

Study eyes injury rates of sexes in military

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

The reason U.S. servicewomen seem to be injured more than their male counterparts may be lower fitness levels at the start of basic training combined with less reluctance to report their injuries and seek care, according to a new study.

The study found that women were more than twice as likely as men to be at risk of injury during basic training and 1.7 times as likely during officer training. But after initial training, women's injury risk dropped to 1.23 times as likely as men's.

Those findings, derived from an analysis of 25 studies on military injury, were published Monday in the journal *BMC Women's Health*.

Women tended to improve their fitness during basic training more than men and reported their injuries sooner and more fre-

quently, the analysis found.

After adjusting for differences between the sexes in average fitness levels based on their times in the 2-mile run, there was no longer a significant difference in injury rates during basic training, the study found.

The 25 studies examined how differences between men and women may contribute to injury variability among military personnel.

For example, the fact that women are shorter on average makes them susceptible to over-striding while marching in formation when the pace is set by men, researchers said.

Other researchers suggested that bone differences "predispose female personnel to a higher incidence of injury, particularly those classified as overuse injuries," they said.

Differences in which body parts are injured have been observed, with foot injuries more common for women during marches and ankle injuries more common among

men, according to the analysis.

Researchers also found that the manner in which injuries were reported made a statistical difference.

Self-reports significantly underestimate injury rates when compared with those coming from medical care, the analysis noted. Female personnel are more likely to seek medical assistance.

One study of Marine Corps recruits showed no difference in injury rates between sexes when both reported and nonreported injuries were pooled, the analysis said.

Given that the difference in injury rates declined as military careers progressed and female personnel are more prone to report injuries, the variability in injury rate is "unlikely to be due to biological sex ... but rather to average sex-based differences in fitness levels, reporting behaviors and possibly other factors," the analysis concluded.

Russian airstrikes hit Black Sea regions of Ukraine

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia targeted Ukraine's Black Sea regions of Odesa and Mykolaiv with airstrikes Tuesday, hitting private buildings and port infrastructure along the country's southern coast, the Ukrainian military said.

The Kremlin's forces used air-launched missiles in the attack, Ukraine's Operational Command South said in a Facebook post.

In the Odesa region, a number of private buildings in coastal villages were hit and caught fire, the report said. In the Mykolaiv region, port infrastructure was targeted despite the agreements Moscow and Kyiv signed last week that was intended to allow grain shipments to resume from Ukraine's Black Sea ports.

Hours after the strikes, a Moscow-installed official in southern Ukraine said the Odesa and My-

kolaiv regions would soon be "liberated" by Russian forces, just like the already occupied Kherson region further east.

"The Kherson region and the city of Kherson have been liberated forever," the region's Russia-appointed official, Kirill Stremousov, was quoted as saying by Russian state news agency RIA Novosti.

Meanwhile, Russia's top diplomat repeated his insistence that Moscow was ready to hold talks with Ukraine on ending the war, though he once again claimed that Kyiv's Western allies oppose a deal.

"We never refused to have talks, because everybody knows that any hostilities end at the negotiating table," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Tuesday during a trip to Uganda.

He said negotiations have gone no further since a meeting between the two sides in Istanbul at

the end of March.

While Ukrainian officials have spoken of a possible counteroffensive in the south, the British Defense Ministry said Tuesday that there was no indication a Ukrainian warship and a stockpile of anti-ship missiles were at Odesa's port, as Moscow claimed when it struck the site over the weekend.

The British ministry said Russia sees Ukraine's use of anti-ship missiles as "a key threat" that is limiting its Black Sea Fleet.

"This has significantly undermined the overall invasion plan, as Russia cannot realistically attempt an amphibious assault to seize Odesa," the military said. "Russia will continue to prioritize efforts to degrade and destroy Ukraine's anti-ship capability."

In addition, "Russia's targeting processes are highly likely routinely undermined by dated intelligence, poor planning and a top-

down approach to operations."

In other military developments, Russian shelling over the previous 24 hours killed at least three civilians and wounded eight more in Ukraine, the Ukrainian president's office said Tuesday. In the eastern Donetsk region, where the fighting has been focused in recent weeks, shelling continued along the entire front line, with the largest cities of the region, including Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Toretsk, targeted by Russian forces, the presidential office said.

Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko accused Russian troops of using cluster munitions and repeated his call for civilians to evacuate.

"There is not a single safe place left, everything is being shelled," Kyrylenko said in televised remarks. "But there are still evacuation routes for the civilian population."

SC man among 2 Americans killed in Ukraine

AP/Report for America

A South Carolina man serving as a medic in the Ukrainian military was identified by his commanding officer over the weekend as one of two Americans killed in action last week.

Luke “Skywalker” Lucyszyn, a 31-year-old Myrtle Beach resident, died on July 18 in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine after he was knocked unconscious by an artillery strike and fatally shot by a Russian tank, his commander, Ruslan Miroshnichenko, wrote on Facebook.

