

US experiencing COVID-19 comeback

Associated Press

The COVID-19 comeback across the U.S. is putting pressure on hospitals at a time when some of them are busy just trying to catch up on surgeries and other procedures that were put on hold during the pandemic.

With the highly contagious delta variant spreading rapidly, cases in the U.S. are up around 70% over the last week, hospital admissions have climbed about 36% and deaths rose by 26%, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday.

Some hospitals are reporting record or near-record patient volumes. But even for those that aren't, this round of the pandemic is proving tougher in some ways, hospital and health officials said. Staff members are worn out, and finding traveling nurses to boost their ranks can be tough.

"I really think of it as a war and how long can you stay on the front line," said Dr. Mark Rosenberg, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. "And how many times do you want to go back for another tour of duty. Eventually you just don't want to do it."

Also, many hospitals were busy even before the surge began, dealing with a backlog of cancer screenings, operations and other procedures that were put off during the winter surge to free up space and staff members,

according to health care leaders.

"Eventually you have to pay the piper, and those things have now built up," said Dr. James Lawler of the Global Center for Health Security at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

The fear now at some hospitals is that they will have to postpone non-COVID-19 care again — and risk the potential health consequences for patients.

Dr. Laura Makaroff, senior vice president for prevention and early detection for the American Cancer Society, said cancer screenings dropped during the outbreak and have yet to return to normal levels in many communities. She warned that delays in screenings can result in cancers being detected at more advanced stages of the disease.

COVID-19 deaths and newly confirmed infections across the U.S. are still dramatically lower than they were over the winter. But for the first time since then, cases are rising in all 50 states. And the nation's vaccination drive has slowed to a crawl, with only about 48% of the population fully protected.

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky warned that the outbreak in the U.S. is becoming "a pandemic of the unvaccinated" because nearly all hospital admissions and deaths are among those who hadn't been im-

munized.

One of the most overwhelmed areas of the country is Springfield, Mo., where public health officials begged the state this week to convert a dormitory, hotel or another large space for the care of less seriously ill COVID-19 patients so that the city's two hospitals can focus on the sickest.

Mercy Springfield and Cox South have seen a sevenfold increase in coronavirus patients since late May, with Mercy treating pandemic-high numbers and Cox expected to break its own record this week.

In Florida, UF Health Jacksonville is talking about setting up tents in the parking lot to help with the overflow after the number of COVID-19 in-patients doubled to 77 over the past couple of weeks. Chad Neilsen, director of infection prevention, said the hospital expects to surpass its January high of 125 COVID-19 in-patients in the next few weeks.

Before the rise, the hospital had begun a push to bring back patients who had delayed care amid the pandemic. Now it is discussing canceling procedures, Neilsen said.

"To be telling someone, 'Sorry, we have to delay your hip surgery or your procedure because we have too many COVID patients who are largely unvaccinated,' it is just not what we signed up to do in health care," he said.

Europe flood death toll rises, costly cleanup looms

Associated Press

BERLIN — Rescue workers labored to clear up damage laid bare by receding water Saturday as the death toll from disastrous flooding in Western Europe rose above 160 and thoughts turned to the lengthy job of rebuilding communities devastated in minutes.

The death toll in western Germany's Rhineland-Palatinate state, home to the badly hit Ahrweiler county, rose to 98. Another 43 people were confirmed dead in neighboring North Rhine-Westphalia state. Belgium's national crisis center put the country's confirmed death toll at 24 and said it expects the number to rise.

Days of heavy rain turned normally mi-

nor rivers and streets into raging torrents last week and caused the disastrous flooding that swept away cars, destroyed homes and trapped residents.

Immediately after the floods hit on Wednesday and Thursday, authorities listed large numbers of people as missing — something apparently caused in large part by confusion, multiple reporting and communications difficulties in the affected areas, some of which lacked electricity and telephone service.

By Saturday, authorities still feared finding more people dead, but said numbers unaccounted for had dropped constantly, without offering specific figures as floodwaters receded across much of the affected re-

gions, easing access and revealing the extent of the damage.

"A lot of people have lost everything they spent their lives building up — their possessions, their home, the roof over their heads," German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said after meeting rescue workers and others in the town of Erftstadt.

"It may only be possible to clear up in weeks how much damage needs to be compensated," he said.

Steinmeier said that people in the affected areas are counting on continuing support.

"Many people here in these regions have nothing left but their hope, and we must not disappoint this hope," he said.

US probes rash of sickened diplomats at Vienna office

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration is investigating a recent rash of mysterious health incidents reported by American diplomats and other government employees in Vienna, Austria, U.S. officials said Friday.

Some of the symptoms are similar to those first reported by U.S. diplomats and spies in Havana, Cuba, in 2016 and 2017 for which no definitive cause has yet been determined, according to the officials, who said more than 20 new cases were being looked at by medical teams at the State Department and elsewhere, including the Pentagon and CIA.

