

Relief package a bet on government

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden wants America to know that he's from the government and he's here to help.

That sentiment became a well-worn punchline under Ronald Reagan and shaped the politics of both parties for four decades. Democrat Bill Clinton declared the era of big government over in the 1990s, Barack Obama largely kept his party in the same lane and Republican Donald Trump campaigned on the premise that Washington was full of morons, outplayed by the Chinese and others.

But Biden is now staking his presidency on the idea that the government can use his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief plan not only to stop a pandemic and jobs crisis but also to catapult the country forward to tackle deep issues of poverty, inequality and more. The massive bill could be approved by Congress as early as Tuesday.

"When I was elected, I said we were going to get the government out of the business of battling on Twitter and back in the business of delivering for the American people," Biden said after the huge bill passed the Senate on Saturday. "Of showing the American people that their government can work for them."

Taken together, provisions in the 628-page bill add up to one of the largest enhancements to the social safety net in decades, pushing the country into uncharted territory.

Besides stopping the pandemic and jump-starting hiring, money in the rescue package — now awaiting final approval in the House — is supposed to start fixing income inequality, halve child poverty, feed the hungry, save pensions, sustain public transit, let schools reopen with confidence and help repair state and local government finances. And Biden is betting that the government can do all of this with the speed of a nation mobilizing for war without touching a tripwire of inflation.

"People have lost faith government can do good for them," says Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who spoke daily with Biden while ushering the bill through the Senate last weekend. Now, as vaccines become more available and other changes take place, "people are going to see that government actually is making their lives better — which is how Americans used to think of it, and we've gotten away from it."

Republicans say Americans have plenty of reason to be skeptical, calling the American Rescue Plan excessive and wasteful. They warn the sweeping package will run up the

national debt to precarious new heights after \$4 trillion in aid has already been provided.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell argues against the package as missing the moment — too big at a time when the virus is showing signs of easing and the economy is poised to come "roaring" back.

Instead of working across the aisle toward unity, as Biden has promised, McConnell says Democrats are "ramming through what they call 'the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation,'" quoting the White House chief of staff.

"They explained their intent very clearly: to exploit this crisis as 'a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision,'" McConnell says. This is the first COVID-19 bill that had zero support from Republicans in the House or Senate.

Final passage of the bill is expected this week — before expanded unemployment benefits are set to expire mid-March. But Biden's signing celebration will just be the start. His administration will have to show that the funds can be spent effectively and efficiently, helping those in need while giving the broader public enough confidence to awaken growth through hiring and spending.

Coronavirus vaccine rollout breeds mixed emotions

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before posting a selfie with her COVID-19 vaccination card on Twitter, Aditi Juneja debated whether to include an explanation for why she was eligible for a shot.

"The first draft of the tweet had an explanation," says Juneja, a 30-year-old lawyer in New York City.

After some thought, she decided to leave out that her body mass index is considered obese, putting her at higher risk of serious illness if infected. A friend who disclosed the same reason on social media was greeted with hateful comments, and Juneja wanted to avoid that.

The rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. is offering hope that the pandemic that

has upended life around the world will finally draw to an end. But as distribution widens in the U.S., varying eligibility rules and unequal access to the coveted doses are also breeding guilt, envy and judgment among those who've had their doses — particularly the seemingly young and healthy — and the millions still anxiously awaiting their turn.

Adding to the second-guessing about who should be getting shots is the scattershot feel of the rollout, and the sense that some might be gaming the system. Faced with a patchwork of confusing scheduling systems, many who aren't as technically savvy or socially connected have been left waiting even as new swaths of people become eligible.

The envy and moral judgments about whether others deserve to be prioritized are understandable and could reflect anxieties

about being able to get vaccines for ourselves or our loved ones, says Nancy Berlinger, a bioethicist with the Hastings Center.

"There's the fear of missing out, or fear of missing out on behalf of your parents," she says.

Stereotypes about what illness looks like are also feeding into doubts about people's eligibility, even though the reason a person got a shot won't always be obvious. In other cases, Berlinger says judgments could reflect entrenched biases about smoking and obesity, compared with conditions that society might deem more "virtuous," such as cancer.

Yet even though a mass vaccination campaign is bound to have imperfections, Berlinger noted the goal is to prioritize people based on medical evidence on who's most at risk if infected.

Female generals focus of Women's Day event

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Two female generals who have been nominated to lead four-star commands were recognized Monday during a White House event in recognition of International Women's Day.

Air Force Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost and Army Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson stood behind President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin during the event as their military careers and achievements were highlighted as examples of women in military service.

Biden said he nominated Van

Ovost and Richardson on Friday and, if confirmed, they will be the second and third women to lead combatant commands.

