Melphy discipline and perseverance, he said.

His message to troops in Japan?

"Thank you for your service," he said in his email. "We appreciate and love you all and we will be representing the flag and our freedoms to the best of our abilities out here in Tokyo. Rock On!"

Melphy isn't the only rugby player in Tokyo for the Olympics with an Army pedigree.

Army Spc. Nana Fa'avesi, 29, of Sacramento, Calif., is a 2016 Olympian who plays prop and came to Japan as an alternate for the U.S. women's sevens team. Army Capt. Kasey McCravey, 27, of Scottsdale, Ariz., is a hooker/flyhalf and also in Japan as an alternate for the women's team. They begin their quest for gold on Thursday.

SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Cody Melphy, a former U.S. Army bridge engineer, breaks a tackle in the Americans' Olympic rugby sevens game against South Africa on Tuesday.

PHOTOS BY FRANCISCO SECO/AP

The United States' Carissa Moore performs on a wave during the gold medal heat in the women's surfing competition at the Summer Olympics in Ichinomiya, Japan.

Surf's up! Moore wins inaugural event for US

BY SALLY HO
Associated Press

ICHINOMIYA, Japan — After a series of underdogs stole the show at the beginning of surfing's historic Olympic debut, two of the sport's most seasoned superstars took home the gold medals.

Carissa Moore of the United States and Italo Ferreira of Brazil became the first Olympic surfing champions on Tuesday, more than a century after the sport first tried to get on the program.

The 28-year-old Moore, the darling child prodigy who could beat the boys and grew up to be the youngest world champion surfer, persevered after struggling in the early heats.

"It's been a crazy couple of days," Moore said. "A little bit of a rollercoaster of emotions just trying to figure out the break, find my rhythm, learning how to trust myself without my family here."

The relatively modest beach break conditions were so unlike the world class waves she's used to as a veteran of the professional tour and at home in Hawaii. By the end, the methodical and well-loved surfer finally got in rhythm with the ocean in time to deliver the kind of standout performance that has defined her career.

The picture-perfect ending even included a rainbow that popped into the sky as Moore, who is the only Native Hawaiian surfer at the Games, shredded waves in the final against South African rival Bianca Buitendag.

Brazil's Italo Ferreira won gold in the men's competition.

Calling it "divine intervention," the 17th-ranked Buitendag won silver after pulling off upset after upset over the three-day competition, starring in some of the contest's biggest moments in her path to the Olympic podium.

She then said she was retiring from the sport.

"I felt like this was the perfect opportunity for closure," the 27-year-old Buitendag said. "I'm ready for the next season of my life."

When the clock ran out in the men's final, Ferreira turned to the ocean, collapsed his hands together in a prayer and wept, nearly knocked over by the waves crashing onto shore as he thanked God for a dominant showing throughout the inaugural contest.

He won his final handily against Kanoa Igarashi of Japan despite crashing through an air to land on a broken board. The incident required a quick board switch on shore near the beginning of the heat, which didn't seem to rattle the man who had so little growing up that he first learned to surf on a cooler.

"I broke my good board on my first wave. That board gives me good speed, the other one is more slow," the 27-year-old Ferreira said. "It's super hard out there, but I knew that there was a lot of opportunities around."

Both Moore and Ferreira will be back on the World Surf League tour next month, with stops in Oaxaca, Mexico, and Teahupo'o, Tahiti. The famous French Polynesia reef break also happens to be the site of the 2024 Olympic surfing contest.

Igarashi, the silver medalist who surfed a career best air that sent him soaring over the water for seven seconds in an earlier heat, couldn't hide his disappointment that he didn't come out on top in the last moments of his Olympic journey.

That homefield advantage proved helpful in the women's event, too, as 20-year-old Amuro Tsuzuki of Japan also earned bronze after winning her heat against Caroline Marks of the United States.

Owen Wright of Australia also won bronze, concluding an extraordinary comeback when he defeated top-ranked surfer Gabriel Medina.

Swimming stunner: Alaskan teen takes gold in breaststroke

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
Associated Press

TOKYO — Alaska is renowned for its majestic natural beauty. The snowy peaks. The glistening glaciers. The sparkling fjords.

An Arctic paradise, for sure.

Swimming?

That's never been much of a thing in the 49th U.S. state. Until now.

