

STARS AND STRIPES®

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy cancels fall E-4 exams amid virus

BY BRIAN FERGUSON

Stars and Stripes

The Navy has canceled petty officer 3rd class advancement exams for the second time this year to limit exposure to the coronavirus, a service statement said.

Instead, sailors will be selected for advancement from E-3 to E-4 this fall based on a scoring formula that is heavily based on job performance but also looks at other criteria, the statement said.

The decision to cancel fall E-4 exams was made because the advancement tests are normally taken in large groups aboard ships or in packed gymnasiums, where social distancing can't be enforced.

In the method that will replace the tests,

the average of annual evaluation scores in rank count for 72% of the overall calculation. Awards, previous pass-but-not-advance points, time in rank and education will also be factored.

The same evaluation method was used in the spring — when advancement exams were first canceled because of the virus — to determine promotions, the statement said.

The new advancement policy was developed “to ensure the safety of our sailors during the COVID-19 outbreak, while still ensuring that all the sailors we advance have the proficiency, expertise and demonstrated capability to lead at the next level,” Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, Jr., the

service's top personnel officer, said in the statement.

Commands of active-duty and full-time support sailors have until Sept. 25 to finalize enlisted advancement worksheets, Navy officials said. Selected reserve cycle worksheets must be completed by Sept. 30, they said.

The changes affect active, full-time support and selected reserve sailors who are not in the prior service reenlistment eligibility reserve program.

E-5 and E-6 exams will be held separately throughout September, the statement said. The Navy said in the spring that those tests could be administered in smaller groups with appropriate social distancing.

Global cases of coronavirus surpass 20 million

Associated Press

ROME — The number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide topped 20 million, more than half of them from the United States, India and Brazil, as Russia on Tuesday became the first country to approve a vaccine against the virus.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that one of his two adult daughters had already been inoculated with the cleared vaccine, which he described as effective.

“She's feeling well and has a high number of antibodies,” Putin said.

Russia has reported more than 890,000 cases, the fourth-highest total in the world, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally that also showed total confirmed cases globally surpassing 20 million.

It took about six months to get to 10 million cases after the virus first appeared in central China late last year. It took just over six weeks for that number to double.

An AP analysis of data through Aug. 9 showed that together, the U.S., India and Brazil accounted for approximately two-thirds of all reported infections since the world hit 15 million coronavirus cases on July 22.

As a result, the race to develop and deliver a vaccine has topped the global health care and geopolitical agenda, even as the

United Nations has warned that any vaccine must be safe and made available to all, not just the wealthy.

Putin said the Russian vaccine underwent the necessary tests and offered a lasting immunity from the coronavirus. But scientists at home and abroad have warned that rushing to start using the vaccine before Phase 3 trials — which normally last for months and involve thousands of people — could backfire.

“The point is not to be first with a vaccine,” U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said Tuesday during a visit to Taiwan when asked about the Russian vaccine. “The point is to have a vaccine that is safe and effective for the American people and the people of the world.”

The U.S. has a half-dozen vaccine candidates under development, China has begun inoculations with an experimental vaccine and European countries have several trials underway.

In Europe, countries that appeared to have gotten their outbreaks under control during nationwide lockdowns and lifted many public restrictions worked to prevent a resurgence of the virus. Finland joined France and Germany in announcing it would test travelers from at-risk countries upon arrival.

Spain, which along with Italy was hardest hit when the virus first exploded on the continent, now has the most confirmed cases in western Europe at nearly 323,000. The number of new cases has risen steadily in Spain since its strict, three-month lockdown ended June 21, reaching 1,486 on Monday.

In Greece, which imposed strict lockdown measures early and kept its reported cases low during the height of the European epidemic, the government announced new measures Monday to prevent an outbreak. It ordered bars, restaurants and cafes in several regions to shut between midnight and 7 a.m.

Outside Europe, infection rates are exponentially higher. The number of new cases reported daily continues to rise in India, hitting a rolling seven-day average of 58,768. In the U.S., which so far has more than 5 million confirmed cases, the daily average has decreased since July 22nd, but remains high at over 53,000. South Africa has more than a half-million cases.

In the 45 days it took reported coronavirus cases worldwide to double to 20 million, the number of reported virus deaths climbed to 736,191 from 499,506, according to the Johns Hopkins count, an average of more than 5,200 a day.

Database offers child care options for military families

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Military families needing hourly child care have a new, free option for finding providers, the Pentagon announced Monday.

Military OneSource, a Defense Department website that provides services and resources to the military, is offering access to a national online service that allows families to find, hire and pay for care, according to a Pentagon statement.

Access to child care is a challenge for military families because of frequent moves, limited availability at their installations and surrounding communities, and irregular work hours.

This option is in addition to the Defense Department's own child care system, which can be accessed at MilitaryChild-Care.com.

Military families can search and sign up for full-time and part-time care at DOD facilities or for home-based care.

"We are committed to taking care of our service mem-

bers and military families, and understand that families may need assistance with their hourly care needs," Kim Joiner, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, said in the Pentagon statement.

