

STARS AND STRIPES®

Monday, March 16, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Navy reports first virus case aboard warship

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The Navy on Friday recorded its first case of a sailor aboard a warship testing presumptive positive for the coronavirus, according to a Naval Surface Forces statement issued Sunday.

The sailor, assigned to the USS Boxer, works aboard the San Diego-based amphibious assault ship, but is quarantined at home “in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines,” the statement said.

The Navy immediately notified those with whom the sailor said that he had close contact and instructed them to self-isolate in their homes. None of them are aboard the Boxer currently, according to the statement.

“Military health profession-

‘Military health professionals are conducting a thorough contact investigation to determine whether any additional personnel were in close contact and possibly exposed. ... U.S. Navy ships conduct routine, daily cleanliness procedures geared toward health, wellness and the prevention of communicable diseases spread.’

Naval Surface Forces
Official statement

als are conducting a thorough contact investigation to determine whether any additional personnel were in close contact and possibly exposed,” Naval Surface Forces said in

CDC can confirm its validity.

“U.S. Navy ships conduct routine, daily cleanliness procedures geared toward health, wellness and the prevention of communicable disease spread,” Naval Surface Forces said in the statement.

“USS Boxer is taking appropriate preventative measures and conducting a thorough cleaning in accordance with specific guidance from the CDC and Navy-Marine Corps Public Health Center.”

The test marks the first time a sailor aboard a Navy vessel has contracted the coronavirus, but not the first in the service.

The Boxer is pierside at its homeport, Naval Base San Diego, where another sailor tested positive on Friday, according to media reports. That sailor was not attached to a ship.

the statement. “Depending on the results of that investigation, additional mitigations may be taken.”

The sailor’s test is considered presumptive positive until the

MCAS Iwakuni places restrictions on guests

BY JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — The commander has ordered restrictions on visitors to this installation in southwestern Japan, along with a ban on any of its U.S. residents staying overnight off base, as part of efforts to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The leave and liberty order posted Sunday on MCAS Iwakuni’s official Facebook page applies to any base resident who falls under the U.S.-Japan status of forces agreement, namely U.S. service members, civilian Defense Department

employees, contractors and their families.

“NO overnight liberty or leave is authorized,” said the statement by Col. Lance Lewis. “When you go to sleep, it must be in your own bed. If you feel you need an exception to have overnight leave or leave outside of mainland Japan, engage your chain of command.”

The order also bars visitors to the air station other than those coming from the U.S. It does not apply to Japan residents.

“If you have visitors coming to the Air Station from somewhere OTHER THAN THE US, now is not the time to visit MCAS Iwakuni,” the Facebook post said.

Yokosuka city sees 1st virus case, Navy base unaffected

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The city of Yokosuka has reported its first case of the coronavirus, city officials said in a statement Sunday.

The patient, a female nurse in her 70s, had gone to Egypt on a Nile River cruise from Feb. 24-26, according to the statement. The woman is not associated with Yokosuka Naval Base, base spokesman Randall Baucom told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

The woman returned to Japan on March 1 and symptoms began March 3 with abdominal pain and diarrhea, progressing to a cough and

malaise on March 8, according to a translation of the city statement. The woman tested positive for the virus Sunday.

The woman is one of 780 patients in Japan who have tested positive for the coronavirus as of Sunday, according to the World Health Organization. Of those patients, 22 have died. That number does not include the 697 people who tested positive aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship that underwent quarantine in Yokohama Bay last month.

As of Monday, no Navy personnel in Japan have tested positive for the coronavirus, according to Naval Forces Japan spokesman Marshall Smith.

2nd US ship sails near disputed islands

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The destroyer USS McCampbell steamed through disputed waters in the South China Sea in the second freedom of navigation operation by the U.S. Navy this year.

The destroyer sailed near the Paracel Islands, a group

of contested islands and reefs, on March 10, according to a statement Monday from the 7th Fleet. China, Taiwan and Vietnam have overlapping claims on the Paracels.

Beijing on March 11 objected to the McCampbell's passage, according to an online report by msn.com.

"Under the guise of 'freedom of navigation,' the U.S. has re-

peatedly flexed its muscles, been provocative and stirred up trouble in the South China Sea," msn.com quoted the People's Liberation Army Southern Theatre command spokesman Col. Li Huamin as saying.

The PLA tracked the McCampbell and warned it to leave the area, msn.com reported.

International law holds that

ships from other nations do not need permission for "innocent passage" within a 12-mile territorial limit, according to an email Friday from 7th Fleet spokeswoman Cmdr. Reann Mommsen to Stars and Stripes.

Territorial seas normally extend 12 nautical miles from the coastline.