“In coordination with our partners across the U.S. government, we are vigorously investigating reports of possible

unexplained health incidents among the U.S. Embassy Vienna community,” the State Department said. “Any employees who reported a possible UHI received immediate and appropriate attention and care.”

Some believe the unexplained injuries, which include brain damage, are the result of attacks with microwave or radio wave weapons. However, despite years of study there is no consensus as to what or who might be behind the incidents or whether they are, in fact, attacks.

The Vienna-based employees have reported suffering from mysterious symptoms since President Joe Biden was inaugurated, according to the officials. The Vienna cases were first reported Friday by *The New Yorker* magazine.

Vienna has for centuries been a center for espionage and diplomacy and was a hub for clandestine spy-versus-spy activity during the Cold War. The city is currently the site of indirect talks between Iran and the United States over salvaging the nuclear deal that was negotiated there in 2015.

Those talks are now on hiatus and it was not immediately clear if any members of the U.S. negotiating team were among those suffering from injuries.

The problem has been labeled the “Havana Syndrome,” because the first cases affected personnel in 2016 at the U.S. Embassy in Cuba. In May, officials said at least 130 cases across the government are under investigation, up from several dozen last year.

Guard faces shortfall in funding

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

National Guard units across the United States will stop training next month without a nearly \$521 million reimbursement from Congress for the funds the Guard spent to bolster U.S. Capitol security for months after the Jan. 6 riot, Guard officials said Friday.

Units will have to ground aircraft, cancel long-planned summer training operations and weekend drills, and the Guard’s 54th Security Force Assistance Brigade could miss a rotation to a major combat training center without the funding by Aug. 1, top Guard officials from several states said in a news briefing.

Congress must pass legislation to reimburse the money that the Guard moved early from its 2021 operations and maintenance coffers to ensure the more than 25,000 troops deployed to the Capitol grounds between January and May were immediately paid.

“Time is running out,” said Air Force Maj. Gen. Rich Nelly, the Illinois National Guard’s top officer. “The loss of these funds will have a major impact on our readiness for federal missions and for state emergencies here in the state of Illinois.”

Lawmakers have almost universally backed reimbursing the Guard for its role in securing the Capital grounds in the days and weeks after thousands of supporters of former President Donald Trump smashed into the building aiming to stop Congress from formally certifying President Joe Biden’s election victory in November.

The House in May passed a bill that would repay the Guard, but the Senate has yet to do so.

Pompeo: Afghan battle with Taliban depends on will to put up fierce fight

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday he believes Afghan forces can secure the country as the U.S. withdraws, but success will depend on whether they have the will to put up a fierce fight against the Taliban.

Thousands of Afghans have fled the country in recent days as Taliban forces have surged through northern Afghanistan. In an interview with the Associated Press, Pompeo said he is confident Afghan forces can repel the Taliban, but it’s “a matter of will.”

“I saw on TV the other day, I saw some 22, 23-year-old Afghan males say, ‘It’s really dangerous here, I want to get out,’” the former secretary of state said. “What those Afghans should have been saying is it’s really dangerous here, give me an M16.”

Under former President Donald Trump, Pompeo oversaw U.S. negotiations with the Taliban and remains the only secretary of state to have met face-to-face with senior Taliban officials.

He applauded President Joe Biden’s move to withdraw from Afghanistan — rare

praise from a Trump loyalist — but said he was worried that U.S. counterterrorism operations could be hurt in the process.

Pompeo was in Des Moines, Iowa on Friday speaking at several political events, including a conference for conservative Christians. Since leaving the office at the end of former President Donald Trump’s term, Pompeo has formed a political action committee and is considered a potential 2024 presidential candidate.

He said he is currently focused on fundraising and recruiting for other candidates.

Texas judge halts DACA, new applications

Associated Press

A federal judge in Texas on Friday ruled illegal an Obama-era program that prevents the deportation of some immigrants brought into the United States as children, putting new pressure for action on President Joe Biden and Democrats who control Congress for legislation to safeguard the people known as “Dreamers.”

U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen ruled in favor of Texas and eight other conservative states that sued to halt the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which provides limited protections to about 650,000 people. People who are already enrolled won’t lose protections, but Hanen is barring the approval of any new applications.

Hanen’s decision limits the immediate ability of Biden, who pledged during his campaign to protect DACA, to keep the program or something similar in place.

His ruling is the second by a federal judge in Texas stopping Biden’s immigration plans, after a court barred enforcement of Biden’s 100-day stay on most deportations. The program has been challenged in court since former President Barack Obama instituted it in June 2012.

In Friday’s ruling, Hanen wrote that the states proved “the hardship that the continued operation of DACA has inflicted on them.”

