

## Military mixed on vaccine mandate idea

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — Since President Joe Biden asked the Pentagon last week to look at adding the COVID-19 vaccine to the military's mandatory shots, former Army lawyer Greg T. Rinckey has fielded a deluge of calls.

His firm, Tully Rinckey, has heard from hundreds of soldiers, Marines and sailors wanting to know their rights and whether they could take any legal action if ordered to get inoculated for the coronavirus.

"A lot of U.S. troops have reached out to us saying, 'I don't want a vaccine that's untested, I'm not sure it's safe, and I don't trust the government's vaccine. What are my rights?'" Rinckey said.

Generally, their rights are limited since vaccines are widely seen as essential for the military to carry out its missions, given that service members often eat, sleep and work in close quarters.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin has said he is working expeditiously to make the COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for military personnel and is expected to ask Biden to waive a federal law that requires individuals be given a choice if the vaccine is not fully licensed. Biden has also directed that all federal workers be vaccinated or face frequent testing and travel restrictions.

Lawyers say the waiver will put the military on firmer legal ground so it can avoid the court

battles it faced when it mandated the anthrax vaccine for troops in the 1990s when it was not fully approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

The distrust among some service members is not only a reflection of the broader public's feelings about the COVID-19 vaccines, which were quickly authorized for emergency use, but stems in part from the anthrax program's troubles.

Scores of troops refused to take that vaccine. Some left the service. Others were disciplined. Some were court-martialed and kicked out of the military with other-than-honorable discharges.

In 2003, a federal judge agreed with service members who filed a lawsuit asserting the military could not administer a vaccine that had not been fully licensed without their consent, and stopped the program.

The Pentagon started it back up in 2004 after the FDA issued an approval, but the judge stopped it again after ruling the FDA had not followed procedures.

Eventually the FDA issued proper approvals for the vaccine, and the program was reinstated on a limited basis for troops in high-risk locations.

Military experts say the legal battles over the anthrax vaccine could be why the Biden administration has been treading cautiously. Until now, the government has relied on en-

couraging troops rather than mandating the shots. Yet coronavirus cases in the military, like elsewhere, have been rising with the more contagious delta variant.

If the military makes the vaccine mandatory, most service members will have to get the shots unless they can argue to be among the few given an exemption for religious, health or other reasons.

According to the Pentagon, more than 1 million service members are fully vaccinated, and more than 237,000 have gotten at least one shot. There are roughly 2 million active-duty, Guard and Reserve troops.

Many see the COVID-19 vaccine as being necessary to avoid another major outbreak like the one last year that sidelined the USS Theodore Roosevelt and resulted in more than 1,000 crew member cases and one death.

An active-duty Army officer said he would welcome the vaccine among the military's mandatory shots. The soldier, who asked not to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said he worries unvaccinated service members may be abusing the honor system and going to work without a mask.

Accommodating unvaccinated troops would burden service members who are vaccinated since it would limit who is selected for deployment, according to active-duty troops and veterans.

## Taliban take 1st district capital since US began leaving

**By J.P. LAWRENCE**

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Taliban overran Zaranj on Friday, the first capture of a provincial capital since the U.S. began leaving the country this year, local officials and the militant group said.

Zaranj, the seat of the government in southwestern Nimruz province, which borders Iran, is an important hub for cross-border trade.

"All of the city is taken by the Taliban," Abdul Wahid Zawri, a provincial council member for Nimruz, said in a phone call with Stars and Stripes from Zaranj.

In a WhatsApp message, the Taliban said

they had captured the city, its airport and numerous military vehicles. The Taliban released photos they say show its fighters walking around abandoned government buildings in the city. There are about 186,000 people in Nimruz province, about a sixth of which live in Zaranj, Afghan government estimates show.

The governor of Nimruz did not respond to calls for comment.

Zaranj went silent at around 3 p.m. after about 30 minutes of fighting, said Roh Gul Khairzad, deputy governor of the province.

"Right now, the governor's house, police chief's house and all other government offices" are controlled by the Taliban, she said.

Zaranj fell to the Taliban weeks before the

Aug. 31 deadline outlined by President Joe Biden for the U.S. to end its longest war.

The Taliban have captured or shut down other key border trading cities in their latest offensive, which began after Biden announced that U.S. troops will leave the country.

More than 95% of U.S. troops have been withdrawn from Afghanistan, the Pentagon has said, though American airstrikes in support of government forces have continued.

Zaranj's capture follows heavy fighting throughout the country, with Taliban attacks on the outskirts of major cities such as Herat in the west, Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, and Kandahar and Lashkar Gah in the south.

# New Marine One will be used by president soon

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A new kind of helicopter will soon be used as Marine One, the name given to helicopters that fly the president, a Marine Corps general said this week.

Delivery is “imminent” for the first two VH-92A helicopters that will transport the president, Maj. Gen. Gregory Masiello, program executive officer for air anti-submarine warfare, assault and special mission programs, said Tuesday at the Navy League’s Sea-Air-Space conference.