Pentagon curtails Defender-Europe 20

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon has ordered a halt to the deployment of forces for Defender-Europe 20, which would have been the military's largest exercise on the Continent in a generation, because of concerns about the coronavirus, U.S. European Command said Monday.

Parts of the exercise have been completely eliminated, including Dynamic Front, Joint Warfighting Assessment, Saber Strike and Swift Response, which involved paratroops dropping into the Republic of Georgia and the Baltics, offi-

cialists said.

"As of March 13, all movement of personnel and equipment from the United States to Europe has ceased. The health, safety and readiness of our military, civilians, and family members is our primary concern," EUCOM said.

Forces already deployed to Europe for exercises will return to the United States, EUCOM said.

Schedules for future troops rotations in support of Atlantic Resolve — the Pentagon's effort to deter Russian aggression in Europe — are also likely to be adjusted, officials said.

Defender would have been

the culmination of several years of military buildup on the Continent and was intended to showcase the military's ability to mobilize large numbers of forces quickly.

EUCOM said it hoped an armored brigade combat team already deployed to Europe will still be able to conduct gunnery and other combined training events as part of a smaller exercise, dubbed Allied Spirit.

The announcement that the scope of Defender was being cut back because of the coronavirus follows a string of exercise cancellations for the same reason. Last week, a large cold weather exercise underway in

Norway was canceled and, earlier this month, a major EUCOM air defense drill in Israel was called off, both because of the coronavirus.

U.S. Africa Command said Monday that it has canceled one of its largest exercises on the continent over concerns about the coronavirus.

Exercise African Lion 2020 was slated to take place between March 23 and April 4 in Morocco, Tunisia and Senegal. Last week, AFRICOM said it would scale back the exercise because of concerns over the virus.

GAO: F-35's \$17B diagnostic system rife with flaws

Bloomberg

A \$17 billion Lockheed Martin system used since 2009 to monitor F-35 fighter jets for repairs, parts replacement and general maintenance is rife with flaws, sometimes forcing personnel to spend hours entering data by hand, according to congressional auditors.

Maintenance crews at one of five U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps bases that were reviewed "estimated they spend an average of 5,000 to 10,000 hours per year manually tracking information that

should be automatically and accurately captured" by Lockheed's system, the Government Accountability Office said in a report obtained by Bloomberg News.

In addition, "inaccurate or missing data" in the Autonomic Logistics Information System, or ALIS, sometimes result in alerts that "an aircraft should not be flown even though it is ready for flight," the GAO said. Airmen said the flaws are affecting the readiness of the fighter jets built by Lockheed. At one location, crews experi-

enced as many as 400 "issues per week related to inaccurate or missing electronic records," according to the report.

The problem adds to uncertainty about the F-35, the world's costliest weapons system. Attention long focused on the plane's \$428 billion acquisition program and on setbacks in development and production. But now the cost of sustaining the planes — estimated at about \$1.2 trillion over 66 years — is what most worries military officials and lawmakers on the House Armed Services Com-

mittee panel that requested the GAO assessment.

A fully functioning diagnostic system at the wing and squadron level, as well as a network of depots, which has lagged, are key to reducing the estimated costs, officials say. Personnel at the five bases the GAO visited said the system has improved since 2015 as Lockheed issued three upgrades but they "continue to report significant challenges" that are affecting day-to-day F-35 operations, the agency said.

White House places new rules to impede the virus outbreak

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House put in place new measures Monday to protect President Donald Trump and his staff during the coronavirus outbreak, including taking the temperature of anyone who enters the complex, including visitors and members of the press corps.

The steps expanded on screenings the White House began on Saturday for anyone who gets close to Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, who is leading the administration's response to the virus.

Officials greeted staff, reporters and camera workers by swiping their foreheads with a temporal thermometer. Only those with a reading of 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit or less

were allowed entry into the complex.

"In order to keep the entire White House complex safe and healthy, beginning Monday morning, temperature checks will be conducted on everyone who enters campus," spokesman Judd Deere said.

The average body temperature is about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit, but it can range from a little lower to a little higher. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it considers a person to have a fever when he or she has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Inside the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room, an orange sign taped to the back of many seats let reporters know that it was to remain unoccu-

pied during briefings to ensure social distancing. The White House Correspondents' Association called on all members to stay home or work remotely if they could do so and to keep a bare level of staffing at the White House.

"We understand these restrictions are deeply disruptive to our members and their ability to do their jobs. But we are forced to take these steps to do our part to ensure that there is a healthy pool available to cover the president and inform the public during this critical time," the association's board said in an overnight email to members.

The White House is pausing its internship and volunteer programs, canceling public tours and canceling large events through the end of March.