He continued: “Furthermore, the government has no legitimate interest in the continuation of an illegally implemented program.”

Biden has already proposed legislation that would provide a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million people living in the U.S. without authorization. He also ordered agencies to make efforts to preserve the program.

Supporters of DACA, including those who argued before Hanen to save it, have

said a law passed by Congress is necessary to provide permanent relief. Hanen has said Congress must act if the U.S. wants to provide the protections in DACA to recipients commonly known as “Dreamers.”

Calling the ruling a “blaring siren” for Democrats, United We Dream Executive Director Greisa Martinez Rosas said they would be solely to blame if legislative reform doesn’t happen.

“Until the president and Democrats in Congress deliver on citizenship, the lives of millions will remain on the line,” Martinez Rosas said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in a statement Friday evening, vowed that Democrats will continue to push for passage of the DREAM Act, and called on Republicans “to join us in respecting the will of the American people and the law, to ensure that Dreamers have a permanent path to citizenship.”

Unstable weather fuels massive Oregon wildfire

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Dry, unstable and windy conditions will keep fueling a massive wildfire in southern Oregon, forecasters said, as the largely uncontained blaze grows by miles each day.

The Bootleg Fire was just one of numerous wildfires burning across the U.S. West.

Crews had to flee the fire lines of the Oregon blaze late Thursday after a dangerous “fire cloud” started to collapse, threatening them with strong downdrafts and flying embers. An initial review Friday showed the Bootleg Fire destroyed 67 homes and 117 outbuildings overnight in one county.

The conflagration has forced 2,000 people to evacuate and is threatening 5,000 buildings, including homes and smaller structures in a rural area just north of the California border, fire spokeswoman Holly Krake said. Active flames are surging along 200 miles of the fire’s perimeter, she said, and it’s ex-

pected to merge with a smaller, but equally explosive fire by nightfall.

The Bootleg Fire is now 377 square miles and mostly uncontained.

“We’re likely going to continue to see fire growth over miles and miles of active fire line,” Krake said. “We are continuing to add thousands of acres a day, and it has the potential each day, looking forward into the weekend, to continue those 3- to 4-mile runs.”

A Red Flag weather warning was issued for the area through Saturday night.

The inferno has stymied firefighters for a week with erratic winds and extremely dangerous fire behavior, including ominous fire clouds that form from superheated air rising to a height of up to 6 miles above the blaze.

“We’re expecting those same exact conditions to continue and worsen into the weekend,” Krake said.

US border sees increase in migrant families amid heat

Associated Press

PHOENIX — U.S. officials say the number of migrant families they encountered at the border in June increased by 25% from the previous month even as summer temperatures rise in the deserts and mountain terrain of the southwestern borderlands.

According to new numbers released Friday, U.S. Customs and Border Protection tallied 55,805 members of families with children in June, compared with 44,746 in May. While a large increase, the figure is far below the high of 88,587 in May 2019.

Overall, officials say they saw 5% more encounters with migrants trying to cross the border in June compared with that of May but attributed much of that increase to repeated attempts by people trying to get into the United States.

Pandemic-related powers that the government uses to rapidly expel most migrants from

the country without allowing them to seek asylum has led to a larger-than-average number of migrants trying to cross multiple times, which means the numbers “somewhat overstate” how many are arriving at the border, Customs and Border Protection said in the monthly report.

CBP officials in recent weeks have been expressing concerns about the dangers migrants face crossing through remote borderlands without water at the height of summer.

“We are in the hottest part of the summer, and we are seeing a high number of distress calls to CBP from migrants abandoned in treacherous terrain by smugglers with no regard for human life,” CBP Acting Commissioner Troy Miller said in Friday’s report.

The bodies of an unusually large number of migrants who died in Arizona’s borderlands are being recovered amid record temperatures

Russia to unveil new fighter jet at show

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian aircraft makers say they will present a prospective new fighter jet at a Moscow air show that opens next week.

The new warplane hidden under tarpaulin was photographed being towed to a parking spot across an airfield in Zhukovskiy, outside Moscow, where the MAKS-2021 International Aviation and Space Salon opens Tuesday. Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to visit the show's opening.

Russian media reports said that the new jet has been built by the Sukhoi aircraft maker in a program of development of a light tactical fighter.

Unlike Russia's latest Su-57 two-engine stealth fighter, the new aircraft is smaller and has one engine.

The new warplane's name is unknown, and there is no information about its capability and deployment prospects.

The Su-57 has been built to match the U.S. F-22 Raptor stealth fighter, but unlike the American aircraft that has been in service since 2005 its serial production is just starting and a new engine intended to give it the capability to cruise at supersonic speed is still under development.

The new Russian warplane appears intended to compete with the U.S. F-35 Lightning II fighter, which entered service in 2015. Russia hopes to eventually offer the new aircraft to foreign customers.