The database service usually charges for a monthly subscription but is being provided free to "eligible military families" through Military OneSource, according to the Pentagon. Families can sign up for their subscription through their Military OneSource account, which will provide a member code.

The Pentagon statement and Military OneSource did not include the name of the database or how much the service could be costing the Defense Department.

The database has more than a million caregivers who offer hourly, flexible and on demand child care, according to Military OneSource. Families can find providers and review their background checks, but interviews can also take place through the service.

Military post offices set for new customs forms policy

BY DAVID EDGE
Stars and Stripes

Expect a line to use newly arrived customs form kiosks at post offices on bases in Europe and the Pacific, postal officials said ahead of a policy taking effect Thursday that bars acceptance of handwritten forms.

Use of the kiosk, which includes a computer, printer and a scale, is one of three ways service members and other Defense Department personnel can send packages from overseas bases to the U.S. or other countries under the new rules, postal officials said.

The U.S. Postal Service began transitioning to electronic customs forms in March due

to international regulations but granted military post offices an extension through Thursday, the service said on its website.

Customers can still fill out handwritten customs worksheets when they mail their packages, but postal workers will need to type in all of the details to create electronic labels. Customers can instead use the kiosks to print labels, which William Hilsher, postal and policy chief for U.S. Army Europe, said should be in place at all USAREUR post offices by Thursday.

Some post offices overseas, such as Osan Air Base in South Korea and Sasebo Naval Base in Japan, have had their kiosks running for months.

Eisenhower group returns to Va. after 7 months at sea

The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower returned home to Norfolk on Sunday following a seven-month deployment that included breaking the Navy's record for most days at sea.

The coronavirus made stops in foreign countries too risky, officials said, so the aircraft carrier had to keep moving.

The Eisenhower's strike group includes about 6,000 total sailors. There are five ships in addition to the carrier. The guided-missile cruiser San Jacinto sailed into Naval Station Norfolk on Sunday as well. Cruiser Vella Gulf and guided-missile destroyers Truxtun and James E. Williams arrived Monday. The Stout, another destroyer, remains deployed.

More than 1,800 aviators from nine squadrons under Carrier Air Wing Three went home to Naval Air Station Oceana and elsewhere last week.

The strike group had left in late January for a final certification exercise and went straight from there to its deployment, instead of coming home first as is customary. That was part of a Defense Department strategy known as "dynamic force deployment," which is meant to keep adversaries on their toes. The Virginian-Pilot reported at the time.

Since then, sailors have operated in the 5th and 6th fleets — the Middle East and Europe, respectively. Each ship sailed more than 60,000 nautical miles, the Navy said in a news release. They partnered with the USS Harry S. Truman and French carrier Charles de Gaulle for dual carrier operations.

A few months ago, the USS

Eisenhower got Naval History and Heritage Command to recognize its crew with a new title, "Iron Shellbacks." That was for their crossing of the equator line in May following over 100 days at sea without port stops.

The ship, along with the San Jacinto, eventually broke the Navy's record of 160 consecutive days at sea. The Ike ended up at 206.

Eisenhower's Capt. Kyle Higgins said at the time the milestone was "not one that I think we really wanted but one that the circumstances of the world thrust upon us. And we embraced it with style."

Crew members also had to improvise to make more than 500 serious equipment and systems repairs that would normally happen at the depot level or with technical help coming on board.

During their deployment, the Vella Gulf, James E. Williams, Stout and Truxtun participated in Operation Sentinel, the Navy said, "providing freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce in and out of the heavily transited Strait of Hormuz and Strait of Bab el Mandeb."

Aviators with Carrier Air Wing Three completed 10,466 rotary and fixed wing sorties, 7,751 traps and about 21,995 flight hours.

"The professionalism of my aircrew and the sailors sweating through seven months of no port visit operations was simply eye-watering," Capt. Trevor Estes, commander of the air wing, said in a statement. "I truly hope that every member of this team has the opportunity they deserve to relax and enjoy time with family and friends post deployment."

Seattle police chief resigns after cuts to force, budget

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Seattle's police chief says she is stepping down, a move made public the same day the City Council approved reducing the department by as many as 100 officers through layoffs and attrition.

Carmen Best, the city's first Black police chief, said in a letter to the department that her retirement will be effective Sept. 2 and the mayor has appointed Deputy Chief Adrian Diaz as the interim chief, KING-TV reported Monday.

"I am confident the department will make it through these difficult times," Best said in the letter.

In an email to police, Mayor Jenny Durkan said she accepted Best's decision "with a very heavy heart."

"I regret deeply that she concluded that the best way to serve the city and help the department was a change in leadership, in the hope that would change the dynamics to move forward with the City Council," Durkan wrote.

The mayor picked Best in July of 2018 to lead the department. She had been serving as interim chief.

A military veteran, Best joined the department in 1992 and had worked in a wide variety of roles, including patrol, media relations, narcotics and operations and deputy chief.

Cuts to the department have been supported by demonstrators who have marched in the city following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, but strongly opposed by Durkan and Best.