“The squadron and the program are ready today,” Masiello said. “We have enough aircraft for the initial usage, we have enough pilots that are trained, we have the support equipment — we have all that kind of stuff.”

The new helicopters will replace the Marine Corps fleet of VH-3D Sea King and VH-60N White Hawk aircraft that now transport the president, according to a June Government Accountability Office report.

The Pentagon has ordered 23 VH-92As,

which cost about \$217 million each, according to the report.

“The VH-92A is expected to provide improved performance, communications and survivability capabilities, while offering increased passenger capacity,” according to the report.

It’s not the first time a new Marine One helicopter program was pitched. In 2009, then-President Barack Obama directed the Pentagon to cancel plans to build 28 VH-71 Kestrel helicopters that would have cost more than \$13 billion.

“The VH-92A program ... superseded the VH-71 program that DOD canceled due to cost growth, schedule delays and performance shortfalls,” according to the report.

The Marine Corps is now developing how they will phase out the old helicopters and bring in the new ones and working with the White House on a commissioning program, Masiello said.

“I think that will all coalesce over the next few months and you will see the VH-92s in service shortly,” he said.

## Loss of braking cited in 2019 Fla. plane incident

*Associated Press*

Investigators say a rain-soaked runway and the pilots’ failure to anticipate the poor conditions caused a plane chartered by the Pentagon to slide into a Florida river two years ago.

The Miami Air jet hydroplaned off the runway and wound up in shallow water of the St. Johns River. None of the 143 passengers and crew were seriously hurt, but several pets in the cargo hold died.

The plane was carrying Defense Department personnel from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The National Transportation Safety Board said pilots of the Miami Air International plane landed too fast and waited too long to deploy speed-reducing panels as the Boeing 737 touched down at Jacksonville Naval Air Station on May 3, 2019.

Investigators said that even without those mistakes, the plane would not have been able to stop on the ungrooved runway because of the amount of standing water. They said in a report released Wednesday that Miami Air failed to give pilots adequate guidance to evaluate braking conditions on wet runways.

Proper estimates about the conditions “would have prohibited (the pilots) from attempting the landing,” the investigators said.

Two months after the accident, the Federal Aviation Administration issued a safety alert tightening guidance about landing on ungrooved runways when moderate to heavy rain is expected.

The NTSB said the excessive speed and delay in using speedbrakes “contributed to the severity of the accident.” But investigators calculated that the plane would not have been able to stop on the runway anyway because of the standing water.

The report said the pilots missed “several cues” that should have led them to call off the landing and, presumably, land somewhere else.

However, investigators said, the pilots might have been under pressure to complete the flight because it was running late. They added the first officer’s inexperience — only 18 hours flying Boeing 737s — may have put too much burden on the captain.

## FAA head seeks more criminal charges for unruly passengers

*Associated Press*

The nation’s top aviation regulator is suggesting that local police around the country should file charges more often against unruly airline passengers and that airports should clamp down on alcohol sales.

Federal Aviation Administration chief Stephen Dickson said that every week, police are asked to be there when a flight lands after an incident involving passengers, including cases in which they assault flight attendants.

“Nevertheless, many of these passengers were interviewed by local police and released without criminal charges of any kind,” Dickson said in letters to airport

officials. “When this occurs, we miss a key opportunity to hold unruly passengers accountable for their unacceptable and dangerous behavior.”

Dickson noted in the letters dated Wednesday that the FAA has proposed civil fines against dozens of passengers in recent months, but the agency has no authority to file criminal charges.

Dickson also asked airports to work with concessionaires to limit alcohol-related incidents. He said some concessionaires sell alcohol to go and passengers get drunk before the flight or believe they can carry their drinks onto the plane.

The letter went to more than 500 airports and two airport trade groups.

# Wildfire now 3rd-largest in Calif. history

Associated Press

GREENVILLE, Calif. — A wildfire raging in Northern California exploded in size overnight, becoming the third-largest wildfire in state history amid high temperatures and strong winds. Better weather conditions were expected to aid the firefight on Friday.

The Dixie Fire grew by 110 square miles between Thursday night and Friday morning, making the blaze the largest wildfire currently raging in the nation.

"This is going to be a long firefight," said Capt. Mitch Matlow, spokesperson of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The fire was 35% contained Friday morning but was largely expanding within the perim-

eter firefighters previously established. It now spans an area of 676 square miles.

On Wednesday, the fire tore through the little California mountain town of Greenville, which resident Eva Gorman said was a place of community and strong character, where neighbors volunteered to move furniture, colorful baskets of flowers brightened Main Street, and writers, musicians, mechanics and chicken farmers mingled.

Now, it's ashes.

As hot, bone-dry, gusty weather hit California, the fire raged through the Gold Rush-era Sierra Nevada community of about 1,000, incinerating much of the downtown that included wooden buildings more than a century old.