"Gen. Van Ovost and Lt. Gen. Richardson have been tested under the most difficult circumstances, and they are proven leaders," Harris said. "The president and I have full confidence in them to address the complex threats we face, to help lead our troops and to keep our nation safe."

Van Ovost has been nominated to lead U.S. Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, where she is the commander of Air Mobility Command. Richardson has

been selected to be promoted to general and nominated to be the next commander of U.S. Southern Command based in Florida. She is the commanding general of U.S. Army North at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas.

Their nominations come less than a month after The New York Times reported Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and former Defense Secretary Mark Esper decided not to recommend the two female officers for promotion because they feared the White House under former President Donald Trump would only approve of white men for those

positions.

Biden spoke about their individual military careers — both women are aviators — and how they have helped blaze a trail for more women to follow them into military service.

"I wanted to shine the light on these accomplishments for those women today because Gen. Van Ovost [has] reiterated in an interview this last week ... 'It's hard to be what you can't see,'" Biden said. "But you'll soon see. Today is International Women's Day and we all need to see and to recognize the barrier-breaking accomplishments of these women."

Biden orders review of how colleges handle sex assaults

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a first step toward reversing a contentious Trump administration policy, President Joe Biden on Monday ordered his administration to review federal rules guiding colleges in their handling of campus sexual assaults.

In an executive order, Biden directed the Education Department to examine rules that the Trump administration issued around Title IX, the federal law that forbids sex discrimination in education. Biden directed the agency to "consider suspending, revising or rescinding" any policies that fail to protect students.

Biden also signed a second executive order formally establishing the White House Gender Policy Council, which his transition team had announced before he took office.

"The policy of this administration is that every individual, every student is entitled to a fair education — free of sexual violence — and that all involved have access to a fair process," Jennifer Klein, co-chair and executive director of the Gender Policy Council, told reporters at a White House briefing.

The orders were issued on International Women's Day, a global celebration marking

the achievements of women.

Both measures had been expected from Biden, who focused on gender equity during his campaign and previously promised to put an "immediate" end to rules that were finalized last year by former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

DeVos' policy made sweeping changes to the way colleges respond to sexual harassment and assault, with provisions that bolster the rights of the accused and narrow the scope of cases schools are required to address. It was seen as a swing away from Obama-era guidance that focused on protecting victims of sexual misconduct.

Among other changes, DeVos' rules narrowed the definition of sexual harassment, reduced the legal liability of colleges investigating sexual misconduct claims and gave accused students the right to cross-examine their accusers through a representative at live campus hearings.

Biden's order for a review drew praise from civil rights groups that say DeVos' policy has had a chilling effect on the reporting of sexual assaults, and also from colleges that say the rules are overly prescriptive and burdensome to follow.

Biden looks to boost offshore wind energy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A huge wind farm off the Massachusetts coast is edging closer to federal approval, setting up what the Biden administration hopes will be a model for a sharp increase in offshore wind energy development along the East Coast.

The Vineyard Wind project, south of Martha's Vineyard near Cape Cod, would create 800 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 400,000 homes in New England. If approved, the \$2 billion project would be the first utility-scale wind power development in federal waters. A smaller wind farm operates near Block Island in waters controlled by the state of Rhode Island.

Vineyard Wind is significantly farther offshore than Cape Wind, a previous Massachusetts offshore wind project that famously failed amid opposition from the Kennedy family and businessman William Koch, among others, who considered it a bird-killing eyesore in their ocean views. Supporters say Vineyard Wind, located nearly 15 miles offshore, is better situated than Cape Wind and uses superior technology with fewer and larger turbine blades.

Minn. trial for ex-cop forges on, for now

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The trial of a former Minneapolis police officer charged in George Floyd's death is forging ahead with jury selection, which began Tuesday, even though a looming appellate ruling could halt the case and delay it for weeks or even months as the state tries to add a third-degree murder count.

Prosecutors are asking the Court of Appeals to put Derek Chauvin's trial on hold until the issue of adding the third-degree murder count is resolved. The appeals court did not immediately rule on that request, and Judge Peter Cahill said Monday that he intends to keep the trial on track until he's told to stop.

"Unless the Court of Appeals tells me otherwise, we're going to keep moving," he said. Jury selection started Tuesday, a day later than scheduled.

Chauvin is charged with second-de-

gree murder and manslaughter in Floyd's death. The Court of Appeals last week ordered Cahill to consider reinstating a third-degree murder charge that he had dismissed. Legal experts say reinstating the charge would improve the odds of getting a conviction. Chauvin's attorney, Eric Nelson, said Monday he would ask the state Supreme Court to review the issue.

On Monday, prosecutors and defense attorneys agreed to dismiss 16 of the first 50 jurors they reviewed "for cause," based on their answers to a lengthy questionnaire. The dismissals weren't debated in court, but such dismissals can be for a host of reasons, such as views that indicate a juror can't be impartial.