Measures that would cut less than \$4 million of the department's \$400 million annual budget this year passed out of committee unanimously last week. On Monday, only council member Kshama Sawant voted against the budget package, saying it does not do enough to defund the police.

"It is unfortunate Council has refused to engage in a collaborative process to work with the mayor, Chief Best, and community members to develop a budget and policies that respond to community needs while accounting for — not just acknowledging — the significant labor and legal implications involved in transforming the Seattle Police Department," Durkan said in a statement after the vote.

Hundreds ransack Chicago businesses after shooting

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Hundreds of people descended on downtown Chicago early Monday following a police shooting on the city's South Side, with vandals smashing the windows of dozens of businesses and making off with merchandise, cash machines and anything else they could carry, police said.

Police Superintendent David Brown told reporters that the Sunday afternoon shooting of the man who had opened fire on officers apparently prompted a social media post that urged people to form a car caravan and converge on the business and shopping district.

Some 400 additional officers were dispatched to the area after the department spotted the post. Over several hours, police made more than 100 arrests and 13 officers were injured, including one who was struck in the head with a bottle, Brown said.

Brown dismissed any suggestion that the chaos was part of an organized protest of the shooting, calling it "pure criminality" that included occupants of a vehicle opening fire on police who were arresting a man they spotted carrying a cash register.

No officers were wounded by gunfire, but a security guard and a civilian were hospitalized in critical condition after being shot, and five guns were recovered, he said.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot agreed that the melee had nothing to do with a protest. "This was straight-up felony criminal conduct," she said. "This was an assault on our city."

Further ratcheting up the tensions in the city was a video circulating on Facebook that falsely claimed that Chicago police had shot and killed a 15-year-old boy. Posted at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, the video shows upset residents confronting officers near the scene where police shot and wounded an adult suspect they said had fired at them that day. By Monday morning, the footage had been watched nearly 100,000 times.

Latrell Allen, 20, was charged with attempted murder Monday for allegedly firing on officers, according to Chicago police. Officers returned fire, wounding the man, who was taken to a hospital for treatment. He was expected to recover. Brown said the man had a long criminal history, including arrests for domestic battery and child endangerment. A gun was recovered at the scene, he said.

Stores miles from downtown were also ransacked, their parking lots littered with glass and boxes that once contained television sets and other electronics.

Brown said the police department would maintain a huge presence in the downtown area indefinitely, telling reporters that all days off had been canceled until further notice.

Portland protesters rally as activist's arrest draws ire

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — The arrest during protests in Portland of a Black woman who became a leading activist in the racial justice movement after she was assaulted by a white supremacist three years ago has galvanized local and national Black Lives Matter groups.

More demonstrations were planned in the city Monday night, and authorities declared

one outside the North Precinct an unlawful assembly, ordering everyone to leave. Portland has seen more than two months of often violent, nightly protests since George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis.

Authorities said Demetria Hester, 46, won't be charged following her arrest early Monday. Hester had been booked on suspicion of disorderly conduct and interfering with a police officer

during the protest that began Sunday night. Hester's arrest drew a sharp rebuke from national Black Lives Matter activists, who are increasingly focusing on demonstrations in Oregon's largest city.

After her release, Hester said at a news conference that she would keep protesting and joined others in announcing plans for a fundraiser to send Black mothers to Washington.

Hester gained prominence in 2017 when she was assaulted by a white supremacist while riding a light-rail train. The man who attacked Hester, Jeremy Christian, stabbed two men to death the following night and critically injured a third man when they came to the defense of two Black women — one of them wearing a Muslim head-covering — who were being harassed by Christian.

Pelosi holds firm in virus relief bill talks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Speaker Nancy Pelosi is not about to blink.

The Democratic leader has been here before, negotiating a deal with the White House to save the U.S. economy, and lessons from the Great Recession are now punctuating the coronavirus talks. With Republicans again balking at big government bailouts, the Democrats believe they have the leverage, forcing President Donald Trump into a politically risky standoff over help for millions of Americans.

“It’s impossible to know whether she has overplayed her hand until we see if there is a COVID package,” said Michael Steel, a former top aide to then-Speaker John Boehner.

Monday brought no new talks between Trump’s team and ne-

gotiators on Capitol Hill as the president tries a go-it-alone strategy. Over the weekend, he launched a series of executive actions that give the appearance of a White House taking charge but may end up providing little help for ordinary Americans.

The president’s orders seek to reverse the devastating fallout from unemployment assistance, eviction protections and other aid that has expired. But there are limits, and legal pitfalls, in trying to make an end run around the legislative branch.

Pelosi dismissed Trump’s proposals Monday as an “illusion” in an interview on MSNBC.

Trump acknowledged he’s still quite open to a deal with Congress.

“So now Schumer and Pelosi want to meet to make a deal.

Amazing how it all works, isn’t it,” he tweeted Monday. “They know my phone number.”

With Trump now having played his hand, however, Democrats appear in no rush to show theirs in turn.

It will take days, if not weeks, to sort out what Trump intended with his executive actions, as guidance from the administration is sent to the states. Already, the Department of Labor is telling governors that Trump’s promised \$400 weekly jobless benefit boost will actually amount to just \$300 if states are unable to provide the rest, according to information obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer dismissed Trump’s administrative actions as “all sizzle and no steak,” held together by “spit and glue.”