Ore. man 1st VA patient to die from coronavirus

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A 70-year-old man was the first patient at a Department of Veterans Affairs facility — and the first person in Oregon — to die from coronavirus, according to the VA and the Oregon Health Authority.

The veteran, whose name has not been publicly released, died Saturday at the VA Portland Health Care System. He had underlying health conditions and had tested positive for coronavirus on March 10, the Oregon Health Authority said. He had no known contact to anyone with coronavirus and had not traveled to another country.

"While we knew we would arrive at this day at some point, it doesn't lessen the impact," said Patrick Allen, director of the Oregon Health Authority. "Our thoughts and deepest sympathy are with the family of this individual who honorably served his country."

The VA has conducted slightly more than 100 tests for coronavirus nationwide, according to information posted to its public website. As of Monday afternoon, the agency reported 30 positive cases across its health care system.

Of the positive cases, five are in Seattle, four in New Orleans, two in Denver, two in Atlanta, two in Arizona, two in Maine, two in Las Vegas, two in Sioux Falls, S.D., and two in Bronx, N.Y. Others are located in Palo Alto, Calif.; Portland; Fresno, Calif.; San Francisco; White River Junction, Vt.; Cleveland, and Montrose, N.Y.

The VA health care system treats more than 9 million veterans, many of whom are older and have underlying health conditions that could put them at greater risk for the virus.

1st shot of experimental vaccine given

Associated Press

SEATTLE — U.S. researchers gave the first shot to the first person in a test of an experimental coronavirus vaccine Monday — leading off a worldwide hunt for protection even as the pandemic surges.

With a careful jab in a healthy volunteer's arm, scientists at the Kaiser Permanente Washington Research Institute in Seattle begin an anxiously awaited first-stage study of a potential COVID-19 vaccine developed in record time after the new virus exploded from China and fanned across the globe.

"We're team coronavirus now," Kaiser Permanente study leader Dr. Lisa Jackson said on the eve of the experiment. "Everyone wants to do what they can in this emergency."

The Associated Press observed as the study's first participant, an operations manager at a small tech company, received the injection inside an exam room. Several others were next in line for a test that will ultimately give 45 volunteers two doses, a month apart.

"We all feel so helpless. This is an amazing opportunity for me to do something," said Jennifer Haller, 43, of Seattle.

She's the mother of two teenagers and "they think it's cool" that she's taking part in the study.

Monday's milestone marked just the beginning of a series of studies in people needed to prove whether the shots are safe and could work. Even if the research goes well, a vaccine wouldn't be available for widespread use for 12 to 18 months, said Dr. Anthony Fauci of the U.S. National Institutes of Health. That's still important if the virus becomes a long-term threat.

This vaccine candidate, code-named mRNA-1273, was developed by the NIH and Massachusetts-based biotechnology company Moderna Inc. There's no chance participants could get infected from the shots because they don't contain the coronavirus itself.

It's not the only potential vaccine in the pipeline. Dozens of research groups around the world are racing to create a vaccine against COVID-19. Another candidate, made by Inovio Pharmaceuticals, is expected to begin its own safety study — in the U.S., China and South Korea — next month.

Some of the study's carefully chosen healthy volunteers, ages 18 to 55, will get higher dosages than others to test how strong the inoculations should be. Scientists will check for any side effects and draw blood samples to test if the vaccine is revving up the immune system, looking for encouraging clues like the NIH earlier found in vaccinated mice.

Pa. church abuse retrial postponed due to virus

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The retrial of the only church official who has ever gone to prison in the Roman Catholic Church sex abuse scandal was delayed Monday because of the coronavirus outbreak.

The retrial of Monsignor William Lynn, the longtime secretary for clergy in the Philadelphia archdiocese, was to start Monday in Philadelphia Common Pleas Court but was put on hold until January amid court shutdowns meant to slow the spread of the pandemic.

After an appeals court found his sweeping 2012 conspiracy trial flawed and his conviction was twice overturned, Lynn, 69, now faces only a single child endangerment count. Prosecutors contend he endangered children by transferring a known predator priest to their parish without warning in 1993.

The landmark case now looks nothing like the gut-wrenching, four-month trial that unearthed the church's "secret archives,"

drew more than 20 haunted victims to the witness stand and led the judge to conclude that Lynn allowed "monsters in clerical garb ... to destroy the souls of children."

Next time, a new judge plans to steer clear of the broader priest-abuse crisis that has cost the church an estimated \$3 billion or more, and plunged dioceses around the world into bankruptcy and scandal.

"We're not bringing in the so-called or alleged 'sins of the Catholic Church,'" Judge Gwendolyn Bright said at a pre-trial hearing Wednesday.

It's not even clear the jury will hear from a single victim when the case resumes. That's because the only accuser whose allegation falls within the statute of limitations — a policeman's son dubbed "Billy Doe" in court files — is an uncertain witness at best, whose credibility has long been challenged. Prosecutors do not plan to call him, although Bright said she may force their hand.