Floyd was declared dead on May 25 after Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against the Black man's neck for about nine minutes, holding his position even after Floyd went limp. Floyd's death

was captured on widely seen bystander video and sparked sometimes violent protests in Minneapolis and beyond, leading to a nationwide reckoning on race.

Chauvin and three other officers were fired; the others face an August trial on aiding and abetting charges.

The unintentional second-degree murder charge requires prosecutors to prove that Chauvin's conduct was a "substantial causal factor" in Floyd's death, and that Chauvin was committing felony assault at the time. The third-degree murder charge would require them to prove that Chauvin caused Floyd's death through a dangerous act without regard for human life.

Jury selection could take at least three weeks and will end when 14 jurors are picked — 12 who will deliberate and two alternates.

As violence surges, some question axing police unit

Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND, Ore. — Elmer Yarborough got a terrifying call from his sister: She wept as she told him two of his nephews may have been shot in broad daylight as they left a bar in Portland, Ore.

He drove there as fast as he could. An officer told him one of his nephews was heading to the hospital and the other, Tyrell Penney, hadn't survived.

"My sister, Tyrell's mom, was on the phone; I just said, 'He's gone.' And I just heard the most horrific scream that you could ever imagine," Yarborough said.

When Penney was killed last summer, unrest was roiling liberal Portland as protesters took to the streets nightly to demand racial justice and defunding police. At the same time, one of the whitest major cities in America was experiencing its deadliest year in more than a quarter-century — a trend seen nationwide — with shootings that overwhelmingly affected the Black community.

Responding to the calls for change in policing, the mayor and City Council cut several police programs from the budget, including one Yarborough believes could have saved his nephew. A specialized unit fo-

cused on curbing gun violence, which had long faced criticism for disproportionately targeting people of color, was disbanded a month before Penney, 27, a Black man visiting from Sacramento, Calif., was killed July 25.

Yarborough and some other families wonder if ending the unit is partly to blame for Portland's dramatic spike in shootings, but officials and experts attribute increased gun violence in cities nationwide to the hardships of the coronavirus pandemic, unemployment, economic anxiety and stress on mental health.

More people died of gunfire last year in Portland — 40 — than the entire tally of homicides the previous year. The spike has continued this year, with more than 150 shootings, including 45 people wounded and 12 killed so far.

Police had warned of possible repercussions of ending the unit, pointing out cautionary tales in other cities that had made a similar choice. Portland police quoted former Salinas, Calif., Police Chief Kelly McMillin: "Not to be overly dramatic, but if you lose the unit which focuses on removing firearms from the hand of violent offenders, people will die. It's really just that simple."

Judge weighs bail in meth stillbirth case

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A central California woman charged with murder after delivering a stillborn baby who tested positive for methamphetamine may be released on reduced bail as her lawyers argue that the state's homicide law does not apply to pregnant women, a position backed by California's attorney general.

Chelsea Becker, 26, has been in jail since her arrest in November 2019, unable to raise \$2 million bail. A judge was expected to consider Tuesday whether to release her to a treatment center pending trial. She has pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutors say the case is about stopping a woman who has repeatedly abused narcotics while pregnant, resulting in two other babies who tested positive for meth at birth.

The case has outraged advocates of pregnant women who say prosecutors are trying to punish a woman who needs treatment, and not prison time, and they hope the charges will soon be thrown out.

More overnight camps plan to reopen

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine — There are going to be more happy campers this summer as more camps choose to reopen despite the pandemic, providing millions more kids an opportunity to gather around a campfire.

Most camp directors sat out last summer as the virus raged across the country, either because of state restrictions that barred them from opening or because of concerns about keeping kids healthy. But with cases declining and more people vaccinated each day, many are feeling more confident about reopening this season.

Parents are currently scrambling to get their kids signed up before slots are filled in many states like Maine, where at least 100 overnight camps will be open. But some states have yet to release their operating guidelines.

In New York, Andrew and Alyssa Klein held their son and daughter out of camp last year. But this summer they're letting them go to a camp in Maine.

"We have to figure out a way to live our lives safely," said Andrew Klein. "We can't live in a cocoon. We did that for a year. I'm ready to emerge and I'm ready for my family to emerge, as safely as we can."

Several states like New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey that banned overnight camps last summer have changed their tune. Across the country, at least 45 states are allowing overnight camps to open, compared to 39 states last summer, according to the American Camp Association.

"Camps are really gearing up to operate as fully as possible. They know that campers and staff need this experience," said Tom Rosenberg, from the ACA.

Most of the overnight camps that did remain open last summer operated successfully, creating their own "bubbles" and emphasizing safety by grouping

kids in cohorts, mandating masks and social distancing indoors, and imposing lots of hand washing. Many required kids to quarantine or to be tested before arrival.