"It's just completely devastating. We've lost

our home, my business; our whole downtown area is gone," said Gorman, who heeded evacuation warnings and left town with her husband a week and-a-half ago as the Dixie Fire approached.

Officials had not yet assessed the number of destroyed buildings, but Plumas County Sheriff Todd Johns estimated on Thursday that "well over" 100 homes had burned in and near the town.

"My heart is crushed by what has occurred there," said Johns, a lifelong Greenville resident.

The 3-week-old Dixie Fire was one of 100 active, large fires burning in 14 states, most in the West where historic drought has left lands parched and ripe for ignition.

## US schools reopen with differing rules on masks

Associated Press

MCDONOUGH, Ga. — As Tussahaw Elementary opened this week for a new school year, teary-eyed mothers led in kindergartners dwarfed by backpacks and buses dropped off fifth graders looking forward to ruling their school. The biggest clue to the lingering COVID-19 crisis was the masks worn by students and teachers — but not all of them.

Georgia, like most states, is leaving it up to local schools to decide whether to require face coverings. And 43,000-student Henry County, like many districts worn out by months of conflict over masks, has decided not to insist on them.

Instead, they are "highly recommended."

Many parents Wednesday in this suburb south of Atlanta had mixed feelings about the policy. Some kept their children home in disagreement with it. Others sent their youngsters to class with face coverings.

Shatavia Dorsey, the mother of a kindergartner and a fifth grader, said her children are going to wear their masks at school regardless of the rules.

"They're not vaccinated because they're too young, and I don't know if someone else is carrying it in," said Dorsey, who is doubtful about the school system's ability to maintain in-person instruction amid rising infections.

With the delta variant spreading rapidly, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics

have advised in recent weeks that everyone in schools wear masks in communities with substantial or high transmission.

Educators have had to contend with strong resistance to masks from some parents and political leaders. Some consider mask rules an intrusion on parents' authority to make decisions about their children's health.

California, Louisiana, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington state intend to require masks for all students and teachers regardless of vaccination status. At the other end of the spectrum, Arkansas, Arizona, Florida, Iowa, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas and Utah have banned mask requirements in public schools.

## Biden grants temporary refuge to people from Hong Kong

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden granted temporary refuge Thursday to people from Hong Kong amid the Chinese government's effort to crush the pro-democracy movement and tighten its control on a city once known for its freedom.

Biden signed a memorandum allowing people from Hong Kong currently residing in the United States to live and work in the country for 18 months, a move likely to further inflame the already tense relations between Washington and Beijing.

The decision to provide a temporary safe haven comes in response to Hong Kong's sweeping new national security law and oth-

er measures that undercut the rights promised when the former British colony was handed back to China in 1997. It also comes as China and the United States are at odds over a range of foreign policy and trade issues.

"Given the politically motivated arrests and trials, the silencing of the media and the diminishing space for elections and democratic opposition, we will continue to take steps in support of people in Hong Kong," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said.

The Chinese government has sought to stifle opposition following protests in Hong Kong in 2019 against a proposed law allowing extraditions to mainland China. Under

the new national security law, which took effect in June, police have arrested at least 100 opposition politicians, activists and demonstrators.

"Despite widespread demonstrations, which brought millions together to call for greater freedom, Hong Kong's promise of democracy has dimmed," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said as the measure granting safe haven was announced.

China bristles at the criticism, saying it is merely restoring order to the city and instituting national security protections found in other countries. It has denounced U.S. sanctions on Hong Kong officials as interference in its domestic affairs.



# 943K jobs added in July; unemployment at 5.4%

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hiring surged in July as American employers added 943,000 jobs. The unemployment rate dropped to 5.4%, another sign that the U.S. economy continues to bounce back with surprising vigor from last year's coronavirus shutdown.

The July numbers exceeded economists' forecast for more than 860,000 new jobs. Hotels and restaurants, reopening and doing brisk business, added 327,000 jobs last month. Local public schools added 221,000.

The number of people who reported they had jobs surged by 1 million, pushing the jobless rate down from 5.9% in June. Last month, 261,000 people returned to the job market.

Scrambling to find workers as

business surges back, companies raised wages: Average hourly earnings were up 4% last month from that of a year earlier.

The coronavirus triggered a brief but intense recession last spring, forcing businesses to shut down and consumers to stay home as a health precaution. The economy lost more than 22 million jobs in March and April 2020. Since then, though, it has recovered nearly 17 million jobs, leaving a 5.7 million shortfall compared to that of February 2020.

"Things are undeniably moving in the right direction," said Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at Bankrate.com.

The rollout of vaccines has encouraged businesses to reopen and consumers to return to

shops, restaurants and bars that they had shunned for months after the pandemic struck. Many Americans are also in surprisingly strong financial shape because the lockdowns allowed them to save money and bank relief checks from the federal government.