The State Department confirmed the deaths of two Americans in Ukraine on Friday but did not release their names or further details. Family and friends have confirmed reports that Lucyszyn was one of the men who died.

Miroshnichenko identified the other American as Bryan Young.

Other information about Young wasn’t immediately available Monday.

Thousands of foreign fighters, including many Americans, have joined Ukrainian forces battling Russia since it invaded Feb. 24. Some of the volunteers are hardened veterans from other wars; others have little to no military experience.

Lucyszyn’s longtime friend Trey Kober, of North Myrtle Beach, said Lucyszyn left for Ukraine in early April after telling close friends he felt a responsibility to defend his late grandmother’s homeland.

Lucyszyn volunteered to take the place of another man who needed to be with his family, Kober said.

“I was proud of him,” Kober said Monday. “He relieved the man, and he immediately started teaching others because some of

these guys had never held guns before, had never loaded ammunition into magazines.”

Kober, 40, befriended Lucyszyn on a North Carolina paintball course 12 years ago and took on “an older brother role” for the young paintball instructor. The two spent their weekends camping in the woods and playing multiday paintball matches with friends. Lucyszyn later worked as a police officer and was the father of two children.

Two weeks before his death, Lucyszyn said goodbye to Kober in an emotional Facebook message after he learned his platoon would soon be sent to the more dangerous Donbas region, where Russia has focused most of its firepower, bombarding cities and towns, in its assault on Ukraine.

“He was pretty confident he wouldn’t be coming back,” Kob-

er said. “He sent us a serious message that said he was being sent to the frontlines to relieve a platoon that had been there for a long time, and he basically just told us, ‘I’m not coming back from this. This is it.’”

Though Kober knew his friend might die in battle, he said nothing could have prepared him for the shock when he learned the news.

Lucyszyn’s parents, Kathryn and George Lucyszyn, said the State Department informed them of their son’s death on a phone call Tuesday. The Calabash, N.C., residents said they tried to dissuade their son from serving abroad, but he insisted it was his calling.

“He didn’t go there to be a hero,” Lucyszyn’s mother said Saturday in an interview with NBC News. “He went there because he wanted to help people.”

After 2024, Russia to opt out of International Space Station

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia will opt out of the International Space Station after 2024 and focus on building its own orbiting outpost, the country’s newly appointed space chief said Tuesday.

Yuri Borisov, who was appointed earlier this month to lead the state-controlled space corporation Roscosmos, said during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin that Russia will fulfill its obligations to other partners at the International Space Station before it leaves the project.

“The decision to leave the station after 2024 has been made,” Borisov said.

Borisov’s statement reaffirmed previous declarations by Russian space officials about Moscow’s intention to leave the

space outpost after 2024. It comes amid soaring tensions between Russia and the West over the Kremlin’s military action in Ukraine.

Despite the rift, NASA and Roscosmos made a deal earlier this month for astronauts to continue riding Russian rockets and for Russian cosmonauts to catch lifts to the International Space Station with SpaceX beginning this fall.

The agreement ensures the space station will always have at least one American and one Russian on board to keep both sides of the orbiting outpost running smoothly, according to NASA and Russian officials. The swap had long been in the works and was finalized despite frictions over Ukraine in a sign of continuing Russia-U.S. cooperation in space.

Navy officer reports to prison; US lawmakers pledge support

BY ALEX WILSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Navy Lt. Ridge Alkonis, convicted of causing the deaths of two Japanese citizens last year, reported to a Japanese prison on Monday after U.S. lawmakers voiced disappointment with Japan’s handling of his case.

Alkonis, 34, of Claremont, Calif., was sentenced in October in Shizuoka District Court to three years in jail for negligent driving causing death. The Tokyo High Court rejected his appeal July 13.

U.S. Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo confirmed by phone Tuesday that Alkonis reported to the Tokyo High Court’s Prosecutors Office on Monday and was taken to the Tokyo Detention House for processing. She said he’ll ultimately be placed in Yokosuka Prison.

Alkonis was driving on May 29, 2021, when his car plowed into pedestrians and parked cars outside a soba restaurant in Fujinomiya. Alkonis, his wife and three children were returning from a hike on Mount Fuji. A woman, 85, died that day; her son-in-law, 54, died June 11, 2021. A second woman, 53, the daughter and wife of the other victims, was injured. Alkonis testified that a case of altitude sickness caused him to lose consciousness behind the wheel.

Rep. Mike Levin, D-Calif., on July 22 said the trial process was unfair to Alkonis and violated the status of forces agreement.

On Monday, Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, tweeted that the United States should consider reevaluating SOFA if “this is how Japan is going to treat U.S. military personnel who have done NOTHING wrong ...”

Abortion debate draws crowds, VP Harris

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Thousands of people arguing the abortion issue surrounded the Indiana Statehouse and filled its corridors Monday as state lawmakers began consideration of a Republican proposal to ban nearly all abortions in the state and Vice President Kamala Harris denounced the effort during a meeting with Democratic legislators.