But there were a few notable outbreaks. More than 250 people were infected at a camp in Georgia, and more than 80 people were infected at a camp in Missouri, for example.

Texas

AUSTIN — A few dozen activists rallied Monday at the Texas Capitol to protest Gov. Greg Abbott's decision to lift his order requiring Texans to don masks.

The Amplified Sound Coalition of music industry workers and the Austin chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America mounted the rally. They called for Abbott to reconsider last week's decision until 70% of the state's essential workers are vaccinated against COVID-19.

The viral illness has killed about 45,000 people in Texas, the nation's third-highest COVID-19 death toll. The Texas per-capita COVID-19 death rate is the nation's 24th-highest, according to Johns Hopkins University researchers.

The 1,300 new confirmed and probable cases drove the state's pandemic total closer to 2.7 million cases, with an estimated 133,003 of those now active, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported Monday.

Mississippi

JACKSON — Mississippi's top public health official is urging people to continue wearing masks in public to slow the spread of the coronavirus, even after Republican Gov. Tate Reeves lifted a mask mandate.

Dr. Thomas Dobbs, the state health officer, said during a news conference Monday that Mississippi has seen a significant decrease in hospitalizations from COVID-19 in recent weeks, but "we're not done with

the COVID pandemic."

"Just like in a baseball game, if you're up a run or two in the sixth or seventh inning, you don't just lay down and let the other team just go at it on offense," Dobbs said. "It's time to continue with some of the safety measures we have in place. Continue to mask in public. Continue to avoid indoor social gatherings. And get vaccinated when it's your turn."

Reeves last week lifted the mask mandate that had been in place for most of Mississippi. He recommended that people continue to wear masks but said the governor's office was "getting out of the business of telling people what they can and cannot do." Reeves said cities are allowed to keep local mandates. Jackson and Hattiesburg are among the cities that have done so.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — Nevada health officials reported Monday that about 1 in 6 people statewide has received at least a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine since shots became available in mid-December.

"I do think progress is starting to finally click and continue to increase," said James English, COVID-19 response operations chief in Washoe County, where state statistics show 16.8% of residents have received their first shot and 9.8% have been fully vaccinated.

In Clark County, home to Las Vegas, the first-dose figure was about 16.2%, with the Las Vegas area nearing 200,000 people fully vaccinated — or almost 8.5% of the area population, according to the state Department of Health and Human Services.

Statewide, the number of first-doses was nearly 16.5%, and full vaccinations almost 9%.

Ohio

COLUMBUS — Ohio's governor on Monday again dropped the minimum age eligibility for

COVID-19 vaccinations, this time to include those 50 years or older.

With the state continuing to show progress in battling the deadly virus, GOP Gov. Mike DeWine said the minimum age will be lowered from 60 years-plus as of Thursday. That is one week since the last age reduction in eligibility. Ohio has seen declining rates of infections and hospitalizations.

On Monday, the state reported 84 COVID-19 hospitalizations in the previous 24 hours, with a 21-day rolling average of 111 hospitalizations, and 1,245 new coronavirus cases in the prior 24 hours, with a 21-day rolling average of 1,831.

New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE — New Mexico on Monday began clearing the way for schools to reopen next month as vaccine eligibility was expanded to include shots for all teachers, those working in early childhood programs and educators.

"We get to ring the bell and bring our students back, and I'm very happy for both our educators — who will be receiving their vaccines, back in the classroom with their students — and students who have missed their peers, missed their sports," Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart said during a news conference.

The announcement on schools came after the state said it was aiming to get educators their first shots by the end of March.

The state expanded vaccine eligibility as part of a directive by the Biden administration to get more schools reopened amid the coronavirus pandemic. Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and state Health Secretary Dr. Tracie Collins said last week that the ability of New Mexico to meet the timeline will depend on the federal government increasing vaccine supplies.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Naked Cowboy arrested while at Bike Week

FL DAYTONA BEACH — A Times Square performer known as the Naked Cowboy was arrested on a misdemeanor panhandling charge while working a gig at Bike Week in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Court records showed Robert Burck, 51, who is widely known for wearing only white briefs, boots and a cowboy hat while playing a brightly colored guitar, was arrested while performing at the annual event on Florida's Atlantic coast.

Daytona Beach police said Burck was arrested after officers spotted people tucking dollar bills into his guitar after taking photographs.

"The defendant's actions violate Daytona Beach City Ordinance 66-1 (Panhandling)," an arresting officer wrote in a report.

Moving time: Police find new home for lost cow

GA SAVANNAH — The Savannah Police Department has canine officers and horses for mounted patrols. For a short period, the force also had a police cow.

Savannah officers found the cow wandering alongside Interstate 16, according to a police news release. While police got the word out that they were looking for the bovine's owners, the cow moved into the stables where mounted officers keep their horses.

Weeks passed and no owner came forward, police said, so they began to search for a new home.