As a result, the economy has bounded back with unexpected speed. The International Monetary Fund expects U.S. gross domestic product — the broadest measure of economic output — to grow 7% this year, its fastest pace since 1984.

Employers are advertising jobs — a record 9.2 million openings in May — faster than applicants can fill them.

Some businesses blame generous federal unemployment benefits — including an extra

\$300 a week tacked on to regular state jobless aid — for discouraging Americans from seeking work. In response, many states have dropped the federal unemployment assistance even before it is scheduled to expire nationwide Sept. 6.

Many Americans may be staying out of the job market because of lingering health fears and trouble obtaining child care at a time when many schools are closed.

The outlook is clouded by a resurgence of COVID-19 cases caused by the spread of the highly contagious delta variant. The United States is reporting an average of more than 75,000 new cases a day, up from fewer than 12,000 a day in late June — although still well below the 250,000 levels of early January.

## Sheriff: Aide who accused Cuomo filed a complaint

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — A woman who accused Gov. Andrew Cuomo of groping her breast at the governor's state residence filed a criminal complaint against him, the Albany County Sheriff's office said Friday.

The complaint, filed Thursday with the sheriff's office, is the first known instance where a woman has made an official report with a law enforcement agency over alleged misconduct by Cuomo.

Albany County Sheriff Craig Apple told the New York Post it is possible the Democratic governor could be arrested if investigators or the county district attorney determine he committed a crime.

"The end result could either be it sounds substantiated and an arrest is made and it would be up to the DA to prosecute the arrest," he told the newspaper. "Just because of who it is we are not going to rush it or delay it," Apple said.

The Cuomo aide who filed the

report has accused him of reaching under her shirt and fondling her when they were alone together at the Executive Mansion last year.

The woman also told investigators with the attorney general's office that Cuomo once rubbed her rear end while they were posing together for a photo.

The sheriff's office didn't immediately provide a copy of the complaint. A request for comment was sent to Cuomo's lawyer, Rita Glavin.

Cuomo has denied touching anyone inappropriately. His lawyers have acknowledged that Cuomo and the woman met together on the day of the alleged encounter, but said he never groped her.

Calls for Cuomo's resignation or impeachment soared this week after an independent investigation overseen by the state attorney general's office concluded that Cuomo sexually harassed 11 women and worked to retaliate against one of his accusers.

## US Apple iPhones to detect images of child sex abuse

Associated Press

Apple unveiled plans to scan U.S. iPhones for images of child sexual abuse, drawing applause from child protection groups but raising concern among some security researchers that the system could be misused, including by governments looking to surveil their citizens.

The tool designed to detect known images of child sexual abuse, called "neuralMatch," will scan images before they are uploaded to iCloud. If it finds a match, the image will be reviewed by a human. If child pornography is confirmed, the user's account will be disabled and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children notified.

Separately, Apple plans to scan users' encrypted messages for sexually explicit content as a child safety measure, which also alarmed privacy advocates.

The detection system will only flag images that are already in the center's database of known child

pornography. Parents snapping innocent photos of a child in the bath presumably need not worry. But researchers say the matching tool — which doesn't "see" such images, just mathematical "fingerprints" that represent them — could be put to more nefarious purposes.

Matthew Green, a top cryptography researcher at Johns Hopkins University, warned that the system could be used to frame innocent people by sending them seemingly innocuous images designed to trigger matches for child pornography. That could fool Apple's algorithm and alert law enforcement.

Other abuses could include government surveillance of dissidents or protesters.

"What happens when the Chinese government says, 'Here is a list of files that we want you to scan for,'" Green asked. "Does Apple say no? I hope they say no, but their technology won't say no."

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Crop-dusting plane crashes in yard of home

**OH** WOOSTER — A crop-dusting plane struck some power lines and trees before it crashed in the front yard of a northeastern Ohio home, leaving the pilot with minor injuries.

The crash in Wooster occurred as the plane dusted a farmer's field, according to the Wayne County Sheriff's office. No one on the ground was injured in the crash, and authorities have not said if anyone was in the home at the time.

Authorities said the plane just missed hitting the home. It eventually ended nose up against a tree in the yard, not far from the home's driveway.

The pilot, Tyler James Vold, 24, of Breckenridge, Minn., suffered undisclosed minor injuries but was able to walk away from the wreck.

## Judges uphold beach town's topless ban

**VA** FALLS CHURCH — A federal appeals court affirmed a Maryland beach town's right to ban women from topless sunbathing.

A three-judge panel of the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., ruled unanimously that Ocean City's law, which allows men to be topless but not women, is constitutional.

Ocean City passed its law in 2017 after one of the plaintiffs in the case, Chelsea Eline, contacted Ocean City police and asserted a right to go topless.