Harris said during a trip to Indianapolis that the abortion ban proposal reflects a health care crisis in the country.

Despite the bill's abortion ban language, anti-abortion activists lined up before a legislative committee to argue that the bill wasn't strict enough and lacked enforcement teeth.

Indiana is one of the first Republican-run state legislatures to debate tighter abortion laws following the U.S. Supreme Court decision last month overturning *Roe v. Wade*. The Supreme Court ruling is expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states.

"Maybe some people need to actually learn how a woman's body works," Harris

said Monday, eliciting murmurs and laughs from the Democratic legislators. "The parameters that are being proposed mean that for the vast majority of women, by the time she realizes she is pregnant, she will effectively be prohibited from having access to reproductive health care that will allow her to choose what happens to her body."

Confrontations erupted periodically between anti-abortion and abortion-rights demonstrators around the Indiana Statehouse.

One person carrying a message on cardboard — "Forced Birth Is Violence" — followed a man, who carried a fake red fetus in a plastic bag over his shoulder, and tried to obscure his sign that read "Save Our Babies."

Some people had virulent arguments encircled by other demonstrators

"You think you should dictate my life and my kids' lives. That's what you're saying," Kait Schultz, who wore a dark gray "Pregnant and Pissed" shirt, shouted to Christopher Monaghan.

"You don't want to have a conversation," Monaghan replied as they spoke over each

other. He held a vertical sign that read "Babies Lives Matter."

Elsewhere Monday, lawmakers in West Virginia's Republican majority Legislature hurried to advance legislation that would criminalize abortion with few exceptions. A bill introduced Monday makes providing an abortion a felony carrying up to 10 years in prison. It provides exceptions only in cases where there is an ectopic pregnancy, a "nonmedically viable fetus" or a medical emergency.

West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice abruptly added state abortion law to the state Legislature's agenda for a special session he called for Monday to focus on his income tax cut plan.

In his announcement, Justice asked legislators to "clarify and modernize" the state abortion laws in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling.

A week ago, a Charleston judge blocked enforcement of the state's 150-year-old abortion ban, saying the recent laws enacted by the West Virginia Legislature "hopelessly conflict with the criminal abortion ban."

Record rainfall causes flooding in St. Louis area

Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. — Record rainfall caused widespread flash flooding across the St. Louis area early Tuesday, closing multiple roadways and prompting rescues from vehicles and homes.

There were no immediate reports of injuries to people, but several puppies drowned when water got into a building at Stray Paws Adoptables, a stray dog rescue operation in St. Peters. Firefighters in boats were able to rescue other dogs from the building.

Damage across the St. Louis region was widespread after a massive downpour dropped more than 11 inches of rain in parts of St. Charles County and up to 10 inches elsewhere in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

By 8 a.m., 8.3 inches of rain had fallen at Lambert Airport,

demolishing the previous daily record of 6.85 inches set Aug. 20, 1915, when remnants of the Galveston, Texas, hurricane moved north to St. Louis.

Forecasters expected Tuesday's rain to wrap up by late-morning, but more storms were likely through the rest of the week.

Firefighters across the St. Louis region were busy with water rescues.

A section of Interstate 70 was closed in St. Peters, and many other roadways were flooded. Some vehicles were completely submerged.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol on Twitter urged drivers to avoid I-70. Some motorists took to social media to report being stranded for several hours.

At one point, sections of interstates 64, 55 and 44 also were closed in the St. Louis area.

Study: Millennials haven't strayed far from home

Associated Press

Growing up in mid-sized Virginia Beach, Andrew Waldholtz wanted to live in a big city, so he moved to Washington, D.C., for college.

After four years in the comparatively expensive city, he realized he wanted a place to live that was more affordable.

Waldholtz, 35, eventually found a happy compromise in St. Louis, whose Midwestern affordability and opportunities to build his career in corporate compliance had the added bonus that his sister and brother-in-law lived there.

Now living 940 miles away from Virginia Beach, Waldholtz is in a distinct minority among others who reached adulthood in the 21st century in that he resides a half-continent away from where he

grew up, according to a new study by U.S. Census Bureau and Harvard University researchers released Monday.

The study found that by age 26, more than two-thirds of young adults in the United States lived in the same area where they grew up, 80% had moved less than 100 miles away and 90% resided less than 500 miles away.

Migration distances were shorter for Black and Hispanic individuals, compared to white and Asian young adults, and the children of higher income parents traveled farther away from their hometowns than those of less wealthy parents, according to the study.

"For many individuals, the 'radius of economic opportunity' is quite narrow," the report said.

Feds file suit against poultry producers

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department filed a lawsuit Monday against some of the largest poultry producers in the U.S. along with a proposed settlement seeking to end what it claims have been longstanding deceptive and abusive practices for workers.

The suit, filed in federal court in Maryland, names Cargill, Sanderson Farms and Wayne Farms, along with a data consulting company known as Webber, Meng, Sahl and Co. and its president.