Israel's new parliament is sworn in amid virus fears

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel swore in its newly elected parliament on Monday under stringent restrictions because of the coronavirus outbreak, in a surreal ceremony reflecting the country's unprecedented dual crisis in politics and public health.

Instead of the typical festive gathering of parliament's 120, the new lawmakers took the oath of office in groups of three over 40 staggered rounds, in keeping with a Health Ministry ban on gatherings of more than 10 people. Israeli President Reuven Rivlin presided over the unusual event after the Israeli Knesset, or Parliament, was thoroughly sprayed with disinfectant.

The president, flanked by the Knesset speaker and secretary, opened the first session

of parliament before a chamber empty save for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival Benny Gantz. They sat several rows apart and made little eye contact, outnumbered by the three trumpeters in the hall who rang in the first session of parliament.

After Netanyahu and Gantz were sworn in, they were ushered out of the hall and the lawmakers were brought in three-by-three.

Rivlin on Monday formally designated Gantz, leader of the Blue and White party, the task of forming a coalition after the retired military chief secured a slim majority of recommendations from incoming lawmakers. Rivlin summoned both Netanyahu and Gantz late Sunday to an emergency meeting in hopes of cajoling them into a unity government.

Biden, Sanders tackle pandemic in debate

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., sought in the Democratic debate to cast themselves as best-positioned to lead the nation through a global pandemic, uniting in their criticism of President Donald Trump's response to the fast-moving coronavirus but diverging in how they would confront the spiraling public health and economic crisis.

Biden pledged Sunday to deploy the U.S. military to help with recovery efforts and warned that a federal financial bailout might be necessary to stabilize the economy. Sanders leaned into the same domestic policy proposals that have dominated his campaign, arguing that the government-run health insurance system he has long championed would allow the U.S. to respond more quickly to a health crisis.

The coronavirus outbreak rapidly had reshaped nearly all aspects of American life, shuttering schools across the country and significantly curtailing travel. Virus fears also have halted campaign rallies and prompted some states to delay upcoming primaries because of warnings from public health officials against large gatherings.

"This is bigger than any one of us — this calls for a national rallying for one another," Biden said.

Indeed, the stakes in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination have shifted dramatically since Biden and Sanders last debated less than three weeks ago — as have the contours of the contest. After a sluggish start to the primary season, Biden has surged to the front of the field, drawing overwhelming support from black voters and consolidating the backing of several more moderate rivals who have dropped out of the race.

The former vice president appeared determined through-

out Sunday's contest to keep his focus on the general election, making direct overtures to Sanders' loyal supporters and committing for the first time to select a woman as his running mate if he becomes the Democratic nominee.

For Sanders, the reality is that his path to the nomination is rapidly shrinking, and he faces the prospect of more stinging defeats in the four states that vote on Tuesday. Still, he appeared determined to draw sharp contrasts with Biden throughout the debate, challenging him aggressively on the Iraq War and free trade deals.

Though Sunday's debate was the first one-on-one contest of the Democratic primary, Biden and Sanders have been the leaders of their party's ideological poles throughout the yearlong campaign. Their prescriptions for addressing the coronavirus outbreak highlighted the contrasting approaches they are pledging to bring to the White House.

Biden, a centrist who backed the 2008 bailout of the financial industry during the recession, warned that another government-backed rescue plan may be needed in the coming months to shore up the economy. Sanders, a fierce liberal critic of Wall Street, opposed the earlier bailout and said that it would be a mistake to take a similar approach now.

The Vermont senator also repeatedly pushed questions regarding the coronavirus toward a now-familiar debate between him and Biden over health care. Sanders argued that the shortages in coronavirus tests and anxiety over the preparedness of the nation's health care system to deal with an impending increase in patients highlight why the U.S. should move to the government-run, "Medicare For All" system he has long championed.

"This is a crisis," Biden said. "We're at war with a virus. It has nothing to do with copays or anything."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Hiker pulled from under boulder

AZ PHOENIX — Phoenix officials temporarily closed two popular trails up Camelback Mountain after firefighters extracted a seriously injured hiker from under a boulder apparently loosened by recent rain.

The boulder estimated to weigh 300 pounds landed on the man when he grabbed it to stabilize himself while moving to the side of Cholla Trail to let other hikers pass, the Fire Department said.

The Parks and Recreation Department said rain had loosened rocks and boulders and that Echo Canyon and Cholla trails will be reopened once they're determined to be safe.

Man charged in 1991 slaying of a woman

OH AKRON — DNA from distant relatives has been used to help identify a suspect in the 1991 slaying of an Ohio woman, authorities said.