The panel's ruling notes that courts across the country have upheld laws banning women from topless sunbathing on pub-

lic beaches. While the law imposes a restriction on women that is not imposed on men, Judge A. Marvin Quattlebaum Jr. wrote that Ocean City's elected leaders are within their rights to enact laws that protect public sensibilities.

## Man arrested for baseball bat attack on home

**KS** GARDEN CITY — Authorities said a 36-year-old man is under arrest after breaking into a Garden City home and chasing people inside while wielding a baseball bat.

Police said they received a report about a man outside a home who was hitting a tree with a wooden bat, the Wichita Eagle reported. He then started beating it on an unlocked door of the home.

Police said in a news release that he then smashed the bat into a large window, climbed into the residence and chased two people, threatening them.

When the people ran outside, he followed and began hitting two vehicles, causing extensive damage, authorities said.

He refused police instructions to drop the bat, walked closer to the officers, and attempted to swing the bat, police said.

## Hunters take aim at feral pigs during the night

**AL** MONTGOMERY — More than 500 Alabama hunters have bought licenses to hunt feral pigs and coyotes at night, authorities said.

It's a new approach to try to control the destructive animals in Alabama, Al.com reported.

State lawmakers passed a bill last year to allow the nighttime hunting. It's aimed at targeting

the wild pigs, which cause more than a billion dollars in damage annually, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Experts say that nighttime hunting could help control the population, but that trapping and killing is the best way to do so.

## Native American woman statue stolen from park

**MO** KANSAS CITY — A statue of a Native American woman has been stolen from a Kansas City park, The Kansas City Star reported.

A Kansas City parks spokeswoman told the newspaper that officials are searching for more details about the \$80,000 statue's disappearance from Northland Park.

The statue was one of several at the François Chouteau and Native American Heritage Fountain. The site honors American Indians and French trader François Chouteau for their roles in founding Kansas City.

## Passenger charged with assaulting flight crew

**FL** MIAMI — An Ohio man was arrested in Florida after being accused of groping two female flight attendants and punching a male flight attendant during a flight from Philadelphia to Miami, officials said.

Maxwell Berry, 22, of Norwalk, Ohio, was arrested at Miami International Airport and charged with three counts of misdemeanor battery, according to a Miami-Dade police report.

Berry had two drinks while on the Frontier Airlines flight and ordered another drink, police said. Berry brushed an empty cup

against the backside of a flight attendant, who then told him not to touch her, officials said. At some point, Berry spilled a drink on his shirt, went to the bathroom and came out shirtless, the report said. A flight attendant helped him get another shirt from his carry-on.

Police said that, after walking around for 15 minutes, Berry allegedly grabbed the chests of two female flight attendants. They called a male flight attendant over to watch Berry, who punched the other man in the face, officials said. The flight attendant and nearby passengers restrained Berry in a seat with tape and a seatbelt extender, the report said.

## Man sentenced 18 years for firebomb plot

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — A California man who plotted to firebomb the homes of people on his personal "enemies list" was sentenced to 18 years in federal prison.

David Jah, 47, of Concord, was sentenced for conspiracy to commit arson.

Prosecutors said Jah had made a list of six people he thought had wronged him, including attorneys involved in the sale of his childhood home in San Francisco; a lawyer who was involved in removing him from the home; the home's buyer; a former neighbor and a deputy city attorney who had represented police in an excessive force suit filed by his son.

"When Mr. Jah was unable to achieve his objectives in court, he turned to violence," said Stephanie M. Hinds, acting U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California, said in a statement.

— From wire reports

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# US baseball team out to make history

*Associated Press*

YOKOHAMA, Japan — Mike Scioscia is one win from matching mentor Tommy Lasorda, the only manager to lead the United States to a baseball gold medal.

Host Japan, which stopped its major league season during the Tokyo Olympics, is the favorite in Saturday's gold medal game.

Scioscia's team, a mixture of prospects mostly from Double-A, career minor leaguers and released veterans, overcame a blown ninth-inning lead in a 7-6, 10-inning loss to Japan to reach the final by beating the Dominican Republic 3-1 and South Korea 7-2.

"I think you can look at a lot of the negative things that maybe aren't happening as far as COVID; obviously we're all concerned with that, not having any freedom, not having any fans in the stands, free to go watch some events," Scioscia said. "We can talk about some things in the negative, but the bottom line is, it says USA across our

jersey and these guys are playing for a gold medal this weekend. Doesn't get any better than that."

Nick Martinez starts for the U.S. The 31-year-old right-hander pitched for Texas from 2014-17, then spent three seasons with the Pacific League's Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters before switching this season to the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks.

Martinez got the opening-round win over South Korea, allowing one run and four hits in five innings with nine strikeouts. He is familiar with Yokohama Stadium from his time in Japan.

"Playing at this field definitely helps," he said. "I feel comfortable."

Japan (5-0), seeking its first baseball gold medal, is batting .288, second to South Korea's .294. The U.S. (4-1) is third at .247 with a tournament-high seven home runs — including three by Boston prospect Triston Casas. American batters

have struck out 50 times, far more than the 36 for contact-focused Japan.