In its lawsuit, the Justice Department alleges the companies have been engaged in a multiyear conspiracy to exchange information about the wages and benefits of workers at poultry processing plants to drive down employee competition in the marketplace. The companies did not im-

mediately respond to messages seeking comment.

The government contends the data consulting firm helped share the information about the workers' compensation with the companies and their executives. By carrying out the scheme, officials allege, the companies were able to compete less intensely for workers and reduce the amount of money and benefits they had to offer their employees, suppressing competition for poultry processing workers across the board, according to court papers.

The defendants and unnamed co-conspirators in the lawsuit account for hiring about 90% of all chicken processing jobs in the nation.

The suit is the latest example of the Justice Department's antitrust enforcement targeting companies the government be-

lieves engage in anti-competitive behavior to stifle workers or harm consumers. It also comes as the department continues a broader investigation into labor abuses in the poultry industry.

"Through a brazen scheme to exchange wage and benefit information, these poultry processors stifled competition and harmed a generation of plant workers who face demanding and sometimes dangerous conditions to earn a living," said Doha Mekki, the principal deputy assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's antitrust division.

The suit against the companies was filed with a proposed consent decree — a settlement that would require the companies to pay \$84.8 million in restitution for workers who were harmed by the unlawful information sharing network.

Official: Grass fire burns as many as 20 Texas homes

Associated Press

DALLAS — A grass fire apparently sparked by a mower swept about 300 yards across a tinder-dry open field to a suburban Dallas subdivision Monday, burning through wooden fences and torching as many as 20 homes, officials said.

The blaze in Balch Springs was the latest in drought-stricken North Texas, which has been vulnerable to explosive wildfires for at least two weeks.

The mower was being used in the open field to trim the brush when its blade

struck some debris and generated a spark that ignited the blaze, said Balch Springs Fire Marshal Sean Davis. The fire spread quickly north from the shoulder of Interstate 20 to the subdivision at about 4 p.m. Monday, causing varying degrees of damage to 14 to 20 homes before the flames were contained, Davis said.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, he said.

Aerial video showed the fire spread up and down the street as firefighters and homeowners working in 103-degree heat tried to prevent the fire from spreading to

more of the bricked frame homes. One end of the fire spread to a home where a panicked dog ran back and forth before running through a pet door at a neighboring home. The fate of pets was not immediately known, Davis said.

Fire crews from Dallas and other nearby suburbs went to the scene to assist Balch Springs crews.

Firefighting teams have thrown dozens of extra crew members into the fight over the weekend against a North Texas wildfire that has destroyed 16 homes and damaged five others, officials said Monday.

Firefighters slow growth of Calif. blaze near Yosemite

Associated Press

JERSEYDALE, Calif. — Firefighters have significantly slowed the spread of a huge wildfire burning in a forest near Yosemite National Park that burned 55 homes and other buildings and forced thousands from their homes, officials said Monday.

"It was a successful day for aircraft and firefighters, resulting in minimal growth on the fire. Helicopters dropped 300,000 gallons of water on the fire. Crews continue to construct control lines and extinguish hot spots along existing lines," said a Monday night report by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

Thousands of residents from mountain communities were still under evacuation

orders Monday while smoke from the fire drifted more than 200 miles, reaching Lake Tahoe, parts of Nevada and the San Francisco Bay Area, officials said.

"It's been just horrendous with the air quality," said Kim Zagaris, an adviser with the Western Fire Chiefs Association, which maps wildfires across the country.

More than 2,500 firefighters with aircraft support were battling the blaze, known as the Oak Fire, that erupted last Friday southwest of the park, near the town of Midpines in Mariposa County. Officials described "explosive fire behavior" on Saturday as flames made runs through bone-dry vegetation caused by the worst drought in decades.

The blaze had consumed 27 square miles of forest land, with 16% containment, Cal Fire said. The cause was under investigation.

Firefighters on Monday struggled in steep terrain in temperatures that reached the mid- to high-90s.

On Sunday, ground forces protected homes as air tankers dropped retardant on 50-foot flames racing along ridgetops east of the tiny community of Jerseydale.

There are two major blazes burning in California, which is experiencing a fairly typical ramp-up to what is sure to be an active fire year once California's infamous Santa Ana and Diablo wind events begin in September, Zagaris said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Muhammad Ali's 'Rumble in the Jungle' belt sold

TX DALLAS — Muhammad Ali's championship belt from his 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" heavyweight title fight was sold at auction for \$6.18 million.

The winner of the heated competition for the belt was Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, according to Heritage Auctions in Dallas.

In a tweet, Irsay confirmed he acquired the belt for his collection of rock music, American history and pop culture memorabilia that is currently touring the country.

The belt will be displayed on Aug. 2 at Chicago's Navy Pier and on Sept. 9 in Indianapolis.