In the meantime, countless

Americans are already feeling the squeeze. What had been a \$600 weekly unemployment benefit boost is gone, as are federal eviction protections. Schools that had been eyeing federal help now face the prospect of reopening on shoestring budgets.

The virus shows no signs of easing, with more than 5 million infections and 160,000 deaths nationwide and stark new evidence that many Americans’ jobs may never return.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, on a conference call with governors Monday, said that action by Congress remains the administration’s “first choice.”

Mnuchin and Vice President Mike Pence urged the governors to reach out to congressional leaders and push for legislation, according to audio of the call obtained by AP.

Shooting near White House stops Trump’s TV briefing

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A uniformed Secret Service officer shot and wounded a man during a confrontation near the White House that led to President Donald Trump being abruptly escorted out of a briefing room during a televised news conference Monday, authorities said.

The White House complex was not breached and no one under Secret Service protection was in danger, said Tom Sullivan, chief of the Secret Service Uniformed Division.

The name of the man, 51, and his condition were not released by Sullivan. The District of Columbia fire department said the man suffered serious or possibly critical injuries.

Sullivan said the man had claimed he was armed, moved aggressively toward the officer and appeared ready to fire before the officer shot him once. Sullivan did not address whether the man had indeed been armed.

Law enforcement officials were trying to determine a motive and authorities were investigating whether the man had a history of mental illness.

Trump had just begun a coronavirus briefing when a U.S. Secret Service agent escorted him from the briefing room. The president returned minutes later, saying there had been a “shooting” outside the White House that was “under control.”

Trump said the agent had escorted him to the Oval Office. The White House was placed on lockdown following the incident.

Both the suspect and the officer were taken to the hospital. Sullivan released no information about the officer and would not answer questions at a news conference near the scene.

An internal review of the shooting by the Secret Service was underway, and the Metropolitan Police Department was also investigating, a standard protocol.

Derecho’s winds devastate swath of Midwestern states

Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa — A rare storm packing 100-mph winds and with power similar to an inland hurricane swept across the Midwest, blowing over trees, flipping vehicles, causing widespread property damage and leaving hundreds of thousands of people without power as it moved through Chicago and into Indiana and Michigan.

The storm known as a derecho lasted several hours Monday as it tore from eastern Nebraska across Iowa and parts of Wisconsin and Illinois, had the wind speed of a major hurricane and likely caused more widespread damage than a normal tornado, said Patrick Marsh, science support chief at the National Weather Service’s Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla.

In northern Illinois, the National Weather Service reported a wind gust of 92 mph near Dixon, about 100 miles

west of Chicago, and the storm left downed trees and power lines that blocked roadways in Chicago and its suburbs. After leaving Chicago, the most potent part of the storm system moved over north central Indiana by late afternoon.

“It ramped up pretty quick” around 7 a.m. Central time in Eastern Nebraska. I don’t think anybody expected widespread winds approaching 100, 110 mph,” Marsh said.

A derecho is not quite a hurricane, as it has no eye and its winds come across in a line. But the damage it is likely to do spread over such a large area is more like an inland hurricane than a quick, more powerful tornado, Marsh said. He compared it to a devastat

Several people were injured and widespread property damage was reported throughout Marshall County in central Iowa after 100-mph winds swept through the area, said its homeland security coordinator, Kim Elder.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 injured when boat explodes on river

OR PORTLAND — Two people were injured in an explosion aboard a boat on the Columbia River along the Washington-Oregon border.

KOIN-TV reported that a Vancouver fire boat responded to reports of the explosion shortly after 10 a.m. Sunday. Emergency crews extinguished the blaze on the 19-foot ski boat and burning fuel that was on the water.

The two victims suffered burns and other injuries that were not considered life threatening. The cause was under investigation.

Dog killed rabid fox on family's property

NC DALLAS — A 1-year-old pit bull and a rabid fox got into a tussle that ended up killing the fox after the animal appeared on the dog's owners' property in North Carolina.

The incident happened Thursday in Dallas, about 25 miles west of Charlotte, news outlets reported. State health officials confirmed two days later that the fox's remains tested positive for rabies, the Gaston County Police Department in a news release.

The pit bull was up to date on her vaccinations for rabies, police said. She also received a rabies booster shot.

Medics OK after thief charges with machete

MS TUPELO — A woman in Mississippi is accused of attempting to steal an ambulance and charging a paramedic with a machete.

The suspect began driving the vehicle Saturday night in

Tupelo as medics were attending to a patient near the ambulance, the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal reported.

A paramedic was able to reach into the ambulance and turn off the engine, stopping the woman from driving it. She then exited the vehicle and charged a medic with a machete before running away, said Tupelo police spokesperson Capt. Chuck McDougald.

The suspect was captured soon after. There were no injuries, the newspaper reported. The woman faces misdemeanor charges. Authorities did not immediately identify her.