U.S. pitchers lead with a 2.18 ERA and Japan is third at 3.65.

Scioscia credited his roster's blend.

"These guys are still very, very good veteran players. Look at Scott Kazmir. Look at Brandon Dickson. Look at Todd Frazier, Edwin Jackson," he said. "We've got a lot of pups here."

Jamie Westbrook, a 26-year-old left fielder, hit a long home run against South Korea for his first RBI and is hitting .389.

An All-Star in the Double-A Southern League in 2018 and 2019, he left the Arizona Diamondbacks organization to sign with San Francisco for the 2020 season. Then, when Major League Baseball canceled its minor-league season due to the coronavirus pandemic, he signed with the Sugar Land Lightning Sloths of the independent Constellation Energy League and wasn't sure whether he'd have a future in affiliated baseball.

ed baseball.

He started this season at Milwaukee's Triple-A Nashville, was demoted to Double-A Biloxi, then returned to Nashville in June. He called it "a whirlwind of emotion."

"COVID kind of messed things up for a lot of minor leaguers," he said. "I found myself in indy ball, a spot most people don't want to be, and I really found myself. I got back into the infield, and it was a chance for me to better myself. ... I started having fun, just like travel ball when you're growing up."

Lasorda, who died in January at age 93, was Scioscia's manager with the Los Angeles Dodgers from 1980-92 and led the U.S. to the 2000 gold medal in Sydney. Ben Sheets pitched a three-hit complete game in a 4-0 win in the final, stopping Cuba's 21-game Olympic winning streak. Mike Neill hit a first-inning homer, Pat Borders an RBI double and Ernie Young a two-run, bases-loaded single.

## Steveson scores late to nab wrestling gold

*Associated Press*

CHIBA, Japan — With 10 seconds remaining, Gable Steveson trailed the biggest wrestling match of his life by three points.

When the clock hit zero, he was an Olympic gold medalist.

Steveson trailed Georgia's Geno Petriashvili 8-5 with time running out. The 21-year-old American remained composed and took control against his more experienced opponent, scoring on a spin-behind takedown with 10 seconds remaining, then another with less than a second remaining to win the men's freestyle 125-kilogram class final 10-8 on Friday night.

Steveson held up two fingers

for two points after the move, but even he couldn't believe what happened.

"I looked at the clock and it was like 0.3," Steveson said. "And I was like, 'Ain't no way.' And my head just like flushed with everything. And I was like, 'Wow.'"

Georgia challenged the final points, to no avail. Steveson gained a point on the challenge, giving him five points in 10 seconds.

It looked as if Steveson might have another easy day. He outscored his opponents 23-0 in the first three rounds and dominated 2016 Olympic gold medalist Taha Akgul 8-0 in the quarterfinals.

## US men take on nemesis France in basketball final

*Associated Press*

SAITAMA, Japan — For USA Basketball, some eras will end Saturday. It will be Jerry Colangelo's last game as managing director of the men's national team. It'll mark the end of Gregg Popovich's commitment as the team's coach. Some players will likely be wearing the U.S. jersey for the final time.

Change is coming.

The Americans just don't want it to be atop the medal stand.

France — the new official nemesis of USA Basketball — awaits the Americans in the gold-medal game on Saturday. France has won the last two meetings between the pro-

grams, denying the U.S. a chance to play for a medal at the 2019 Basketball World Cup and then winning again in both teams' opener at the Tokyo Olympics.

The summer for the Americans started with two exhibition losses, then the loss to France in the Olympic opener, and the U.S. had to pull off double-digit comebacks — 10 against Spain, 15 against Australia — in each of their last two games just to make the final.

Yet the Americans have clearly gotten better. The French, who have Rudy Gobert and Evan Fournier among others with lengthy NBA experience on their roster, agree.



# Americans win beach volleyball gold

*Associated Press*

TOKYO — April Ross won the Olympic gold medal that completes her set, and when she stood on the top step of the podium at the Shiokaze Park beach volleyball venue Friday she had with her the perfect person to hang it around her neck: Alix Klineman.

“I know that was a product of COVID, but it actually feels really special when you’re up there,” said Ross, who received her third Olympic medal from her third Olympic partner after a masked IOC official presented it on a tray because of pandemic protocols.

“I was like, ‘We get to award

the medals to each other,’ ” said Ross, who won silver in London and bronze in Rio de Janeiro. “In my head, I was thinking, ‘Thank you, Alix.’ ”

Playing in 92-degree Fahrenheit temperatures — the U.S. TV broadcast said it felt like 129 on the sand — the Americans beat Mariafe Artacho del Solar and Taliqua Clancy of Australia 21-15, 21-16 in 43 minutes.