Daniel Rees, 57, of Akron, was arrested and charged with aggravated murder, the Akron Beacon Journal reported.

Rees is accused of the March 1991 slaying of Rachael Johnson in Akron. An autopsy showed Johnson was beaten, sexually assaulted, stabbed and set on fire.

Her autopsy provided a DNA profile of the likely killer, but no matches in any DNA databases were found, Akron police Detective James Pasheilich said.

Texas-based Advance DNA LLC began working on the case, connecting the known DNA profile to distant relatives of a possible suspect. That work helped investigators pursue other leads.

Mom shaves head for son, video goes viral

VA CHESTERFIELD — Meghan Clifton shaved her head in the middle of her kitchen. In the months leading up to the decision, her 7-year-old son was diagnosed with alopecia, an autoimmune disease that causes hair loss. He was worried no one would want to be his friend.

She'd chosen to put up the before-and-after of the hour-long process on TikTok. In one frame, she throws her hair forward. The next showed her grinning as she holds a ponytail in her right hand and runs her left across her newly shaven head.

The 10-second video had more than 380,000 views and almost 1,000 comments.

Man to serve 13 years for cocaine, guns

MD BALTIMORE — A Maryland man has been sentenced to 13 years in prison on cocaine distribution and firearms charges.

The Daily Times of Salisbury reported that Takii Nikeya Smith, 44, was considered by federal authorities to be a "large-scale cocaine supplier on the Eastern Shore of Maryland."

Smith pleaded guilty to federal charges of conspiracy to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine, possession with intent to distribute cocaine and to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Truck hauling horses crashes into plane

KY LEXINGTON — A truck driver transporting a horse trailer crashed into an airplane at Kentucky's

Blue Grass Airport, authorities said.

The driver was hospitalized and the severity of his injuries weren't immediately released.

Airport spokeswoman Amy Caudill said the tractor-trailer hit the side of a Tex Sutton airplane causing the Boeing 727's wing to go through the truck's cab.

Caudill said the truck was on the ramp picking up horses that arrived from San Bernardino, Calif. To her knowledge, the two horses on the truck were fine, Caudill said.

Sheriff: Boy sets self on fire; mom arrested

GA AUGUSTA — A Georgia mother was arrested after her unattended 11-year-old son set himself on fire as part of a social media stunt, authorities said.

Mattelyn Parks, 29, of Augusta, was arrested and charged with first-degree cruelty to children, news outlets reported. The child had first- and second-degree burns on his face and chest that were not life-threatening, authorities said.

Richmond County Sheriff's Sgt. Caleb Lee said Parks had left her son and his 3-year-old sister alone at home when authorities received a fire call.

Deputies learned that the boy put rubbing alcohol on himself and lit it on fire. He told authorities he was copying a stunt he had seen on social media.

Police get tips on 30-year-old case

NM LAS CRUCES — Detectives are examining dozens of new tips related to the massacre at a southern New Mexico bowling alley more than 30 years ago following the announcement of a new reward.

The tips come a month after Las Cruces police detectives announced a \$30,000 reward for information leading to the suspects behind a deadly robbery that left four dead, KVIA-TV reported.

Police said two robbers came into the Las Cruces Bowl in February 1990 and shot seven people before burning a portion of the building. The assailants lined up all seven victims on the floor in the cramped office, shooting each in the head multiple times at close range.

Las Cruces Detective Amador Martinez said he's combing through 50 to 60 tips he's received since holding a news conference.

Officers use tear gas to break up wild party

WV MORGANTOWN — A raucous crowd of partiers near West Virginia University pelted officers with beer bottles during a wild stand-off that ended when police used tear gas against the crowd, officials said.

The Morgantown Police Department said 10 people were charged after officers tried to break up a party that completely shut down Beverly Avenue and people began throwing bottles, cans and other debris at them.

The officers took cover and used a loudspeaker to tell the party to disperse but the crowd grew in size and continued to hurl items at the officers, according to a news release from the police department.

Police then threw smoke grenades and tear gas at the crowd, ending the standoff.

Authorities said they will review body camera video and other surveillance footage of the incident.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

School closings wipe spring sports slate

BY GREGORY BROOME

Stars and Stripes

In-person school is canceled for the vast majority of DODEA Europe schools as of Monday, and with it at least several weeks of the organization's slate of spring sports.

Athletic director Kathlene Clemmons confirmed Friday, soon after DODEA Europe's announcement about the widespread closures, that all practices, games and events will be canceled for as long as the involved schools remain closed. That includes boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball and track and field.

That comprehensive decision followed a spate of initial cancellations in response to the spreading coronavirus. Soccer games in Italy scheduled for the season's opening weekend of March 14 were canceled first as that country became the first in Europe to be ravaged by the disease. Soon after, Clemmons announced that games and

meets through March 21 were canceled.