The 1974 fight was one of boxing's most memorable moments. Ali stopped the fearsome George Foreman to recapture the heavyweight title in the African nation of Zaire, now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Ali won the fight in a knockout in the eighth round.

Police investigate hotel theft of ancient Torah

NV LAS VEGAS — Authorities said they are still investigating the reported theft of an ancient Torah from a man who was staying at a hotel on the Las Vegas Strip.

Metro Police said the item was reported stolen from The Venetian. They said a man told detectives that he had left his Torah inside of the convention room that had been converted into a synagogue.

Police said the Torah had been used in the convention room since June 8 and had remained in

that location until it was reported stolen two days later.

Hotel video surveillance showed a man walking through the property pulling a suitcase on wheels, but police said they have not been able to identify the suspect yet.

Chemical's release so stinky it broke the law

NC CHARLOTTE. — Officials said an environmental cleanup company violated a county's "objectionable odor rule" when it accidentally released a smelly chemical that offended nostrils and caused alarm across Charlotte.

The Charlotte Observer reported that the area's 911 system was flooded with calls from people who thought they smelled a leak of natural gas. Climate conditions around the city seemed to spread the smell broadly.

In fact, though, a company called Legacy Environmental Services accidentally released a chemical called mercaptan while it was recycling four metal tanks.

Mercaptan is the otherwise harmless chemical added to natural gas that smells like rotten eggs so people can detect a possible leak.

The Observer reported that Mecklenburg County officials said the release has been classified as a violation and that they are seeking more information from the company to determine next steps.

Man posed as young girl to get explicit videos

MD BALTIMORE — A Baltimore man has pleaded guilty to charges he

posed as a young girl to induce teenage boys to send him sexually explicit images and videos before he extorted them, a federal prosecutor said.

Matthew K. Walsh, 24, pleaded guilty to sexual exploitation of a minor in order to produce child pornography, said U.S. Attorney Erik L. Barron.

According to his plea agreement, from at least 2016 through 2021, Walsh created fake online profiles on multiple platforms posing as a young girl to make contact with boys between the ages of 12 and 17 and induce them to produce sexually explicit images and videos.

Once Walsh got the images, he extorted the boys into producing more explicit images and videos, threatening to send the earlier images to their friends if they didn't, the plea agreement said. Prosecutors said Walsh also uploaded the files to various social media accounts and sold the sexually explicit files to others.

To date, more than 40 boys have been positively identified as victims of Walsh's conduct, and at least 30 victims' pictures and videos were sold and/or distributed to others by Walsh.

Authorities: Plane hits turbulence, diverted

AL BIRMINGHAM — An American Airlines plane bound for Nashville, Tenn., with 56 people from Tampa, Fla., was diverted to an Alabama airport after hitting severe turbulence, and at least eight minor injuries were reported, authorities said.

Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service responded to Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport, fire Capt. Orlando

Reynolds told news outlets. The plane hit unexpected turbulence over the Pensacola area of the Florida Panhandle and was diverted, officials said.

Reynolds said 52 passengers were aboard the Embraer E175 plane along with two pilots and two flight attendants. Ten people were evaluated, and two flight attendants and six passengers were taken to an area hospital with minor injuries, the airline said in a statement.

The airline said it was bringing in another aircraft for the other passengers to board and continue on to Tennessee.

Man sentenced in illegal guiding services case

AK ANCHORAGE — A man has been sentenced to six months in prison for illegally selling big game guiding services, the Alaska U.S. attorney's office said.

Stephen Jeremy Hicks signed a plea agreement last year, pleading guilty to a Lacey Act violation. The document states that in 2018, Hicks conducted a guided hunt and that the hunt took place on federally managed land.

The U.S. attorney's office in a statement said Hicks was not permitted to operate on those lands and that he violated state provisions related to supervision of clients in the field.

Hicks was also ordered to forfeit his interest in a small plane and to pay \$13,460 in restitution for the hunt, the statement said. He was also sentenced to three years of supervised release during which he cannot fly private aircraft or engage in commercial hunting activity, the statement said.

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Bold Big Ten open to more expansion

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren talked Tuesday about the conference being bold and aggressive as college sports goes through a period of sweeping change and left the door open for more expansion after the league added Southern California and UCLA.

Warren's opening remarks to begin Big Ten football media days went nearly 15 minutes before he directly mentioned the two Los Angeles schools that announced last month they will be joining the conference in 2024.

"Regarding expansion, I get asked every single day what's next? It may include future expansion," Warren said. "We will not expand just to expand. It will be strategic. It will add ad-

ditional value to our conference."

He added: "We are in a perpetual state of evaluating what's next for college athletics."

Warren also said the Big Ten is in the process of finalizing a new media rights deal that will go into effect next year, with an announcement expected "sooner rather than later." He dodged questions about what it could be worth to the conference but some projections have the Big Ten in position to pay out about \$100 million in revenue annually to its schools in the coming years.

He did say USC and UCLA will enter the conference as full members with regards to revenue sharing. In previous expansions with Nebraska, Rutgers and Maryland, the incoming

members received partial shares of revenue at first.