Rostec, the state corporation that includes Russian aircraft makers, said the "fundamentally new military aircraft" will be unveiled Tuesday at the show. In an apparent bid to raise public interest before the presentation, Rostec published a picture of the new plane covered by tarpaulin with "wanna see me naked?" written under it. It also posted a brief video featuring excited foreign customers

and the jet's vague shadow over the water.

Following the Rostec announcement, Russian plane spotters rushed to Zhukovskiy to take pictures of the new plane — an eerie parallel with Cold War times when Western spies tried to get a glimpse of the latest Soviet warplanes at the tightly-guarded airfield that served as the country's top military aircraft test facility.

"Russia is one of the few countries in the world with full-cycle capacities for producing advanced aircraft systems, as well as a recognized trendsetter in the creation of combat aircraft," Rostec said.

The Kremlin has made modernization of the country's armed forces a top priority amid a bitter strain in relations with the West, which have sunk to post-Cold War lows after Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, accusations of Russian interference in elections, hacking attacks and other irritants.

US: Doing business in Hong Kong carries risk

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration issued a blanket warning Friday to U.S. firms about the risks of doing business in Hong Kong as China continues to clamp down on political and economic freedoms in the territory.

Four Cabinet agencies — the departments of State, Treasury, Commerce and Homeland Security — released the nine-page advisory that alerts companies about the shifting legal landscape in Hong Kong and the possibility that engaging with Hong Kong business could incur reputational and legal damages.

At the same time, Treasury announced sanctions against seven Chinese officials for violating the terms of the 2020 Hong Kong Autonomy Act, which calls for asset

freezes and other penalties against those who participate in the crackdown.

"Businesses, individuals, and other persons, including academic institutions, research service providers, and investors that operate in Hong Kong, or have exposure to sanctioned individuals or entities, should be aware of changes to Hong Kong's laws and regulations," said the notice, which is titled "Risks and Considerations for Businesses Operating in Hong Kong."

Hong Kong's government responded with a statement calling the U.S. advisory "totally ridiculous and unfounded fear-mongering" driven by ideology. "The main victims of this latest fallout will sadly be those U.S. businesses and U.S. citizens who have taken Hong Kong as their home," the statement said.

Ariz. governor declares emergency after floods

Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — A northern Arizona city was hit a third time with flooding on Friday, sending debris into the streets and forcing them to close.

Gov. Doug Ducey issued an emergency declaration earlier Friday for Coconino County, making up to \$200,000 available for response to flash flooding in the Flagstaff area. Residents reported streams of water flowing through their yards and on the busiest city streets.

The city of Flagstaff and Coconino County opened a joint emergency operations center. Some of the flooding occurred in neighborhoods that sit in the shadow of a mountain that burned in 2019.

"Severe post-wildfire flooding is creating dangerous challenges for communities in northern Arizona," Ducey said Friday. "The flood-

ing is causing road closures, damaging property and putting Arizonans' safety at risk."

The National Weather Service issued a barrage of weather statements on Friday, warning of flood potential across the state. Many places have received more rain in the past month than in the entire 2020 monsoon season, which ran from mid-June through September, the weather service said.

At least one death has been attributed to flooding. Grand Canyon National Park on Friday identified a woman who was found in the frigid Colorado River after a flash flood swept through her rafting group's trip.

Rebecca Copeland, 29, of Ann Arbor, Mich. was found near the camp where the group of 30 had set up the night before, park officials said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Driver crashes into home to avoid squirrel

MA HINGHAM — A driver who swerved to avoid a squirrel in the road crashed into a Massachusetts home that was built in 1650 by an ancestor of Abraham Lincoln, police said.

Neither the driver nor the occupants of the Hingham home known as the Samuel Lincoln House were injured in the crash, police said on Facebook.

The SUV was headed east when the driver, 19, swerved and drove off the right side of the road, over the sidewalk and into the living room, police said. Approximately half of the vehicle entered the home.

Woman accused of concealing mom's death

IL FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS — A southern Illinois woman was accused of concealing her mother's death and continuing to accept the financial benefits and assistance the woman received, authorities said.

Police found the body of Karen Hayashi, 80, in a bedroom of the home shared with her daughter. A neighbor had requested a well-being check.

Reena S. Hayashi, 48, of Fairview Heights is charged in St. Clair County Circuit Court with two counts of concealing a death and one count of obstructing justice.

When police asked her about her mother, Hayashi told them she had moved to Hawaii, which resulted in the obstruction charges.

"We're still trying to figure out when she died, but her body

had been there well over a year," Fairview Heights police spokesman Officer Tim Mueller said.

Teacher resigns after pupil's Hitler assignment

NJ TENAFLY — A New Jersey elementary school teacher will resign and a principal will be reinstated following a school board investigation into an incident involving a student who wrote an essay in Adolf Hitler's point of view and later dressed as Hitler for an assignment.