Klineman, a first-time Olympian, never let her new prize out of her grasp while talking to reporters. She said she had watched individual sports, where winners put their medals around their own necks, and was excited when she realized

she could do that for Ross after working four years together to get to the Olympics, and then win it all.

“I feel like we’ve both just tried to support each other and give this partnership as much as we have,” she said. “And so it was a really special moment.”

The silver for Australia was its first beach volleyball medal since Natalie Cook and Kerri Pottharst took gold on Bondi Beach in 2000. They were never really close against the Americans, who tied for the top spot in the Olympic qualification points race and lost one set in seven matches in Tokyo.

Australia survived three

championship points before Artacho del Solar served into the net to seal the U.S. victory. After a long hug, Klineman went to the bench to douse herself in water, then she and Ross went over to the stands and posed with an American flag.

“I still can’t fathom that it worked out the way it did,” said Ross, who played with Jen Kessy in 2012 and Kerri Walsh Jennings in 2016. “It’s kind of a fairy tale story, going out there to try and get my gold medal. And the fact that it actually happened feels really special and surreal.”

## Korda leads women’s golf by 3 strokes

*Associated Press*

KAWAGOE, Japan — Nelly Korda survived a battle with her swing Friday, closed with 12 straight pars for a 2-under 69 and held a three-shot lead going into the final round in her pursuit of a gold medal in Olympic women’s golf.

“I didn’t have a really good back nine. I was kind of spraying it all over the place. I had some testy par putts,” the 23-year-old American said. “But made all pars and I fought really hard to stay in it really, or ahead of it.”

She was ahead by three shots over Aditi Ashok of India, who is nearly last in the 60-player field driving and near the top in sheer determination. She had a 68.

Olympic golf officials plan to start play as early as possible Saturday at Kasumigaseki Country Club and take advantage of a window they hope is big enough to squeeze in 72 holes before a tropical storm in the forecast arrives.

## Long journey leads to record for American sprinter Felix

*Associated Press*

TOKYO — She describes herself as “old.” She concedes she wasn’t sure she’d make it this far. There were times, though, when “making it” had nothing to do with the Olympics and everything to do with simply climbing out of her hospital bed.

No wonder Allyson Felix came to these, her last Olympics, with little fear of losing.

It shouldn’t surprise anyone by now to learn that instead, on Friday, she won.

Not the gold medal in the women’s 400 meters. But a bronze that might wind up taking center stage in her trophy case. It is medal No. 10, the one that put her all alone at the top of the record book.

On a humid, sticky evening filled with anticipation, Felix — the sprinter, turned mom, turned advocate, turned realist — became the most decorated female track athlete in

the history of the Olympics.

The 35-year-old was beaming as she strode through the bottom of the stadium — the new bronze medal standing out against her white, “USA” sweatshirt.

Felix’s 10th Olympic medal broke a tie with Jamaican sprinter Merlene Ottey, and matches Carl Lewis, who was alone as the most decorated U.S. athlete in track. Felix could surpass Lewis on Saturday, when she is expected to be part of the U.S. 4x400 relay. Paavo Nurmi of Finland holds the all-time mark with 12 medals from 1920-28.

Friday’s milestone for Felix came nearly three years after she helped spearhead a conversation about the way women are treated in track, and sports in general. She severed ties with Nike, which wrote in pay reductions to women’s contracts if they became pregnant.

She raced Friday wearing a shoe she designed for a company she created. (She also wore Nike gear, because that’s the company that sponsors the U.S. team).

Felix has spoken candidly about the struggle to come back from a difficult pregnancy that led to an emergency C-section and put the lives of both her and her baby, Cammy, in jeopardy.

She’s spoken of the pressure she felt to return quickly, even when her body wasn’t responding the way it once did. She also overcame one of her biggest hurdles — leaving her well-cultivated private image behind to become a spokesperson for something much bigger.

“I feel like it’s definitely been a journey for me to get to the point where I guess I had the courage to do so,” Felix said.

# Alfaro helps push Marlins past Mets

Associated Press

MIAMI — Jorge Alfaro hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the eighth inning and the Miami Marlins defeated the New York Mets 4-2 on Thursday, taking three of four from the sagging NL East leaders.

New York has lost six of eight overall and is 2-4 since its big trade-deadline acquisition, Javier Baez, made his debut. Baez went 0-for-5 with five strikeouts on Thursday and is hitting .160 (4-for-25) with the Mets.

Miguel Rojas drew a one-out walk against Jeury Familia (5-2) and advanced to second on Jazz Chisholm's single. Alfaro's line drive to right scored Rojas, whose slide eluded catcher James McCann's tag. Lewis Brinson followed with a two-run double.

**Yankees 5, Mariners 3:** Joey Gallo hit his first homer with his new team, a go-ahead, three-run blast in the seventh inning, and host New York beat Seattle.

Gallo, who entered 2-for-23 in six games since the Yankees ac-

quired him from the Texas Rangers, lofted a 1-0 slider from Paul Sewald (6-3) just over the short porch in right field.