The West Coast additions will make the Big Ten a coast-to-coast conference. For football coaches, the prospect of making long road trips was not much of a concern compared with the benefits USC and UCLA bring.

Just a year ago at the first in-person Big Ten media days hosted by Warren as commissioner, the SEC dominated headlines with news that Texas and Oklahoma would be leaving the Big 12 for the Southern super-conference.

The Big Ten's counterpunch came about 11 months later.

"I thought it was a very smart move for our league to get out in front of any changes that might be happening around the country," Nebraska coach Scott

Frost said.

Minnesota coach P.J. Fleck summed it up succinctly: "L.A.! Are you kidding me? That's perfect."

Warren reminisced about the days when his family would shop from a Sears, Roebuck and Co. catalog and the company's long history in and around Chicago. The third-year commissioner, who received plenty of criticism of the Big Ten's handling of the 2020 pandemic season, said he would not let the conference become an outdated business like Sears.

"Where expansion goes, I don't know," he said. "It is important for all of us in business to recognize that we're in a time of change. I'm embracing change. I'm going to be very aggressive."

JGR apologizes, accepts penalties for Hamlin, Busch

Associated Press

NASCAR warned its teams it was serious about stamping out a culture of cheating that stretched back to its roots and let illegitimate race winners often walk away unscathed with nothing worse than a fine or a few docked points for the team.

But the drivers always kept the trophy and added the number in the win column.

No more and not again. NASCAR carried out its stiffest punishment against a race winner in more than 60 years when it stripped Joe Gibbs Racing's Denny Hamlin of his Pocono Raceway victory and teammate Kyle Busch of his runner-up finish.

JGR didn't bother to fight the penalties, declining Monday to take the matter to an appeals panel.

Message received.

"What you've seen here is a reaction to kind of a new way of doing business," said Scott Miller, NASCAR's senior vice

president of competition.

The JGR Toyotas flunked post-race inspection Sunday night when NASCAR found issues in both cars that affected the aerodynamics. Miller said Monday on Sirius XM the exact issue was "extra layers of vinyl" found under the wrap of the car — more commonly known as the paint scheme — that essentially modified that area of the lower nose on each car.

Joe Gibbs Racing apologized in a statement and said changes were underway to make sure it did not happen again.

"This change in our build process was not properly vetted within our organization and we recognize it is against NASCAR's rules," said Wally Brown, director of competition for Joe Gibbs Racing.

Hamlin was the first Cup winner to be disqualified since April 17, 1960, when Emanuel Zervakis' victory at Wilson Speedway in North Carolina

was thrown out because of an oversized fuel tank. Hamlin was stripped of his third Cup Series win of the season and a track-record seventh at Pocono.

Chase Elliott finished in third place and was awarded the win without the Hendrick Motorsports driver ever leading a lap in his No. 9 Chevrolet.

NASCAR introduced a new car this year that spent years in development and was designed to cut costs and essentially attempt to level the playing field. The 2022 version is pretty much a kit car; teams get all the same pieces from varying vendors and have detailed instructions regarding how to put it together.

And many of the pieces that fit under the car, items that used to cost hundreds of thousands annually to develop, are now spec parts that are essentially bought off store shelves. They're the same for everyone and not allowed to be manipu-

lated.

Four years after NASCAR first threatened to tighten up inspection rules, it doubled down this season on going after potential rule benders.

NASCAR's three manufacturers — Chevrolet, Ford and Toyota — and their race teams never stop trying to find that extra edge that can give them more speed. They look for gray areas and wiggle room that give them an advantage yet keep them under the inspection radar.

"One of the early directives was that NASCAR was going to have to inspect these cars at a level that previously had never been done before," Miller said. "It's critical that we inspect at the level that we do and it's critical that we react when we see something that wasn't agreed on on the Next Gen concept."

Toyota Racing Development President David Wilson said the manufacturer stood by NASCAR's decision.

Union rejects international draft proposal

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball's goal of an international amateur draft was thwarted again when the players' association rejected management's final offer on Monday and retained direct draft-pick compensation for free agents.

The quirky tie between the two provisions was established in the March 10 agreement that ended the 99-day lockout and preserved a 162-game season. The sides gave themselves until July 25 to reach an agreement on an international draft, which MLB has sought since 2002, and specified the draft-pick provision would be dropped in the event of a deal.

There was little movement over the four months. The union made an offer during a Zoom meeting Saturday, and MLB presented what it termed its final proposal in an email Sunday. Union officials forwarded

that plan to the players' executive board and said they planned to reject it.

Hearing no opposition, union deputy executive director Bruce Meyer telephoned deputy commissioner Dan Halem with the rejection at about 3:45 p.m. EDT Monday.

The decision, announced about eight hours before the deadline, was the final step needed to complete the collective bargaining agreement that expires on Dec. 1, 2026. Retaining compensation is likely to limit the market for some older players set to become free agents, a group set to include Anthony Rizzo, J.D. Martinez, Chris Sale and Charlie Morton.