Seventeen-year-old Lydia Jacoby pulled off a stunning victory in the women's 100-meter breaststroke on Tuesday, upsetting American teammate and defending champion Lilly King.

Alaska — of all places — has a champion at the pool.

"I was definitely racing for a medal. I knew I had it in me," said Jacoby, who hails from Seward (population: 2,733). "I wasn't really expecting a gold medal, so when I looked up and saw the scoreboard it was insane."

Only a handful of Alaska swimmers had even qualified for the U.S. Olympic trials. Jacoby was the first to ever make the team.

When she touched the wall first, it set off a giddy celebration back home.

"A lot of big-name swimmers come from big, powerhouse clubs," Jacoby said. "Me coming from a small club, in a state with such a small population, really shows everyone that you can do it no matter where you're from."

Jacoby's winning time was 1 minute, 4.95 seconds. Tatjana Schoenmaker of South Africa claimed the silver in 1:05.22, while King gave the Americans another medal by taking the bronze in 1:05.54.

Jacoby's shocking win salvaged what had been a bit of a disappointing morning for the Americans.

Britain went 1-2 in the men's 200 freestyle. Russia did the same in the men's 100 backstroke. And the Australian women claimed their second gold of the Tokyo Games.

Through the first three finals, the U.S. had only managed a pair of bronze medals, losing a men's backstroke race at the Olympics for the first time since 1992.

Then the high schooler came through.

Jacoby was third at the turn, trailing Schoenmaker and King. But, with her head bobbing furiously out of the water, the teenager surged past King and glided to the wall just ahead of the South African.

The U.S. men have always had plenty of confidence in the backstroke, but one of the sport's longest streaks finally ended Tuesday.

Russian swimmers swept the top two spots in the 100-meter back, with Evgeny Rylov claiming the gold medal in 51.98 and teammate Kliment Kolesnikov taking the silver in 52.00.

Defending Olympic champion Ryan Murphy settled for the bronze in 52.19.

Amazingly, it was the first backstroke defeat for the U.S. men at the Olympics since the 1992 Barcelona Games.

They won 12 straight golds over the last six Olympics, including Murphy's sweep of the 100 and 200 back at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

World record-holder Kaylee McKeown gave the Aussie women another gold medal with a victory in the women's 100 backstroke, setting an Olympic record.

Her winning time of 57.47 was just off the world mark she set this year of 57.45. The silver went to Canadian Kylie Masse in 57.72, while former world record-holder Smith was relegated to bronze at 58.05.

Britain's sweep in the 200 free was led by Tom Dean capturing the gold in 1 minute, 44.22 seconds, while teammate Duncan Scott picked up the silver at 1:44.26. The bronze went to Brazilian Fernando Scheffer in 1:44.66.

PETR DAVID JOSEK / AP

The United States' Lydia Jacoby reacts after winning the final of the women's 100-meter breaststroke Tuesday during the Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

SPORTS

Capping the comeback

Moore's grand slam helps Mariners rally from 7-0 deficit ›› MLB, Page 18

OLYMPICS

The Russian Olympic Committee's women's gymnastics team, from left, Liliia Akhaimova, Angelina Melnikova, Viktoriia Listunova and Vladislava Urazova, celebrate winning the gold medal at the Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

NATACHA PISARENKO/AP

No Biles and no gold

Top US gymnast withdraws due to medical issue, ROC claims first in team competition

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

TOKYO — Simone Biles came to Tokyo as the star of the U.S. Olympic movement and perhaps the Games themselves. She convinced herself she was prepared for the pressure. That she was ready for the spotlight.

Only, as the women's gymnastics team final approached on Tuesday night, something felt off for the American star. So rather than push through the doubts that crept into her head as she's done so many times before, she decided enough was enough.

Biles withdrew from the competition following one rotation, a stunning decision that opened the door for the Russian Olympic Committee team to surge to gold. Her American teammates held on for silver after the 24-year-old realized following a shaky vault she wasn't in the right headspace to compete.

"I didn't want to go into any of the other events second-guessing myself," Biles said.

SEE NO ON PAGE 21

Inside: American takes gold in surfing, Page 23

GREGORY BULL/AP

Simone Biles withdrew from the team event due to a medical issue. Her status for the all-around and individual competitions is uncertain.

Grizzlies, Pelicans trade multiple players

›› Briefs, Page 17

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