Authorities work to find escaped chimpanzees

MO JEFFERSON COUNTY — Authorities are working to recapture two chimpanzees that escaped from a sanctuary in eastern Missouri.

At least one of the two escaped chimps had been tranquilized by Sunday afternoon, while the other one was contained within a perimeter set up by Jefferson County sheriff's deputies and animal control personnel.

Sheriff's office spokesman Grant Bissell told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch the plan was to tranquilize the chimps and then return them to the sanctuary that is about 35 miles southwest of St. Louis near the town of Festus. Bissell said authorities have some experience dealing with chimps because one of these same chimpanzees escaped from the sanctuary just a few weeks ago.

Serial bank robber returns after 4 years

MD POTOMAC — Police in Maryland said they arrested an aging, serial bank robber who resurfaced after apparently being

silent for four years.

The Washington Post reported that police in Montgomery County arrested James Clyde Wersick, 71, on Tuesday after authorities said he robbed a PNC branch in Potomac.

Police said that Wersick robbed a string of banks between 2012 and 2016 and took more than \$50,000. He faces 16 felony counts.

His attorney during a bail review, Selena Alonzo, said that Wersick is a master electrician whose work had been drying up because of the coronavirus pandemic. She added that he suffers from chronic diabetes and colitis. Detectives said that Wersick told them in an interview that he was hungry and had bills to pay.

Man seeking pizza drives into pond, dies

FL STUART — A Florida man died after driving into a pond as a deputy tried to pull him over early Sunday.

The Martin County Sheriff's Office reported that Timothy Joseph Brunning, 26, of Stuart, was driving at a high rate of speed when a deputy attempted to make a traffic stop. But Brunning drove through a cul-de-sac and into a pond, the sheriff's office said in a Facebook post.

Bunning died while still inside the vehicle. A passenger was able to free himself and told investigators that the two of them were out earlier, went home and then decided to go out and get pizza. The passenger said he urged Brunning to slow down before the crash.

Man accused of driving impaired for 14th time

NM FARMINGTON — A Kirtland man is accused of driving impaired for the 14th time after being pulled

over recently with a 30-pack of beer in his vehicle, authorities said.

Farmington police said Anthony Chee, 46, is facing a felony count of aggravated DWI. He's also facing misdemeanor counts of driving while his license is revoked, failure to maintain traffic lane, improper turning at intersection and no seat belts.

Semi truck carrying honey overturns, spills

IN INDIANAPOLIS — Crews were cleaning up a sticky mess Sunday after a semi truck carrying honey overturned on an Indianapolis highway.

The incident happened around 8 a.m. Sunday on the ramp leading from Interstate 70 eastbound to Interstate 65 northbound, according to authorities.

Indiana State Police Sgt. John Perrine said the driver wasn't injured.

Bouncer charged after patron gets brain injury

GA ST. SIMONS ISLAND — A bar bouncer in coastal Georgia has been charged with aggravated battery after punching a patron so hard he was hospitalized with a brain injury.

A Glynn County police report said Randall Collins was jailed after a fight broke out at closing time at Brogen's South pub and restaurant on St. Simons Island. The bouncer told police he was trying to get customers to leave when Elijah Mukes began an argument and hit him with a beer bottle, The Brunswick News reported. Witnesses said there was more fighting outside and police found Mukes lying on the ground at about 2 a.m. Monday.

From wire reports

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Reporting
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College football coaches face uncertainty

Associated Press

College football coaches are facing the daunting challenge of getting their players to maintain the required focus to prepare for season openers when the prevailing question swirling around the sport is when, or if, the season will even be played because of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.

Preparation is a regimented endeavor. Practice periods are measured on a clock on the field, whistles signal the time to hustle from one drill to another. And uncertainty is a formidable opponent to the process.

Virginia coach Bronco Mendenhall said it adds an “emotional drain” to the rigor of weight lifting and fitness, film study and psychological preparedness.

“With so many variances on the outside of start, stop schedule, new schedule, continued start, stop, there’s an existing emotional drain and distraction that is very difficult in terms of managing the external environment that does spill over,” Mendenhall said Monday on a

Zoom call with reporters.

Virginia, like many schools with recently revised schedules, has just started practice. But Syracuse coach Dino Babers has a different take, saying team workouts seem to provide relief.

“The effort, based off all the stuff that’s gone on, I almost feel like it’s been a release that they can actually lose themselves and do something that they really enjoy with a bunch of guys that are all COVID-free and running around and having fun,” Babers said on Zoom.

West Virginia coach Neal Brown agrees.

“You see guys, their demeanors have changed,” he said. “They have something to look forward to. Our guys have new energy when they’re out there. They’re able to get off their phones. They’re able to get away from all the uncertainty and they’re really going to do what they love to do. So that’s been a positive experience and I hope it continues.”

The Mountaineers, Brown said, have no current COVID-19 infections.

Army coach Jeff Monken prefers his team focus on when, not if, games are played.

“We don’t know who the opponent’s going to be, we don’t know what time it’s going to be, what day it’s going to be, but eventually they’re going to say let’s play ball and when we do our guys want to be ready,” Monken said, also on Zoom. “So we’re just completely focusing on preparation and not worrying about the rest of it.”