Since then, leagues at every level across the world have scrapped their schedules. Major events like the NCAA basketball tournaments were canceled outright, the NBA, NHL and Premier League seasons are suspended and may not resume and the start of the Major League Baseball season has been indefinitely delayed. High-school leagues across the United States and under-18 leagues around Europe are in a similar predicament.

While DODEA Pacific was not so fortunate, DODEA Europe was able to fit in its basketball tournaments and other winter championships before the virus began to cause widespread disruptions outside of China and its neighboring countries. Six European hoops champions were crowned Feb. 22 in Wiesbaden, Germany; the boys and girls teams from northern Italian schools Aviano and Vicenza were all active just days before the area faced Europe's

first major outbreak of the coronavirus. The spring season, however, is at risk of not starting. Soccer was due to begin over the weekend, while baseball and softball were originally set to start March 21 and track and field was slated for a March 28 start. The DODEA Europe season was already set for a midseason hiatus over spring break, starting April 6. If school can resume after spring break — any earlier seems unlikely — a reduced spring season remains possible. If school closures persist beyond that, the spring championships, all of which are scheduled for the week of May 18 in the Kaiserslautern Military Community in Germany, face cancellation.

For now, DODEA-Europe joins most of the rest of the sports world in an unscheduled, indefinite pause.

"We will work on a plan for the spring season when we have a better idea of when schools might be able to open again," Clemmons said Friday.

Commentary

March Madness gives way to spring sadness

Associated Press

For all those who dreamed the impossible — making it a whole month without getting a single game wrong in the bracket — this is your year.

Everything else about the NCAA Tournament that won't happen this season — from Selection Sunday, to the jaw-dropping bracket busters and buzzer-beaters, to the Sweet 16 to the Final Four? Call it March Sadness.

Before fears about the coronavirus scrubbed sports for the foreseeable future, Sunday was supposed to be the Big Reveal — the day when Americans gathered around a TV for an hour to watch ... drum-roll ... a college basketball schedule being released.

It's so much better than it sounds.

It was supposed to be the day to imagine the possibilities: all the tantalizing matchups, the upsets-in-the-makings, the favorites, and, of course, the underdogs — so many underdogs — that would pop up on the 68 lines to set the table for America over the next three weeks.

It was supposed to be the day to kick off a rite of spring, and a rite of passage — a three-week college hoops spectacular that allows people to set aside their differences and replace them with other ones. It was an event designed every bit as much for the

hard-core basketball fan as for the clueless neophyte who can't tell a pick-and-roll from a personal foul. It was for anyone with 10 bucks to blow in an office pool, or who really liked picking teams that wear red, or was quite sure a Blue Devil would vanquish a Red Raider if the actual team mascots went to war.

It was ... something we're going to miss this year in our coronavirus-infected country — a year in which we really could use an escape, but will be stuck watching reruns of "Blue Bloods" instead of games between blue bloods.

This season's tournament, like all before them, would've been filled with dozens of legends in the making and diamonds in the rough — with teams that overcame adversity to get this far and superfans who inspired the country every bit as much as their team.

Might one have come from Belmont? The Ohio Valley Conference champions won a thriller of a conference title game with a last-second bucket off a backdoor cut on a play called "Liberty."

Or, how about Liberty? The Flames had punched their ticket by winning the Atlantic Sun tournament last Sunday, before the cancellations began en masse. They'll have to settle for a 30-4 record and the thoughts about what might have been in what would have been the program's first back-to-back

trips to the show.

Ah, what might have been. New Mexico State was an inch away from the tying layup in the first round last year, but a selfless Aggie passed on the layup and kicked it out to a teammate for an open three. That player got fouled and made only one free throw. Advancing instead was Auburn — and the momentum from that win pushed the Tigers all the way to the Final Four. Both teams were a good bet to make it back to the show this year.

But there will be no betting. And there will be no bulldogs, either. The Butler Bulldogs — remember them? — were a shoo-in for the bracket, but the availability of their mascot, Blue III, has been a source of controversy since the NCAA banned him from entering arenas a few years ago. Blue's handler, Michael Kaltenmark, was hanging up the leash either way after this season.

It's ending sooner than he — or anyone — expected.

"Extremely, extremely disappointed," said Mark Few, the coach of Gonzaga, which also was poised to be a No. 1 seed.

He's hardly the first coach to see his team's dreams crushed in March. But there wasn't a player, coach or fan in America who thought the season would end before the fun even began.

Briefs

Titans extend QB Tannehill, tag RB Henry

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans are keeping the quarterback that led them within a victory of the Super Bowl, agreeing to a four-year, \$118 million extension with Ryan Tannehill.