**Phillies 7, Nationals 6:** J.T. Realmuto and Rhys Hoskins each hit a two-run double in the ninth inning, and visiting Philadelphia rallied past Washington to complete a four-game sweep.

The Phillies have won five straight overall and moved within one-half game of the NL East-leading New York Mets.

**Giants 5, Diamondbacks 4 (10):** LaMonte Wade Jr. tied it with a two-out single in a four-run ninth inning and Kris Bryant doubled in the winning run in the 10th to complete visiting San Francisco's rally over Arizona.

The Giants moved four games ahead of the idle Los Angeles Dodgers in the NL West.

**Blue Jays 3, Indians 0:** Bo Bichette homered and drove in all three runs, Ross Stripling pitched six sharp innings to win his second consecutive start, and host Toronto blanked Cle-

veland.

Toronto won for the sixth time in seven games since returning north of the border last week and moved a season-best eight games above .500.

**Angels 5, Rangers 0:** Dylan Bundy pitched shutout ball into the seventh inning in the opening day starter's second appearance since returning from a demotion to the bullpen, and visiting Los Angeles beat Texas.

**Tigers 8, Red Sox 1:** Victor Reyes tripled twice and drove in three runs, Tarik Skubal pitched five scoreless innings, and host Detroit beat skidding Boston.

The Red Sox lost for the sixth time in seven games and dropped 1½ games behind idle Tampa Bay in the AL East.

**Twins 5, Astros 3:** Rookie Griffin Jax had a solid outing on the mound and Andreton Simmons drove in two runs to help visiting Minnesota build a big early lead against Houston,

Jax (2-1) allowed three hits and one run in a career-high 5½

innings for his first career victory as a starter.

**Royals 3, White Sox 2:** Daniel Lynch and four relievers held host Chicago in check, and Emmanuel Rivera's line drive was misplayed into an early two-run double that helped Kansas City hang on.

Kansas City won its second consecutive game, while the AL Central-leading White Sox lost for the ninth time in their last 14.

**Rockies 6, Cubs 5:** Trevor Story hit two home runs, including a go-ahead two-run drive in the fifth inning, and host Colorado hung on to beat Chicago.

**Reds 7, Pirates 4:** Eugenio Suarez and Joey Votto hit three-run homers in a six-run second inning, powering host Cincinnati over Pittsburgh.

**Braves 8, Cardinals 4:** Austin Riley homered and Ehire Adrianza drove in the go-ahead run with the first of four straight bases-loaded walks as visiting Atlanta scored six times in the eighth inning to complete a three-game sweep of St. Louis.

## Heavyweight joins club of Cubans with 2 gold medals

Associated Press

TOKYO — Only six fighters had won gold medals in two weight classes in Olympic boxing before a trio of polished Cuban veterans joined the club over the past four days in Tokyo.

Julio Cesar La Cruz, Roniel Iglesias and Arlen Lopez showed the Cuban domination of this Olympic discipline is far from finished, no matter how much the game changes around them.

La Cruz capped the trifecta Friday with a clear victory over Russian heavyweight Muslim Gadzhimagomedov, putting on a defensive masterclass in his 5:0 win.

La Cruz added the Tokyo heavyweight title to his light heavyweight gold from Rio de Ja-

neiro. His two-time teammates also moved up one weight class from their previous championship divisions to claim their second golds.

Amateur boxing has changed significantly from the sport that the Cuban teams dominated through long stretches of the past half-century. The Tokyo field contained more than 40 boxers with professional experience, and the overall skill level seems remarkably high throughout most of the weight classes.

Only two Cubans had won medals at three Olympics before Iglesias and three-time bronze medalist Lazaro Alvarez doubled the size of that club over the past week.

## Former Astros fireballer Richard dies at age 71

Associated Press

HOUSTON — J.R. Richard, a huge, flame-throwing right-hander who spent 10 years with the Houston Astros before his career was cut short by a stroke, has died. He was 71.

The team announced his death Thursday but did not provide any further details.

"Today is a sad day for the Houston Astros as we mourn the loss of one of our franchise icons, J.R. Richard," the Astros said in a statement. "J.R. will forever be remembered as an intimidating figure on the mound and as one of the greatest pitchers in club history. He stood shoulder to shoulder with club icons Larry Dierker, Joe

Niekro and Nolan Ryan, to form a few of the best rotations in club history."

The 6-foot-8 Richard intimidated hitters with an effectively wild delivery, a fastball that often touched 100 mph and an almost unhittable breaking ball. He was selected by the Astros with the second overall pick in the 1969 draft and struck out 15 batters in a complete-game win over the Giants in his major league debut on Sept. 5, 1971.

He pitched for Houston from 1971-80, going 107-71 with a 3.15 ERA and 76 complete games. Richard won a career-best 20 games in 1976, the first of four straight seasons with at least 18 wins.