The cow is going to live at Skylands Animal Sanctuary and Rescue in Wantage Township,

N.J.

Pig, husky rescued from hot vehicle at golf course

WA WALLA WALLA — Police said they rescued a 300-pound pig named Elvis Pigsley and a female husky named Lupa from a hot vehicle parked at a golf course in eastern Washington.

Police in Walla Walla said they responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle containing a distressed dog at the Veterans Memorial Golf Course.

Police said that after letting out Lupa, they discovered Elvis Pigsley lying down in the back.

Thieves steal statue of homeless Jesus

MO ST. LOUIS — Some persistent thieves stole a statue of Jesus as a homeless man sleeping on a bench.

The Rev. Larry Rice said the statue that was taken from outside the New Life Evangelistic Center in St. Louis was valued at about \$33,000.

Two men cut the legs of the bench holding the statue right above the concrete. They fled without taking the statue.

But Rice said that after two trainees lifted the statue back onto the sidewalk outside the closed homeless shelter, thieves returned in a vehicle and took the statue when it was left unattended.

Rice told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that he's worried the 400-pound bronze statue will be cut into pieces and sold for scrap.

Dozens of abandoned pay phones to be removed

LA NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans is removing dozens of abandoned

pay phone kiosks across the city that have become obsolete with the widespread use of cell-phones, the city announced.

In a news release, the city said that a contractor, Hard Rock Construction LLC, would be removing 77 pay phone kiosks. After the kiosks are removed, they will be put up at public auction.

"This is a small project in dollars, but substantial in terms of the impact to people's everyday lives," said Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Ramsey Green in the news release.

The kiosks, which no longer have phones in them, are often covered in graffiti or pamphlets, and people sometimes leave used cups and other trash inside.

Surfer dies after collision on waves off coast

CA VENTURA — The accidental collision of two surfers in the waves off the Southern California coast left one of the men dead, authorities said.

Emergency crews were called to Rincon Point following reports of an unconscious man, said Ventura County sheriff's Captain Victor Medina.

Witnesses told officials the two men had collided in the water and both suffered head injuries.

Gerry Gilhool, 51, was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead, Medina said.

The other surfer drove himself to a hospital, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Largest brood of cicadas will emerge this year

MD BALTIMORE — The region's largest brood of cicadas will emerge this year.

The Baltimore Sun reported

last week that scientists are rejoicing over the once-every-17-years event. Millions of cicadas are likely to rise from the ground around mid- to late May. The insects will stick around for two to four weeks.

The cicadas will breed and leave behind the next generation, which will surface in 2038.

The winged singers are part of a group called Brood X or Brood Ten. They will be hard to miss because their calls can approach 100 decibels. That's the same intensity as a lawnmower.

Man charged in multiple unrelated cases

WA SEATTLE — Prosecutors in Washington state have charged a Seattle man, who posted bail in May on unrelated robbery and hit-and-run charges, after he was accused of shooting a man in the head because he claimed the man cut him off in traffic.

He now faces multiple charges in at least four separate criminal cases.

Marcus Williams, 28, was charged with murder and first-degree unlawful possession of a firearm in the Jan. 7 shooting death of Javon Satterwhite, 41, in Kent, The Seattle Times reported.

Court records showed Williams was also charged in a Jan. 23 drive-by shooting.

Prosecutors charged Williams with second-degree assault and first-degree unlawful possession of a firearm after he allegedly threatened and strangled a man Jan. 24 in his apartment.

Court records show that Williams was charged in February 2019 with first-degree robbery, and on Feb. 25, 2019, Williams was accused of a felony hit-and-run that resulted in a fatality.

— From wire reports

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Some players standing out this spring

Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Diamondbacks left-hander Caleb Smith was reflecting on Tuesday's first spring training start when he talked about a valuable lesson he learned when facing the San Diego Padres.

"Don't throw Tatis a fastball," he said with a chuckle.

After Smith grooved a fastball, Fernando Tatis Jr. hit a grand slam deep over the left-center wall for his first homer of the spring. The 22-year-old hit the ball so hard that Arizona's outfielders barely moved and the ball landed among the fans sitting on blankets at Salt River Fields.

Tatis is among baseball's best young stars and he finished fourth in the NL MVP voting during the pandemic-shortened 2020 season, when he hit .277 with 17 homers and 11 stolen bases.

The Padres beefed up their

roster in the offseason, adding pitchers like Yu Darvish and Blake Snell to try to snap the Dodgers' streak of eight straight NL West titles. The lineup is expected to revolve around Tatis, who has a .301 average and 39 homers over his first 143 big league games.

Here are a few other players who were impressive during the first week of exhibition action.