"Each of our proposals was focused on protecting against the scenario that all players fear the most — the erosion of our game on the world stage, with international players becoming the latest victim in baseball's prioritization of efficiency over

fundamental fairness," the union said in a statement. "The league's responses fell well short of anything players could consider a fair deal."

As a result, the international signing bonus pool total for 2022-23 will remain at \$167 million, its level in 2021-22, according to a side letter between MLB and the union whose contents were divulged to The Associated Press.

The total will increase starting in 2023-24 by any corresponding percentage rise in industry revenue since 2019 — the last year before the pandemic. The decision keeps in place a system of qualifying offers for free agents that began in 2012. A club can make a qualifying offer following the World Series to a free agent who has been with the team since opening day, a one-year contract for the average of the top 125 deals by average annual value. Last year's figure was \$18.4 million.

If a player rejects a qualifying offer and signs elsewhere, the signing team is subject to a loss of one or two amateur draft picks and a reduction in international signing bonus pool allotment.

Craig Kimbrel and Dallas Keuchel, unhappy with offers during the offseason and spring training, delayed signing in 2019 until June, after the draft pick compensation no longer was attached.

An amateur draft was established for residents of the United States and Canada in 1965 and extended to residents of U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico in 1990. MLB has pushed for a similar international amateur draft, saying part of its rationale was to combat illicit agreements made before players are age eligible — at least 17 at the time of signing or 16 at the time as long as the player turns 17 by the Sept. 1 of the contract's first season.

Russian trial considers Griner's use of medical cannabis

Associated Press

KHIMKI, Russia — The drug trial of American basketball star Brittney Griner in a Russian court focused Tuesday on testimony that cannabis, while illegal in Russia, is regarded in other countries as having legitimate medicinal use.

Griner has acknowledged that she was carrying vape canisters containing cannabis oil when she was arrested in February at a Moscow airport, but she contends that she had no criminal intent and that the canisters ended up in her luggage inadvertently because of hasty packing.

"We are not arguing that Brittney took it here as a medicine. We are still saying that she involuntarily brought it here because she was in a rush," defense attorney Alexander Boykov said after the session in

which a Russian neuropsychologist testified about worldwide use of medicinal cannabis.

"The Russian public has to know, and the Russian court in the first place has to know, that it was not used for recreational purposes in the United States. It was prescribed by a doctor," he said.

Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist who plays for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury, faces up to 10 years in prison if convicted. The medical testimony and Griner's admission that she had the canisters is aimed at bringing her a mild sentence.

"We have a lot of mitigating factors. So we do hope that the court will take it into consideration. And the courts in Russia, in fact, have very broad discretion with regard to the sentence," said Maria Blagovolina, another of Griner's lawyers.

After about 90 minutes in session Tuesday, the case was adjourned until Wednesday afternoon.

The trial began July 1 but only five sessions have been held, some them lasting only about an hour.

The slow-moving trial and Griner's five months of detention have raised strong criticism among teammates and supporters in the United States, which has formally declared her to be "wrongfully detained," a designation sharply rejected by Russian officials.

Elizabeth Rood, the U.S. Embassy's charge d'affaires, attended Tuesday's court session. Griner "confirms that she is doing ok and as well as can be expected under these circumstances," she told reporters.

ABC's "Good Morning America" aired a producer's brief in-

terview with Griner in which she wished her wife, Cherelle, "good luck on the bar exam."

When asked whether she had any complaints, she replied: "No, no complaints. Just waiting patiently." She displayed photos of her wife, friends and teammates.

Griner was arrested in February amid high U.S.-Moscow tensions ahead of Russia sending troops into Ukraine later that month. Some supporters contend she is being held in Russia as a pawn, possibly for a prisoner swap. American soccer notable Megan Rapinoe last week said "she's being held as a political prisoner, obviously."

The Russian Foreign Ministry last week lashed out at the U.S. contention that Griner is being wrongfully detained and said Russian laws should be respected.

Stott's 5 RBIs lift Phils past Braves

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Bryson Stott homered, doubled and drove in five runs to lift the Philadelphia Phillies to a 6-4 comeback victory over the Atlanta Braves on Monday night.

Alec Bohm doubled and had three hits for the Phillies, who rebounded from a three-game sweep at home against the Chicago Cubs last weekend.

Austin Riley had a pair of doubles and Marcell Ozuna had three hits and an RBI for the Braves, who fell two games behind the first-place New York Mets in the NL East.

Nationals 4, Dodgers 1: Juan Soto's RBI triple capped a four-run fifth inning and Washington snapped NL West-leading Los Angeles' 11-game home winning streak.

The Nationals (33-65) brought the worst record in the majors into Dodger Stadium, where they won for the first time since the 2019 NL Division Series, against the team with baseball's best record (64-31).