The Black Knights’ biggest challenge might be finding opponents. Their only confirmed home game is Nov. 7 against Air Force. The other five scheduled visitors have canceled.

Whatever their take on the situation, coaches at the top levels of college football are facing the distraction challenges. Louisville coach Scott Satterfield refers to it as “the elephant in the room.”

The issue was highlighted Saturday when the Mid-American Conference became the first Football Bowl Subdivision league to cancel its fall season. Monday night saw the Mountain West Conference also can-

cel its fall sports.

Connecticut, Massachusetts and Old Dominion have also canceled, bringing to 15 the number of schools at the top level to forgo the fall, along with numerous conferences one step down in the Football Championship Subdivision.

“What we understand is that the ACC is moving forward,” Satterfield said Monday. “And we’re relying on our medical group that’s over the ACC and what they are projecting to us is that we’re moving forward with everything. And so that’s where we are today.”

“We know how things change and how fluid it is. But that’s what we are.”

Brown, at West Virginia, hopes teams will be competing soon.

“I think we can make it work in the fall. I think it’s doable,” he said. “I think we can do it in a safe manner. I think the biggest question is — and this is something that people aren’t talking about — what’s the plan if we don’t play?”

President, senator, players push for having season

Associated Press

President Donald Trump on Monday joined a U.S. senator and a number of coaches calling to save the college football season from a pandemic-forced shutdown as supporters pushed the premise that the players are safer because of their sport.

There was speculation two of the five most powerful conferences — the Big Ten and the Pac-12 — might call off their seasons and explore the possibility of spring football.

The Mountain West became the second conference in the NCAA’s Football Bowl Subdivision to do just that, joining the Mid-American Conference in giving up hope on playing any sports in the first semester. Back east, Old Dominion canceled fall sports, too, becoming

the first school in college football’s highest tier to break from its league; the rest of Conference USA is going forward with plans to play.

On Tuesday, Massachusetts canceled its fall football season.

UMass is an independent in football and its decision affects only that sport. Most of UMass’ athletic teams compete in the Atlantic 10.

A Big Ten spokesman said no votes on fall sports had been taken by its presidents and chancellors as of Monday afternoon. The conference’s athletic directors were scheduled to meet later in the day, but it’s the university presidents who will have the final say on whether football is played. In the Pac-12, presidents were scheduled to meet Tuesday, a person fa-

miliar with the meeting told AP on the condition of anonymity because the meeting was not being made public.

The powerful Southeastern Conference made clear it was not ready to shutter its fall season.

“Best advice I’ve received since COVID-19: ‘Be patient. Take time when making decisions. This is all new & you’ll gain better information each day,’” SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey posted on Twitter. “Can we play? I don’t know. We haven’t stopped trying.”

A growing number of athletes have spoken out about saving the season, with Clemson star quarterback Trevor Lawrence among a group posting to Twitter with the hashtag #WeWantToPlay. Trump threw his support behind them Monday.

“The student-athletes have been working too hard for their season to be cancelled,” the president tweeted.

Nebraska coach Scott Frost made similar claims and said if the Big Ten doesn’t play, that might not stop the Cornhuskers.

Sen. Ben Sasse, a Nebraska Republican, picked up on the safer-with-football theme in a letter to the presidents and chancellors of the Big Ten.

“Life is about tradeoffs. There are no guarantees that college football will be completely safe — that’s absolutely true; it’s always true,” he wrote. “But the structure and discipline of football programs is very likely safer than what the lived experience of 18- to 22-year-olds will be if there isn’t a season.”

Trout's 2 HRs rally Angels

Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Mike Trout is beginning to believe there might be something to the notion of having added power after the birth of a child.

The reigning AL MVP has certainly been on a tear since son Beckham was born. Trout homered twice Monday night, including a tiebreaking shot in the eighth inning, as the Los Angeles Angels rallied from an early five-run deficit for a 10-9 victory that snapped the Oakland Athletics' nine-game winning streak.

"People ask me about this Dad power. I guess it is a thing," Trout said. "There's nothing like being a Dad."

With three hits in the series opener, Trout is 11-for-30 with six home runs and 11 RBIs in the past seven games. He rejoined the team in Seattle on Aug. 4 after his wife, Jessica, gave birth to Beckham on July 30.

"I am a little more relaxed. Leading up to it I was extremely worried about the coronavirus," Trout said. "I didn't want to have it and come home. But we have been keeping it safe in the Trouthold and everyone in the organization has

been doing a good job."

Anthony Rendon and Shohei Ohtani also homered for the Angels.

Trout's solo drive off Yusmeiro Petit (1-1) in the eighth helped Los Angeles stop a three-game skid. It was the 20th multihomer game of Trout's career, which tied Tim Salmon and Vladimir Guerrero for the franchise record.

"We had a rough weekend. We weren't doing our jobs when we had our chances," Trout said. "But this is a new homestand and we got a huge win against an Oakland team that was coming in hot."