At a school board meeting, the board voted to accept the teacher's resignation after the unnamed teacher was on leave of absence since May. The board also reinstated Principal Jennifer Ferrara at Maugham Elementary School, NorthJersey.com reported.

The online outrage began when a photo of the student's report hanging in the school's hallway was posted on social media in late May. The teacher and principal were put on paid leave during the superintendent's investigation of the assignment.

Contractor dies after 40-foot fall through roof

PA BETHLEHEM — A contractor died after a 40-foot fall through the roof of a building in eastern Pennsylvania, authorities said.

Charles Irwin, 73, of Reynoldsville was pronounced dead at St. Luke's Hospital in Bethlehem, the coroner's office said.

An autopsy ruled the death accidental and due to multiple blunt force trauma from the fall, the coroner's office said.

Off-the-grid island getaway sold for \$365K

RI PORTSMOUTH — The only home on a small island in Rhode Island's Narragansett Bay has been sold.

The 600-square-foot, off-the-electrical-grid cottage on Patience Island — with the unique address of 0 Patience Way — sold for \$365,000, according to public records, lower than the \$399,900 asking price when it was first listed in April, The Newport Daily News reported.

The seasonal cottage comes with just under a half-acre of land, two bedrooms, a kitchenette, a half bath and what is described as a "picturesque front porch."

A single solar panel provides some electrical services.

Rehabbed manatee and calf set free in river

FL ORANGE CITY — A baby manatee and its injured mother are now swimming in Florida's St. Johns River after undergoing four months of rehabilitation at Sea World Orlando.

They were released near Blue Springs State Park, The Daytona Beach News-Journal reported.

The pair were brought to Sea World in March after researchers noticed signs of emaciation in the mom.

"She was underweight," Ally Greco, of Save the Manatee Club, told the newspaper. "However, this was not related to the starvation that was seen this winter in the Indian River Lagoon, as there was plenty of vegetation available near Blue Spring."

Woman accused of doing surgery without license

NV RENO — Washoe County sheriff's deputies arrested a woman accused of stealing more than \$22,000 from a dental office and performing dental surgery without a license.

Laurel Eich, 42, was charged with two counts of burglary and one count each of grand larceny, conspiracy to commit burglary and preform surgery on another without a license. She also faces three counts of violation of probation or condition of a suspended sentence.

During the investigation, detectives determined Eich had performed 13 tooth extractions on a patient and later admitted she told others she had used anesthetic disposed of by the dental office.

Man killed trying to climb out of maintenance hole

CA LOS ANGELES — A man in a maintenance hole on a Los Angeles street was killed when he tried to raise the cover just as a pickup drove over it, police said.

Video of the strange incident in the Panorama City area was released by the Los Angeles Police Department in an effort to identify the driver.

"As the vehicle drove over the manhole cover it was pushed down on top of the pedestrian who fell back down the manhole," a police press release said.

The cover flipped up behind the pickup, which continued on. It was described as a 2008-to-2012 white Chevrolet Silverado.

— From wire reports



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Baker finally settling in with Astros

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Dusty Baker never felt quite right while navigating his first season as manager of the Houston Astros during last year's pandemic-shortened campaign.

"I felt like a substitute teacher," Baker said.

Now, halfway through his second season in Houston, he has settled in, and the Astros are tied for the second-best record in the American League as they come out of the All-Star break.

"This year I feel like the teacher," he said. "I feel like I'm one of them."

Baker was already playing catch-up in getting to know his team last season before the pandemic hit. He was hired only

about two weeks before the start of spring training to replace A.J. Hinch, who was fired after being suspended by Major League Baseball for a year for his role in the team's sign-stealing scandal.

"We had spring training; I was learning them, they were learning me and then we had the stoppage," Baker said. "Then we had to come back right quick and then we only had 60 games and there wasn't time for that switch to flip."

Baker can't point to a single moment when he began to feel at home with the team. It was more of a gradual progression that was helped by having an entire offseason to check up on his players and get to know

them a bit off the field.

The whirlwind of last season not only made it difficult for Baker to settle in, it also made it tougher for the players to really get comfortable with him. Now that they've already played more games than they did all last season, the players are finally getting to know their manager.

And they love what they're seeing from Baker.

"He's bringing a lot to the team," All-Star second baseman Jose Altuve said. "Not just his energy, but his commitment to the team, the passion he has about the game, about every player here."

The Astros are 56-36, tied with Boston for the best record

in the AL. They lead the AL West by 3½ games over second-place Oakland.

Houston has remained one of the top teams in the AL despite starting pitchers Framber Valdez and Jake Odorizzi missing time with injuries and star third baseman Alex Bregman sitting out the last month with a quadriceps strain. Those injuries came after they lost center fielder George Springer in free agency and ace Justin Verlander to Tommy John surgery last season.