The Titans announced the deal Sunday, hours after the NFL Players Association approved a new collective bargaining agreement.

“Tennessee let’s run it back,” Tannehill wrote on Twitter.

The Titans also plan on keeping running back Derrick Henry after using the non-exclusive franchise tag on the NFL rushing leader on Monday. That means Henry still can receive offers from other teams, with the Titans able to match

or receive two first-round draft picks. The franchise tag for a running back is estimated to cost \$12.3 million, according to Overthecap.com.

Henry led the league with 1,540 yards on 303 carries and became the first in the NFL to run for at least 180 yards in three straight games over the regular season or post-season. Henry had seven 100-yard games over his final nine games, and he ranks third in NFL history, averaging 126 yards rushing for his career in the playoffs.

After being traded by Miami to Tennessee last March, Tannehill went 9-4 overall as a starter, 7-3 in the final 10 games of the regular season. Tannehill earned his first Pro Bowl nod and was The AP NFL

Comeback Player of the Year.

In other NFL news:

■ The Dallas Cowboys have placed their exclusive franchise tag on quarterback Dak Prescott, securing the rights to their star quarterback for an estimated \$31.5 million while the sides continue working on a long-term deal.

By using the tag on Prescott, the Cowboys will work to get a deal with Amari Cooper before the receiver becomes an unrestricted free agent when the new league year starts, currently set for Wednesday.

■ The Baltimore Ravens made quite the deal to land veteran Calais Campbell, agreeing to trade a fifth-round draft pick in the upcoming draft to the Jacksonville Jaguars for the five-time Pro Bowl defensive

lineman, according to a person familiar with the deal. The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity. The trade can’t become official until the new league begins.

■ The Minnesota Vikings and quarterback Kirk Cousins have agreed to a two-year contract extension, his agent Mike McCartney said Monday. Terms of the deal were not immediately available.

■ The Pittsburgh Steelers are holding onto outside linebacker Bud Dupree. The team placed the franchise tag on Dupree on Monday, just hours before the NFL-mandated deadline for teams to use the designation.

Commentary

NFL wins with deal players didn’t have to make

Associated Press

More money, more jobs, and more for retirement.

Those are the kind of things negotiated in most union contracts, and the union that represents NFL players got them in the new deal that ties the NFL and its players together for the next decade.

But more work, too? Who would negotiate that?

That’s what a lot of NFL players must be wondering after a 1,019-959 vote to approve the new collective bargaining agreement barely squeaked past members. The vote released Sunday revealed a deep schism among players when it came to the centerpiece of the agreement — a 17th regular season game in exchange for owners throwing a few more financial crumbs their way.

There’s no such schism among NFL owners. They’re popping champagne corks after getting players to sign off on a deal that guarantees their golden goose remains golden for at least another 10 years.

What’s not to like about getting more regular-season games — and more play-off games (though owners can impose that decision unilaterally) — for the upcoming television deals that will make their billion-

dollar franchises even more valuable than before?

“We are pleased that the players have voted to ratify the proposed new CBA, which will provide substantial benefits to all current and retired players, increase jobs, ensure continued progress on player safety, and give our fans more and better football,” Commissioner Roger Goodell said.

Not so pleased are some of the NFL’s elite players, who already have big salaries and weren’t looking for more work. They’ll be risking their bodies at least one more Sunday a year when the league goes to an expanded schedule as soon as the 2021 season.

“It seems like player safety has a price tag,” 49ers cornerback Richard Sherman said at the Super Bowl. “You know, player safety up to the point of, hey, 17 games makes us this much money. So they really don’t care how safe we are.”

Not safer than before, that’s for sure. A 17th game not only increases the chance of injury to players but adds wear and tear to bodies that struggle to make it through the season intact as it is.

Yes, players do get fewer practices in pads and one less exhibition game as part

of the trade off. There are more jobs — and more money — for those who stay healthy and productive.

And retirees make out better, too, with larger pensions and more players included in the pension pool.

That’s all well and good for a union that struggles to get the same kind of deals that baseball and basketball players take for granted. The NFLPA always seems to be playing catch-up when it goes against hard-line owners who have beaten the union down before and would not be averse to doing it again.

But this was a deal that didn’t need to be made, at least right now. There’s still another year left on the current pact, and plenty of time to twist the arms of owners — even with the implicit warning from on top that this was the best they could do.

And to make it for 10 years? Didn’t players learn anything from the current contract that began when some players were still in middle school?

That means at least another decade without guaranteed deals for most players. Ad another decade with cheap rookie deals that, for many, will be the only contract they ever get.