RHP Merrill Kelly, Diamondbacks: Kelly gave up two runs in two innings during his first outing but his stuff looked good, and five of the six outs he recorded were strikeouts. It was an encouraging sign for the 32-year-old, who looked like one of the better pitchers in the National League early in 2020 before a blood clot was discovered in his shoulder and his season ended. Kelly had thoracic outlet surgery to dissolve the clot. The procedure involved the removal

of a rib.

1B/3B Bobby Dalbec, Red Sox: The 25-year-old corner infielder has three homers in his first nine spring at-bats, which has raised expectations even more for his 2021 season. The 6-foot-4, 227-pounder had an impressive debut for the disappointing Red Sox in 2020, batting .263 with eight homers in just 80 at-bats.

C Gary Sanchez, Yankees: The 28-year-old is trying to bounce back from a miserable 2020 season when he batted just .147 with a .253 on-base percentage. He hit two homers in his first five spring at-bats, raising hopes that the two-time All-Star will return to his 2019 form when he hit a career-high 34 homers.

3B Ke'Bryan Hayes, Pirates: The Pittsburgh prospect was excellent in his first big league action last season, batting .376 with five homers in 85 at-bats.

Now the Pirates are hopeful he can be one of the cornerstones of this season's lineup. He's off to a good start in spring training this week with three hits, including two doubles, in his first seven at-bats.

RHP Trevor Bauer, Dodgers: The reigning NL Cy Young Award winner for the Cincinnati Reds joined the Dodgers during the offseason, making the defending World Series champions even more formidable heading into 2021. In his first outing for L.A., he struck out two batters over two scoreless innings and gave up just one hit.

SS Wander Franco, Rays: The consensus No. 1 prospect is still just 20 years old but launched his first spring training homer Wednesday. It remains to be seen when he'll actually make his big league debut but there's little doubt the Rays could have a special player.

Prescott gets richest contract in Cowboys history

Associated Press

The Dallas Cowboys and Dak Prescott have finally agreed on the richest contract in club history, two years after negotiations first started with the star quarterback.

The team said the agreement was reached Monday. It's a \$160 million, four-year contract with \$126 million guaranteed and an NFL-record \$66 million signing bonus, according to a person with knowledge of the deal who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because details weren't announced.

The deal comes a day before a deadline to put the franchise tag on Prescott for a second straight year at a salary cap charge of \$37.7 million. The new contract will lower that cap hit.

Prescott played on a \$31.4 million franchise tag in 2020 be-

fore his season ended with a compound fracture and dislocation of his right ankle in Week 5.

Washington franchise tags Scherff again

Washington has placed the franchise tag on Brandon Scherff for the second year in a row. The team announced the move Monday night on the eve of the tagging deadline after the two sides couldn't come to terms on a long-term contract.

Scherff is coming off the first All-Pro season of his NFL career. The 29-year-old started 13 games at right guard and helping Washington make the playoffs for the first time since 2015, Scherff's rookie year after being drafted fifth overall.

Franchise-tagging Scherff again comes at a price of \$18 million, a 20% raise from his

2020 salary. Scherff has started 78 games in his NFL career while developing a reputation for battling through injuries.

Source: Jets place franchise tag on Maye

NEW YORK — A person with direct knowledge of the move says the New York Jets placed the franchise tag on safety Marcus Maye, a steady playmaker and leader with whom the team hopes to work out a long-term deal.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team hadn't announced the move. ESPN first reported the Jets' plan to use the franchise tag.

The tag for a safety is expected to be worth around \$10.5 million this year. By using the franchise tag, the sides have until

July 15 to work out a new contract or Maye would have to sign the franchise tag tender to play in 2021.

Source: Titans trade Wilson to Dolphins

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Tennessee Titans have found a team in the Miami Dolphins to take their 2020 first-round draft pick off their hands, trading offensive lineman Isaiah Wilson after his rookie season.

The trade agreed to Monday night sends the 29th overall pick in 2020 out of Georgia to Miami after Wilson played only four snaps as a rookie, the person told The Associated Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because neither team had announced the swap.

NFL.com first reported the trade.

NBA: No positive tests for All-Star group

Associated Press

The NBA's mini-bubble in Atlanta for the All-Star Game apparently worked.

No players, coaches or game officials tested positive for COVID-19 while in Atlanta, the NBA said Monday after the final tests were processed and results were returned to the league and the teams involved.

That includes Philadelphia's Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, a pair of All-Stars who missed the game and left Atlanta early after being flagged through contact tracing. A barber both saw before going to Atlanta tested positive, and that meant Embiid and Simmons were potentially exposed to the virus. By league policy this season they couldn't play Sunday night.

"All players, coaches, and game officials were tested for COVID three times after arriving in Atlanta, including a final test immediately prior to last night's All-Star Game," the league said Monday. "Each of

those tests returned a negative result, confirming no one on the court for last night's events was infected."