The biggest reason for Houston's success this year has been the team's powerful offense. The Astros lead the majors in batting average (.269), hits (848) and runs (503).

Rodriguez helps Red Sox shut out Yankees

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Eduardo Rodriguez shut down the short-handed Yankees into the sixth inning, Christian Arroyo and J.D. Martinez homered and the Boston Red Sox beat their rivals 4-0 on Friday night with the New York Yankees missing slugger Aaron Judge and five others due to a coronavirus outbreak.

A day after the series opener was postponed for testing and contact tracing, Judge, third baseman Gio Urshela and catcher Kyle Higashioka were added to the COVID-19 injured list. They joined Yankees pitchers Jonathan Loaisiga, Nestor Cortes Jr. and Wandy Peralta, who have also tested positive over the past week.

New York was also without first baseman Luke Voit, who went on the injured list Friday with a bone bruise in his left knee.

Rodriguez (7-5) allowed two hits over 5½ innings, retiring 10 straight during one stretch and finishing with eight strikeouts. Hirokazu Sawamura got the final out of the sixth, and Tanner Houck pitched the final three innings, closing out Boston's three-hitter for his first big league save.

Padres 24, Nationals 8: Jake Cronenworth hit for his first career cycle, Wil Myers had a grand slam and a two-run shot and visiting San Diego blew out Washington to set a franchise record for runs.

The Padres had 22 hits against seven pitchers. San Diego scored in every inning except the seventh as the Nationals allowed the most runs since the franchise moved to Washington in 2005.

Dodgers 10, Rockies 4: Julio Urias (12-3) became the first 12-game winner in the majors, Will Smith drove in four runs and visiting Los Angeles beat coronavirus-compromised Colorado.

The Rockies were without manager Bud Black and five other team members due to health and safety protocols and contact tracing.

Cubs 5, Diamondbacks 1: Kyle Hendricks (12-4) outpitched Madison Bumgarner (4-6) in six effective innings for his 10th straight victory and visiting Chicago beat Arizona.

Blue Jays 10, Rangers 2: At Buffalo, N.Y., Vladimir Guerrero Jr. followed up his breakout All-Star Game with two homers to help Toronto beat Texas.

Astros 7, White Sox 1: Lance McCullers Jr. (7-2) pitched seven sparkling innings and visiting Houston beat Chicago in the opener of the weekend series between AL division leaders.

Pirates 4, Mets 1: Coming off their first All-Star appearances, Bryan Reynolds homered and Adam Frazier hit a two-run single to lead host Pittsburgh past New

York.

Phillies 5-0, Marlins 2-7: Jesus Aguilar homered and drove in four runs, Starling Marte went deep with three RBIs and visiting Miami beat Philadelphia to split a doubleheader.

In the opener, Travis Jankowski drove in four runs and Matt Moore struck out nine while pitching into the fifth inning to lead the Phillies.

Brewers 11, Reds 6: Willy Adames homered and drove in four runs in visiting Milwaukee's victory over Cincinnati.

Rays 7, Braves 6 (10): Austin Meadows hit a single in the 10th-inning to score Brett Phillips from second base in visiting Tampa Bay's victory over Atlanta.

Giants 7, Cardinals 2: Mike Yastrzemski hit two home runs, Logan Webb pitched four strong innings as a spot starter and visiting San Francisco beat St. Louis.

Royals 9, Orioles 2: Nicky Lopez drove in four runs to lead host Kansas City past Baltimore.

Athletics 5, Indians 4: Jed Lowrie hit a game-ending, two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning and host Oakland rallied past Cleveland.

Mariners 6, Angels 5: Mitch Haniger had three hits, including a two-run homer, and Chris Flexen (9-3) continued his mastery of Los Angeles as visiting Seattle won.

Koepka, Johnson fall back at British Open

Associated Press

SANDWICH, England — Saturday is moving day at the British Open, and Dustin Johnson and Brooks Koepka are moving in the wrong direction.

Johnson started out four shots behind Friday leader Louis Oosthuizen, made two superb par saves to start his round and then it began to unravel. Johnson, the No. 1 player in the world, had four bogeys in the front nine, was plus-5 through 11 and didn't make his first birdie until No. 14, but also put up a birdie at No. 16 and finished at 3-over for the day.

Koepka had three bogeys in his opening five holes before making a birdie. He just

added another birdie on the 14th, but added a bogey on No. 16, finished 2-over for the round and is at 3-under overall for the tournament.

Oosthuizen was tied at 11 with Jordan Spieth and Collin Morikawa though his first 15 holes on Saturday, but birdied No. 16 to retake the lead at 12-under.