Los Angeles trailed 9-4 in the fourth before Trout began the rally with a two-run drive into the Angels' bullpen in left field. Ohtani had an RBI double in the inning to bring them to 9-7 and then tied it with a two-run homer to center in the sixth.

It was Ohtani's 44th career home run, which tied Tadahito Iguchi for fourth in the majors by a Japanese-born player. The Angels' bullpen, which has struggled this season, allowed only two hits over the final five innings.

Briefly

Stroman to opt out of season

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Marcus Stroman's recovery from a torn left calf muscle was almost complete, and he was in line to possibly make his season debut for the New York Mets next week against the Miami Marlins.

But the idea of traveling to one of the country's coronavirus hot spots played a factor in Stroman's decision Monday to opt out of the 2020 season.

"Obviously, you see the Cardinals, the Marlins, you see spikes everywhere in the country, you see protocols not being handled properly from citizens everywhere," Stroman said during a Zoom call. "You see us going to Florida soon. That was a big discussion I had with my family"

Laureano said Astros' coach goaded him

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Oakland outfielder Ramon Laureano says Houston Astros hitting coach Alex Cintron made a crude remark about his mother that prompted a benches-clearing incident Sunday, and Athletics manager Bob Melvin wants Cintron punished harshly by Major League Baseball.

In other baseball news:

■ Indians right-hander Mike Clevinger won't make his scheduled start against the Cubs after Cleveland learned he joined rotation-mate Zach Plesac in violating COVID-19 protocols by going out after a game Saturday in Chicago. Plesac was forced to travel home separately from the club Sunday, while Clevinger flew home with teammates without disclosing that he had been with Plesac.

Cleveland said Clevinger will be quarantined and tested until he registers two negative results in 72 hours.

MLB roundup

Nats' Cabrera clobbers his former team

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Asdrubal Cabrera went 4-for-4 with two homers, two doubles and five RBIs, tormenting his former team again as the Washington Nationals routed the New York Mets 16-4 on Monday.

Juan Soto and Trea Turner homered in the third inning for the Nationals, who scored just 11 runs in their previous five games. Cabrera, who played in 374 games for the Mets from 2016-18, became the first player to go 4-for-4 with four extra-base hits against a former team since Johnny Cooney of the Brooklyn Dodgers did it versus the Boston Bees in 1937, according to STATS. Cabrera is batting .452 with three homers and 11 RBIs in eight games against New York since Washington signed him last August.

Phillies 13, Braves 8: Didi Gregorius hit a grand slam, Bryce Harper blasted a three-run shot and host Philadelphia got Aaron Nola his first win in

nearly a year.

Nola (1-1) allowed one run, two hits and struck out 10 in eight innings. The ace right-hander was 0-5 in nine starts since his last win at Boston on August 20, 2019.

Padres 2, Dodgers 1: Eric Hosmer singled in the go-ahead run with two outs in the sixth inning, and San Diego won at Los Angeles in the series opener.

Joc Pederson bobbled the ball on Hosmer's hit to left and couldn't attempt a throw as Trent Grisham scored from second.

Astros 6, Giants 4: Lance McCullers Jr. pitched no-hit ball into the seventh inning, Michael Brantley and Carlos Correa drove in two runs each and host Houston snapped a five-game skid.

Rays 8, Red Sox 7: Kevin Kiermaier hit a tiebreaking, two-run double in the seventh inning, Manuel Margot had four hits and Tampa Bay won at Boston.

Kiermaier's opposite-field line drive off reliever Jeffrey Springs (0-1) rolled all the way to the wall in left-center field. Yoshi Tsutsugo and Margot scored after both singled to start the inning.

Twins 4, Brewers 2: Eddie Rosario hit a grand slam, Randy Dobnak pitched five strong innings and Minnesota won at Milwaukee to end a four-game skid.

Diamondbacks 12, Rockies 8: Kole Calhoun hit a leadoff homer and a two-run double to lead Arizona's 18-hit outburst at Colorado.

Tigers 5, White Sox 1: Jacoby Jones hit an inside-the-park home run and host Detroit breezed past Chicago for its fourth straight victory.

Mariners 10, Rangers 2: Kyle Seager hit a grand slam, Kyle Lewis and Dylan Moore also homered and Seattle won its first game at the new Texas ballpark, snapping its opponent's three-game winning streak.

NBA roundup

Suns run to 6-0 in restart

Booker scores 35 to lead Phoenix past undermanned Oklahoma City

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Devin Booker scored 35 points, and the Phoenix Suns rolled past the short-handed Oklahoma City Thunder 128-101 on Monday to improve to 6-0 in the restart and improve their playoff chances.

The Suns have surged in the Western Conference standings. They entered the day just 1½ games behind eighth-place Memphis and a game behind ninth-place Portland in the race to qualify for a spot in the play-in series.

“We haven’t accomplished anything,” Phoenix coach Monty Williams said. “That may sound like coach-speak, but we dug ourselves a hole with our record. We scrapped all year long and won some games, but it’s been an uphill battle.”

Williams appreciates the position the Suns are in.

“We’ve done a good job of getting to this point,” he said. “No one knew we were going to be here, but we’re here and we’re thankful for that.”