Embiid and Simmons have continued to return negative tests as well. It's still unclear if they will be eligible to play when Philadelphia opens its second-half schedule in Chicago on Thursday.

"So far, so good as far as their testing," 76ers coach Doc Rivers said. "They feel great. They both obviously wanted to play. We're disappointed. Both of them, their biggest concern would be if they could play the first two games when we get back. So we don't know the answer to that yet. That's going to be really important for us. It would be tough to start the second half of the year and not have either one."

All players and coaches who were involved in the game arrived in Atlanta on Saturday and left late Sunday following the game. Team LeBron, captained and selected by LeBron James, defeated Kevin Du-

rant's Team Durant 170-150.

Some players questioned why the game needed to be played during the pandemic, and those questions persisted Sunday after it was revealed Embiid and Simmons could not participate. But the league and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver insisted throughout the planning for the game that players would be safe in Atlanta.

Just as was the case last summer in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., where the NBA held the end of its regular season and then the entire 2020 playoffs in a bubble at Walt Disney World, the plan worked.

"Big shoutout to everybody that made this happen, to the players for coming down and participating, playing," Phoenix All-Star Chris Paul, who also serves as president of the National Basketball Players Association, said after the game. "There's always a lot of back and forth on these different decisions, but once guys get here, I think they're grateful for it."

Kansas ousts Miles as report is made public

Associated Press

Les Miles is out as Kansas' head coach just days after he was placed on administrative leave amid sexual misconduct allegations from his tenure at LSU.

Kansas announced Miles' departure Monday night, describing it as a mutual agreement to part ways. Miles has three years left on his original five-year contract with the school that pays him \$2.775 million annually through December 2023 and includes several bonuses, among them a \$675,000 retention bonus paid last November.

"I am extremely disappointed for our university, fans and everyone involved with our football program," Kansas athletic director Jeff Long said in a statement. "We will begin the search for a new head coach immediately with an outside firm to assist in this process. We need to win football games, and that is exactly what we're going to do."

Miles, 67, was 3-18 in two seasons with the Jayhawks. Offensive coordinator Mike DeBord was named acting head coach.

"This is certainly a difficult day for me and for my family," Miles said in a statement. "I love this university and the young men in our football program. I have truly enjoyed being the head coach at KU and

know that it is in a better place now than when I arrived."

Last week, LSU released a 148-page review by a law firm about the university's handling of sexual misconduct complaints campus-wide. One part described how Miles "tried to sexualize the staff of student workers in the football program by, for instance, allegedly demanding that he wanted blondes with big breasts, and 'pretty girls.'"

The report also revealed then-LSU athletic director Joe Alleva recommended firing Miles in 2013 to university officials.

Kansas placed Miles on leave later that day and said it would conduct a review of allegations against the coach that it had previously been unaware of.

Kansas said terms of the agreement with Miles on his departure will be released in the coming days.

Miles spent 11-plus seasons with LSU, leading the school to a national title in 2007. He was fired four games into the 2016 season.

Miles was investigated at LSU after two female student workers in the football program accused the coach of inappropriate behavior in 2012.

While that 2013 investigation by the Taylor Porter law firm found Miles showed poor judgment, it did not find violations of

law or that he had a sexual relationship with any students. Taylor Porter also concluded it could not confirm one student's allegation that Miles kissed her while they were in the coach's car with no one else present.

In an email dated June 2013 and sent to the president of LSU, Alleva wrote Miles was guilty of "insubordination, inappropriate behavior, putting the university, athletic (department) and football program at great risk."

The Taylor Porter review had been kept confidential for about eight years until a redacted version of it was released this week after a lawsuit filed by USA Today.

For Kansas, Miles' departure is just the latest setback for what has been college football's worst Power Five program for a decade. The Jayhawks have not won more than three games in a single season since 2009.

Miles had been out of coaching for two years when Long hired him after the 2018 season, hoping a notable name and experienced coach could help break the apathy that has enveloped the Kansas program for a decade.

Long and Miles were friends dating to their time at Michigan in the late 1980s.

Kane, Sharks down Blues in overtime

Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Evander Kane scored 41 seconds into overtime and the San Jose Sharks ended a disappointing homestand on a high note by beating the St. Louis Blues 3-2 Monday night.

The Sharks had lost five of their first six games on their longest homestand of the season before rallying to beat the Blues by getting a tying goal in the third period from Logan Couture and the winner from Kane off a feed from Erik Karlsson on a 2-on-1 rush.

"Huge, coming from behind there," Couture said. "I thought we competed harder in that third. The first two periods we weren't getting any offense. ... We were able to get a power-play goal and then a big play by Kane."

Marc-Edouard Vlasic also scored for San Jose, and Devan Dubnyk made 24 saves after getting starts in back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Now the Sharks get three days off before heading out on the road on a winning note.