The South African Oosthuizen had a two-putt birdie on the par-5 seventh and rolled in a 15-foot birdie putt on the ninth. After having only one bogey in his first 45 holes, he had two in a three-hole stretch with problems at No. 11 and No. 13.

Morikawa had two bogeys on the front nine, but salvaged his round with birdies on

Nos. 7, 8, 13 and 14.

Spieth had four birdies to go with a bogey on his front nine and had another birdie at No. 10 before cooling off with a bogey at 11, five straight pars and then another bogey at 17 to fall two shots back.

Another Canadian is in the mix at a major. This time it's Corey Connors, who quietly put together one of the better rounds Saturday. He opened with nine straight pars. Then, he ran off four birdies over the next five holes and closed with four pars.

That's a 66, and it puts Connors at 8-under 20. Mackenzie Hughes was under for his round at Royal St. George's and finished 7 under after birdies at Nos. 14, 16 and 18.

NHL's expansion struggles changed with Vegas, Seattle

Associated Press

SEATTLE — When the NHL hit the accelerator on expansion some 30 years ago, it brought hockey to untapped markets, warm weather destinations and established a footprint throughout all corners of North America.

It also created some pretty terrible teams and wins were hard to come by in Tampa Bay, Anaheim, Ottawa, Atlanta and Nashville for several seasons.

"In the past, we were in the era of expansion teams, so when Atlanta came in, you didn't necessarily need to be your best and still be able to win the game because the team you're playing against wasn't like the Vegas expansion team. They were a true expansion team, and they struggled," former Washington Capitals goalie Olie Kolzig recalled. "You had Columbus when they came in, you had Minnesota when they came in, so there was a handful of those nights that (you couldn't) take off but you knew you didn't have to be your best."

The NHL reworked its expansion draft rules in 2017 and Vegas flipped the league on its head by becoming the most successful first-year franchise in NHL history, reaching the Stanley Cup Final in the Golden Knights' inaugural season.

The same rules are in place, meaning the Seattle Kraken franchise is in the same situation when it drafts its first team next Wednesday. In theory, Seattle general manager Ron Francis can put a competitive team on the ice from the outset, just like Vegas.

If only that was the case years ago.

"Hindsight is always 20/20, but I really

think the NHL erred in and how they treated the expansion teams all the way up until Vegas," said Nashville general manager David Poile, who drafted the first Predators roster in 1998.

Teams often went through several roster iterations before success was achieved. When the New York Islanders started their run of four straight Stanley Cup titles in the 1979-80 season there was only one player — Hall of Fame goalie Billy Smith — still on the roster from their expansion draft in 1972.

"We were dealing with a lot of older guys that probably were at the end of the line," said Carolina general manager Don Waddell, who was the GM in Atlanta when the Thrashers arrived in 1999. "I think we only had one guy stay past two years with our franchise from the expansion draft, which is not the way you probably would hope to set out with an expansion draft."

After the expansion rush that began in 1991, no team found success faster than the Florida Panthers, who opened play in 1993 and reached the Stanley Cup Final in 1996. The Panthers featured 10 players from their expansion draft on the roster for the 1996 season, including leading scorer Scott Melanby, but the lineup had been supplemented through the draft (Rob Niedermayer) and trades (Robert Svehla and Stu Barnes).

Ottawa is another example of an expansion franchise that was thumped early but created a foundation that led to 11 straight playoff berths beginning with the Senators' fifth season.

At the other end was Tampa Bay, which spent 10 seasons mostly at the bottom of the

standings with just one playoff berth. The Lightning are the defending back-to-back champions now, with three titles overall, but it took time and investment to finally get there.

Waddell was long gone from Atlanta by the time the Thrashers made the playoffs in 2007, their only playoff berth before moving to Winnipeg. It took six seasons for Poile and the Predators to make the postseason.

"Almost philosophically we drafted a lot of players that we knew would not be with our team for more than a couple of years," Poile said.

The NHL went through a lengthy expansion pause but when the Golden Knights arrived, friendlier rules and the guile of the Vegas front office transformed the expectations for any team going forward. Vegas found ways to leverage salary cap issues, pilfered teams with bloated rosters and were willing to take on veterans to be solid from the start.

"After the fact, the word I most used most often to describe the entire process was fascinating," said Vegas GM Kelly McCrimmon, who was assistant GM to George McPhee during the expansion draft. "It was a fascinating process to be part of."

It worked, too: Vegas earned 109 points in its first season and 93 in its second — 61.6% of all the possible points the Golden Knights could have earned over its first 164 regular-season games. Of the previous nine expansion teams, none earned more than 83 points (Florida, 1993-94) in either of their first two seasons. Both San Jose and Ottawa failed to top 40 points in either of their first two campaigns.

Aussies stun US women in exhibition

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Breanna Stewart and her U.S. Olympic teammates aren't panicking, even though they've lost consecutive games for the first time in a decade.