CDC recommendations may further postpone pro sports

Associated Press

The already-delayed professional sports seasons in North America could be on hiatus for significantly longer than first planned after federal officials said Sunday that they recommend all in-person events involving 50 people or more be called off for the next eight weeks.

That's twice as long as the 30-day shutdowns that the NBA, NHL and Major League Soccer decided to put into place last week in response to the global coronavirus pandemic that has already made a deep impact on the U.S. financial markets and has been blamed for at least 64 deaths in this country.

Major League Baseball also was going with what essentially was a 30-day shutdown after canceling the rest of spring training and pushing back the start of regular season play for two weeks; opening day was to have been March 26.

But new recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Sunday night seem to suggest that sports in this country could for all intents and purposes be gone until May, if not later.

"CDC, in accordance with its guidance for large events and mass gatherings, recommends that for the next 8 weeks, organizers ... cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States," it said. "Events of any size should only be continued if they can be carried out with adherence to guidelines for protecting vulnerable populations, hand hygiene, and social distancing."

The eight-week window easily exceeds what would have been the remainder of the NBA and NHL regular seasons, plus would cover about the first 25% of the MLB season — or roughly 40 games per team. It would also cast serious doubt on the ability to hold other major U.S. sporting events as planned, such as the Kentucky Derby in early May.

The NBA was already bracing to play games without fans

in arenas, something that would have started late last week had a player — Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz — not tested positive for the virus, COVID-19. Utah teammate Donovan Mitchell and Detroit's Christian Wood have tested positive since, but Gobert's diagnosis was enough for the league to say that it was suspending play.

"I've been feeling a little better every single day," Gobert said in a video posted Sunday. He added, "I wish I would have (taken) this thing more seriously."

Later Sunday, a person with knowledge of the matter said the NBA has sent teams a memo saying players can leave their home markets during the shutdown if they so choose — yet another clear sign that the game's hiatus is not ending anytime soon. But if those players do leave for another market, they must do so after coordinating plans with their teams and medical advisers.

The memo also told teams formal practices will remain off indefinitely, individual workouts at team facilities may continue and detailed other safeguards teams should be taking at this point, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the memo had not been released publicly.

NHL players also have been told they can go home and must self-isolate there until the end of March, suggesting any potential return to play is many weeks away.

The NBA has already been asking teams to share availability for their arenas through the end of July, a sign that the league is prepared to extend the season at least that long if necessary — and those moves came a couple of days before the CDC made its latest recommendation. The NBA regular season was to have ended April 15 and the NBA Finals were to have started June 4, with the season done on or before June 21.

Yanks' minor leaguer first in MLB with virus

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — A New York Yankees minor leaguer tested positive for the coronavirus, the Miami Marlins shut their spring training complex and baseball began bracing for the possibility that opening day could be delayed into May or longer.

Major League Baseball was set to update teams Monday on its health policy in the wake of the virus outbreak.

On Sunday, a Yankees prospect became the first known player affiliated with MLB to contract COVID-19. Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said a "younger player" was affected, without identifying him. Cashman said the player "feels much better" and his symptoms had subsided, but he was still isolated.

"He did not have any interactions with our major league players," Cashman said on a conference call.

The Marlins, meanwhile, became the first organization to completely close their complex. Their big leaguers were told to take a break and avoid group activities.

The Marlins' move was a team decision, rather than something mandated by MLB. But there were indications that other camps wouldn't stay open much longer, and more shutdowns could set off a chain reaction that would mean no real games for a while.

MLB called off the rest of the spring training schedule on Thursday and said opening day, which had been scheduled for March 26, was postponed for at least two weeks.

Teams and players agree that two to four weeks of additional spring training will be needed before the regular season begins. Given the time required to reopen camps, hold workouts and then get started, opening day appeared a long way off.

Yankees player representative Zack Britton said Friday

the team had voted to remain together in Tampa and continue voluntary workouts.

"I'm sure the numbers are going to change," Cashman said.

Cashman said he met with the major leaguers Sunday in light of the positive virus case at the minor league complex across the street from George M. Steinbrenner Field and the "players didn't voice anything" as to their immediate plans. But he said as the players process the information, "I just suspect things are going to change."

For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. The vast majority of people recover from the new virus within a few weeks.

Some of Miami's players have homes near the spring training complex in Jupiter and plan to stay there. Others will go home.

MLB and the union recently had given players the option to stay at the site of their spring camp, return to their offseason homes or go to the club's home city.

Cashman said the player was tested on Friday morning and the minor league complex was closed. He said the positive result was confirmed late Saturday night into early Sunday morning.

Cashman said no one else in the Yankees organization other than the affected minor leaguer had been tested for the virus.

The team said the unidentified player had spent his entire time at the minor league complex and hadn't been over at the main stadium and facilities used by the major leaguers.