"We didn't want that hanging over our heads," coach Bob Boughner said. "The fashion we won was a good building block

for us."

St. Louis won the first four games of its road trip before stumbling a bit at the end with overtime losses in Los Angeles and San Jose.

"It was a great trip," Blues coach Craig Berube said. "It really is. We got points in every game, which was outstanding. I would have liked to close these last two games out but we didn't do it."

Niko Mikkola got his first career goal and Brayden Schenn also scored for St. Louis. Ville Husso made 17 saves.

The Blues controlled play in the second period, earning three power plays and outshooting San Jose 16-5. But the Sharks had the only goal on Vlasic's first of the season on a rush before St. Louis finally capitalized late on its third attempt of the period with the man advantage.

Ryan O'Reilly sent a cross-ice pass to David Perron, whose one-timer deflected off Schenn's stick and fluttered past Dubnyk with 54 seconds left in the period to make it 2-1. It marked the fifth straight game that the Blues scored a power-play goal.

San Jose tied it midway through the third on the power play when a rebound of Ryan

Donato's shot hit off Couture's skate and went into the net.

"It's tough when you know there was another point available tonight if you held them off," O'Reilly said. "A couple of little things hurt us and we ended up losing."

Wild 2, Golden Knights 0: Kaapo Kahkonen made 26 saves to notch his first career shutout for host Minnesota in a victory that halted Vegas' six-game winning streak.

Coyotes 3, Avalanche 2: Johan Larsson tipped in the go-ahead goal with 15:54 remaining, Antti Raanta stopped all 16 shots after taking over early in the third period when Darcy Kuemper left with an apparent injury and Arizona won at Colorado.

Oilers 3, Senators 2: Kailer Yamamoto scored the first of three straight goals by host Edmonton in a win over Ottawa.

Ducks 6, Kings 5 (OT): Adam Henrique scored three minutes into overtime, Rickard Rakell became the fourth franchise player in 10 years to have three or more points in consecutive games and Anaheim won at Los Angeles.

Canucks 2, Canadiens 1 (SO): Bo Horvat scored in the shootout, extending host Vancouver's winning streak to three games.

No. 1 Gonzaga routs Saint Mary's in WCC semifinals

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Gonzaga was at its free-flowing best on offense and shut down Saint Mary's on the defensive end.

Another dominating performance, another trip to the West Coast Conference Tournament title game.

Win one more and the Zags will enter the NCAA Tournament undefeated.

Drew Timme scored 18 points, Joel Ayayi added 16 and top-ranked Gonzaga racked up another lopsided win, blowing past the Gaels 78-55 in the WCC semifinals on Monday night.

"These guys have shown all year how competitive they are and as we moved toward the NCAA Tournament — it was taken away from them last year — I think we'll get even an increased effort moving forward,"

Bulldogs coach Mark Few said.

Gonzaga (25-0) dominated from a big opening run and led by 18 at halftime to cruise into its national-best 24th conference tournament title game. The Bulldogs shot 53% as they tied the school record with their 29th straight win, dating to last season. They have won 22 straight games by double digits.

Jalen Suggs scored 15 points for Gonzaga, which will play BYU on Tuesday night for a chance to win its ninth WCC title in 11 years.

All but assured of a No. 1 seed, the Bulldogs have a chance to become the first team to enter the NCAA Tournament undefeated since Kentucky in 2014-15.

BYU 82, Pepperdine 77 (OT): Alex Barcello scored 23 points and Matt Haarms hit the go-ahead foul shots with 2:01 left

in overtime, sending the Cougars past the Waves in the West Coast Conference Tournament semifinals.

Appalachian State 80, Georgia State 73: Michael Almonacy scored a career-high 32 points with six three-pointers and the Mountaineers upset the two-time defending champion Panthers to win the Sun Belt Conference championship in Pensacola, Fla., and return to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2000.

It was an improbable run for fourth-seeded Appalachian State (17-11), which lost six of its final seven regular-season games before winning four games in four nights — including two in overtime. The Mountaineers didn't win four straight during the regular season and last won four-straight league games in 2015.

UNC Greensboro 69, Mercer

61: Isaiah Miller scored 25 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and had six assists as the top-seeded Spartans earned a berth in the NCAA Tournament by beating the seventh-seeded Bears in the Southern Conference championship in Asheville, N.C.

Cleveland State 71, Milwaukee 65: Torrey Patton had 14 points and 13 rebounds to lift the top-seeded Vikings over eighth-seeded Panthers in the Horizon League tourney semifinals in Indianapolis. Cleveland State, which will face third-seeded Oakland in Tuesday's title game, closed the game on a 10-1 run in the last 1:31.

Drexel 74, Northeastern 67: James Butler had 12 points and 12 rebounds to lift the Dragons past the Huskies in the Colonial Athletic Association semifinals in Harrisonburg, Va.