Phoenix center Deandre Ayton sat out the first quarter because he missed his coronavirus test on Sunday. He tested negative on Monday and was cleared. He started the second quarter.

“In an NBA season guys are going to make mistakes,” Williams said. “You have to be able to give people grace. It wasn’t intentional. Thankfully he was able to get tested early enough that he was able to come back and play, and the guys received him with open arms because we all understand we’re human.”

With Ayton out, Oklahoma City led 37-23 at the end of the first quarter. After Ayton entered the game, the Suns dominated the rest of the way. He finished with 10 points and six rebounds in just over 17 minutes.

The Thunder were without four of their top five scorers. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (bruised right calf), Danilo Gallinari (left ankle maintenance), Dennis Schroder (birth of child) and Steven Adams (bruised left leg) sat out. Reserve center Nerlens Noel (sprained right ankle) also did not play.

Lakers 124, Nuggets 121: Kyle Kuzma hit a three-pointer with .4 seconds left and Los Angeles beat Denver to snap a three-game losing streak.

LeBron James threw an inbounds pass to Anthony Davis, who flipped it to Kuzma on the right wing for the game-winner as the clock ran down.

The Lakers, outplayed down the stretch by the Nuggets’ bench, got 29 points and 12 assists from James, who hit two three-pointers in the fourth quarter. Anthony Davis had 27 points and Kuzma 25.

P.J. Dozier had a chance to put Denver up by one with 4.4 seconds left but missed the second of two free throws. Kuzma rebounded and Los Angeles called timeout to set up the winning play.

James had given the Lakers a 121-119 lead by converting a three-point play with 45.7 seconds to go. Monte Morris made one of two free throws for the Nuggets.

Raptors 114, Bucks 106: Chris Boucher scored a career-high 25 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to help Toronto defeat Milwaukee.

Though the meeting featured the top two teams in the Eastern Conference standings, both teams were missing key players.

The Bucks’ Giannis Antetokounmpo, the reigning MVP, missed the game after undergoing oral surgery. Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer said Monday it was uncertain whether Antetokounmpo would play in the team’s final two

seeding games Tuesday against the Washington Wizards and Thursday against the Memphis Grizzlies.

For the Raptors, Kyle Lowry sat out with a sore lower back, Serge Ibaka missed the game with a bruised right knee and Fred Van Vleet was out with a hyperextended right knee.

Heat 114, Pacers 92: Jimmy Butler returned from a foot injury and scored 19 points, Derrick Jones scored 18 off the Miami bench and Miami kept T.J. Warren largely in check on the way to a win over Indiana.

Tyler Herro scored 17 while Duncan Robinson and Jae Crowder each added 14 for the Heat, who snapped a two-game slide. They took control for good in the third quarter, blowing open what was a tie game with a 35-17 run. Goran Dragic scored 11 and Bam Adebayo added 10 for Miami.

Warren scored 12 for Indiana on 5 for 14 shooting in 29 minutes. He came into Monday averaging a bubble-leading 34.8 points per game on 61% shooting from the field, 56% from 3-point range, but never got rolling against Butler and the Heat.

Victor Oladipo scored 14 and Malcolm Brogdon added 12 for Indiana.

Mavericks 122, Jazz 114: Short-handed Dallas rallied from a 22-point deficit in the second half to stun Utah.

Tim Hardaway Jr. led the Mavericks with 27 points and Seth Curry added 22. Boban Majanovic had 20 points and nine rebounds. It was the biggest comeback for Dallas since February 2016 and the win means the Mavs still have a slim shot at earning the No. 5 seed in the Western Conference playoffs.

Dallas won despite playing without stars Luka Doncic and Kristaps Porzingis, who were both resting because of nagging injuries.

Rangers win lottery, earn No. 1 draft pick

Associated Press

The New York Rangers got a timely assist with their rebuilding efforts.

New York won the second phase of the NHL Draft lottery, giving the franchise a shot at selecting winger Alexis Lafreniere.

“Luck is on our side,” Rangers general manager Jeff Gorton acknowledged Monday night. “We’re pretty happy with that a few days after coming out of the bubble.”

The Rangers were among eight teams that lost in the qualifying round with a chance to claim quite a consolation prize.

Carolina finished off a sweep of the Rangers last week, leading to them boarding buses in Toronto while players and coaches from other teams in the league were drinking coffee at the same hotel.

“Leaving the bubble first, it hurts,” Gorton said.

The Rangers have the No. 1 overall pick for the first time since they selected Andre Veilleux in 1965, four years before the universal draft began.

“Obviously, you don’t get the first pick very often,” Gorton said. “This is a special year and it’s exciting.”

While the Rangers would rather still be skating in the playoffs, they will have the rights to draft a player for a short- and long-term gain.

The sturdy, 6-foot-1 Lafreniere had 114 goals and 297 points in 173 games in the Quebec Major Junior League. The 18-year-old winger also captained Canada’s gold medal-winning team and earned MVP honors at the world junior championships earlier this year.

Gorton refused to commit to drafting Lafreniere, saying the team wanted to get to know him during an interview process.