Diamondbacks 7, Giants 0: Merrill Kelly threw eight innings of three-hit ball, Carson Kelly had a pair of doubles and host Arizona beat skidding San Francisco for its third win in four games.

Kelly retired the first 15 batters he faced in another stellar performance. Kelly (10-5) lowered his ERA to 3.04, striking out seven and walking none.

Red Sox 3, Guardians 1: Cleveland pitcher Zach Plesac threw the ball out of Fenway Park as the grounds crew began to bring out the tarp, and Boston ended a five-game losing streak.

Alex Verdugo hit a tiebreaking double and the Red Sox bullpen worked 3½ scoreless innings.

Boston remains a half-game ahead of last-

place Baltimore in the AL East.

Athletics 7, Astros 5: Tony Kemp homered and hit a two-run double, Skye Bolt added a two-run shot, and host Oakland dealt AL West-leading Houston its first defeat after a 5-0 start following the All-Star break.

Elvis Andrus added an insurance RBI single in the eighth for the Athletics before closer Lou Trivino surrendered a solo homer to Chas McCormick, then finished for his ninth save.

Reds 11, Marlins 2: Jonathan India hit his first career grand slam and Brandon Drury connected for a three-run shot, helping host Cincinnati pound banged-up Miami.

India and Donovan Solano each had three hits as the last-place Reds improved to 9-4 in their last 13 games.

Mariners 4, Rangers 3: Ty France hit his 13th home run as part of a three-hit night, Cal Raleigh added an RBI single and host Seattle rebounded from a rough weekend and beat Texas.

The Mariners won for the 15th time in 18 games, a stretch of success interrupted over the weekend when they were swept at home by AL West-leading Houston following a 14-game winning streak. But the Rangers were welcome visitors as the Seattle won its sixth straight over Texas and improved to 9-2 against it this season.

Orioles 5, Rays 1: Ryan Mountcastle hit a tiebreaking, two-run single in a four-run fifth inning that sent host Baltimore over Tampa Bay.

Austin Voth and five Orioles relievers kept the Rays' offense from delivering the big hit. They left 10 men on base, including six in the first three innings.

Cubs 3, Pirates 2: Nico Hoerner hit a tie-breaking double in the eighth inning, and host Chicago extended its win streak to five games by beating Pittsburgh.

Hoerner finished with two hits and two RBIs. Rafael Ortega homered for the Cubs, and Adrian Sampson pitched seven innings of two-run ball.

Rockies 2, Brewers 0: Kyle Freeland pitched four-hit ball over seven innings, Daniel Bard worked his way out of a bases-loaded jam in the ninth and Colorado avoided a four-game sweep with a victory at Milwaukee.

Elias Díaz had a homer that helped the Rockies beat the Brewers for the first time in their last nine meetings.

Royals 7, Angels 0: Zack Greinke combined with four Kansas City relievers to hold visiting Los Angeles to five hits and Michael A. Taylor drove in three runs in the win.

Emmanuel Rivera drove in a run during a four-run seventh, and MJ Melendez added a two-run homer in the eighth, helping to position the Royals for another shot at their first four-game win streak this season on Tuesday night.

Tigers 12, Padres 4: Eric Haase hit a grand slam off Sean Manaea, Jeimer Candelario homered twice and host Detroit routed San Diego. Miguel Cabrera hit his 506th career homer in the sixth inning and moved past Al Simmons for 13th on the career RBI list with 1,840.

Manaea (5-5) was tagged for a career-worst nine runs in 3½ innings, and his replacement, left-hander MacKenzie Gore, was pulled with an apparent arm injury. The Padres, who got a solo homer from Jurickson Profar, lost their second in a row.

Rays rule Kiermaier, Zunino out for season

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Tampa Bay Rays standouts Kevin Kiermaier and Mike Zunino are out for the season because of injuries, another significant blow for the defending AL East champions.

Manager Kevin Cash said before Monday night's game at Baltimore that Kiermaier is having an operation in the coming weeks. The 32-year-old out-

fielder hasn't played since July 9 because of a left hip injury, and Kiermaier said earlier this month that he might miss the rest of the regular season.

Zunino, a 31-year-old catcher, hasn't played since June 9 because of left shoulder problems. He's out for the season because of thoracic outlet syndrome surgery, according to a spokesman.

Tampa Bay entered Monday's game holding the second

of the American League's three wild cards. In addition to missing Kiermaier and Zunino, the Rays are also without Wander Franco, Nick Anderson, Shane Baz, Tyler Glasnow, Manuel Margot and several others who are on the injured list. Brandon Lowe recently returned after missing two months.

Kiermaier, a three-time Gold Glove winner, has hit .228 with seven home runs, 22 RBIs and

six steals this year. Cash indicated that his operation would be to fix the labrum.

"He's been playing with it, and the doctor basically said years ago that you play through it until you can't," Cash said. "Well, we got to the point where he couldn't."

Kiermaier is on the 60-day IL and wasn't eligible to return until September. Zunino was eligible to come back next month.