Two days after losing to a team of WNBA All-Stars, the Americans fell to Australia 70-67 on Friday in a pre-Olympic exhibition game.

"There's a standard and the standard is winning and we haven't gotten to that point yet," said Stewart, who scored 17 points for the U.S. "It's frustrating, it's part of the game and part of the process. When we get to Tokyo and get to the Olympics that's when it's really, really crunch time. We're continuing to elevate and get better every day. We'll get to

where we want to be."

The U.S. struggled from the outside, missing 16 of its 18 three-point attempts. The Americans, who got together as a team for the first time last week, also had 18 turnovers.

"In the third quarter, we turned the ball over and gave Australia too many easy baskets," U.S. coach Dawn Staley said. "We were able to defend when we're in front of them. When we turned the ball over, we weren't able to get back."

It was the first time the U.S. has lost back-to-back games since 2011 in Spain. The Americans had gone 29-2 since then in exhibition games.

Ezi Magbegor, Stewart's Seattle Storm teammate, scored 17 points to lead Australia.

Stewart's three-point play tied the game at 66 with 2:59 left before Magbegor scored and Marianna Tolo made a reverse layup with 2 minutes remaining to give Australia a 70-66 advantage.

The U.S. missed seven straight shots before Brittney Griner was fouled with 17 seconds left. She made one of two free throws.

After a timeout, the U.S. committed four consecutive fouls to try to get Australia to the foul line. After the fourth foul, Australia turned the ball over with 10.9 seconds left, but Stewart's three-pointer before the buzzer was off the mark.

The loss comes on the heels of the U.S. men dropping exhibitions against Nigeria and Australia.

The Opals' victory came hours after star center Liz Cambage withdrew from the team, citing mental and physical health concerns. She had been worried about the experience at the Tokyo Games, with players isolated in a bubble-like environment. Cambage posted a statement on social media late Thursday night saying the prospect of having no friends, no family, no fans and no support system outside the women's basketball squad was "honestly terrifying."

"It hasn't been easy, definitely," said Australia coach Sandy Brondello, who had never beaten the U.S. as a coach or player. "It shows the character of this team. I wasn't sure what the game would look like today."

Johnson, McGee named as replacements for US men

Associated Press

The U.S. basketball team has lost two games and now two players on its road to Tokyo.

Kevin Love withdrew from the Olympics on Friday because of a right calf injury, forcing the Americans to replace a player for the second straight day.

Love's withdrawal came after the Americans announced Thursday that Washington Wizards guard Bradley Beal would miss the Olympics because he was in health and safety protocols.

Veteran center JaVale McGee and Spurs guard Keldon Johnson were added later Friday to the 12-man Olympic roster as replacements. It means that much of the U.S. roster will have little time together before its Olympic opener July 25 against France.

"I think coming into something like this, you know that things can come up, especially coming out of a pandemic and the possibility of guys maybe testing positive," U.S. guard Damian Lillard said.

"Injuries happen. People have a change of heart. You just come into it expecting that. But I think our primary focus was to come here and come together as a team, get our bodies moving around, get in

shape to be able to go compete on the level that we want to compete on and I think we've moved in that direction as a group. We feel good about where we are."

Lillard spoke after the team's practice in Las Vegas. The Americans were supposed to play Friday night against Australia, but that exhibition was canceled because of health and safety concerns.

Johnson, who plays for U.S. coach Gregg Popovich in San Antonio, was a member of the select team of young players training against the Americans, and had appeared in two of their exhibition games.

McGee, who played for the Cleveland Cavaliers and Denver Nuggets last season, has won three NBA titles but has no Olympic experience. He has been involved in the national team program since 2009.

Love would have been trying for a second Olympic gold medal, having played for the Americans in London in 2012. He also was on the team that won gold two years earlier in the world championships.

That past USA Basketball experience helped him get selected for this roster despite his difficult NBA season. Love missed 46 games because of the injury

and averaged just 12.2 points in 25 games.

He played in two of the Americans' three exhibition games in Las Vegas, scoring one point.

The U.S. was already short-handed before the losses of Beal and Love. Milwaukee's Jrue Holiday and Khris Middleton, along with Phoenix star Devin Booker, won't join the team until after the NBA Finals.

With them not joining the team until after camp and forward Jerami Grant also in health and safety protocols — though with his Olympics not expected to be in jeopardy — the Americans are without half the players they will take to Tokyo.

Guard Zach LaVine said he didn't have any concerns about the team's readiness.

"I think we're the best basketball players in the world," he said. "We're able to compete and do things under certain circumstances and we've got to go out here and get the job done regardless. So I don't think anybody's going to feel bad for us or try to take it easy. It's just what it is and we've got to still get a job done."

The Americans dropped their first two games before beating Argentina. They have one exhibition left against Spain.