

CDC: Virus may be mild this summer

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Coronavirus infections could be driven to low levels and the pandemic at least temporarily throttled in the United States by July if the vast majority of people get vaccinated and continue with precautions against viral transmission, according to a report released Wednesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The report comes as administration officials and leaders in many states are sounding more confident that the country can return to a degree of normalcy relatively soon. President Joe Biden on Tuesday announced a new vaccination goal, saying he wants 70% of adults to have had at least one dose by July 4.

CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said Wednesday that the modeling results give Americans a road map out of the pandemic — so long as they continue to get vaccinated and maintain mitigation strategies until a “critical mass of people” get the shots.

“The results remind us that we have the path out of this, and models, once projecting really grim news, now offer reasons to be quite hopeful for what the summer may bring,” she said.

The CDC report is not a prediction or forecast. It is a set of four scenarios based on modeling of the pandemic, using different assumptions about vaccination rates, vac-

cine efficacy and precautions against transmission.

Each scenario shows an epidemic curve in which the national increase in cases that began in early March hits a peak and plummets in late spring, leading to a significantly improved viral landscape this summer. In the less optimistic scenarios, hospitalization numbers will vary significantly from state to state.

Under the most optimistic scenario, deaths linked to COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, could drop into the low 100s per week in August and into the “tens” per week in September, according to Justin Lessler, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and one of the paper’s senior authors. More than 4,000 people a week are dying of the disease, and about 578,000 people in the U.S. have died of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

That model includes an assumption that 90% of those eligible for vaccine would get a shot, which Lessler acknowledged “may be on the optimistic side given rates of vaccine refusal in some areas.”

Infectious-disease experts caution that the number of new infections remains high. Variants of the virus could emerge with mutations that allow the pathogen to evade vaccines. Immunization hesitancy among large chunks of the population is another con-

cern. High rates of vaccination seen in early April have come down in the past several weeks.

And the long-term picture remains cloudy because of all the unknowns about this virus, which continues to circulate freely around the planet and is driving catastrophic outbreaks in Brazil, Colombia, India and other countries. Some epidemiologists say that even if the coronavirus is suppressed to low levels this summer in the U.S., it will rebound in the fall.

There are limitations to the modeling. Although the researchers factored in the highly transmissible coronavirus variant B.1.1.7 now dominant in the U.S., it did not contemplate what would happen if an even more problematic variant — for example, one that could evade vaccine-induced immunity — were to spread.

The models used data through March 27. The report did not capture the high rate of vaccinations in April, when more than 90 million doses went into arms, according to Washington Post vaccine tracking data. Instead, the report considered 60 million to be a high vaccination rate in April. The high rate of vaccinations so far has made the most optimistic scenario more likely, Lessler noted.

Officials said people and communities need to maintain some efforts, such as wearing masks, to limit viral transmission.

Navy offers some early out to reduce overmanned rates

BY DANIEL BETANCOURT
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy is offering as many as three years’ early separation to sailors in some “overmanned” rates and career fields before the end of fiscal year 2021, according to a Navy administrative message released Tuesday.

The service exceeded its retention goals in FY 2020 and announced a select list of ratings

would qualify for early separation, according to NAVADMIN messages in December and January. The list includes boatswain’s mate, culinary specialist and hospital corpsman.

“While we have grown over the years, some enlisted ratings have become overmanned, creating imbalances in the Fleet,” the chief of Navy personnel, Vice Adm. John Nowell, wrote in December’s message.

Early separation comes with

some conditions, namely the return of unearned bonus money and no separation pay, according to Tuesday’s message.

Sailors in fields that are less than 95% manned or in nuclear fields are not eligible for early separation, according to January’s message. Sailors subject to selective reenlistment bonuses, obligated service for school training or in the Selective Training and Reenlistment Program are also not eligible.

Applications for early separation will be considered on a first come, first serve basis until quotas are met, according to Tuesday’s message. The deadline is Sept. 30.

All applicants for early separation must come forward on a voluntary basis through submitted requests into the Enlisted Early Transition Program, which gets updated regularly to show opportunities to those seeking it.

Army CID will cede oversight to civilian

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — The Army will split control of its criminal investigative agency from a general officer to a civilian director and add more civilian agents to its workforce in a major restructuring ignited by an independent committee that found the agency was failing to prevent and investigate crimes and support victims.

Maj. Gen. Donna Martin, Army provost marshal general and commander of Army Criminal Investigation Command, known commonly as CID, announced the restructuring Thursday, more than five months after the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee found that the CID detachment at Fort Hood, Texas, “was unstable, under-experienced, over-assigned and under-resourced, leading to inefficiencies that had an adverse impact on investigations, especially complex cases in-

volving sex crimes and soldier deaths.”

With four main points of adjustment, Martin said the restructuring will “address many seams and gaps, and it will also address those findings from the Fort Hood independent review.”

“We did extensive research, calculations and staff work to develop more comprehensive courses of action to present the Army senior leaders,” she said.

Specifically, CID will split oversight of criminal investigations with a civilian director, add more civilian agents and support staff, create a new commissioned officer tract of criminal investigators and staff its security missions for senior leaders with military police instead of CID agents.

“Because military people tend to transition, every two to three years, when we add our civilian capacity on top of our military special agents, we believe

that what we will see is an enhanced partnership with our local and regional law enforcement partners. We believe that will help us help not only in Criminal Investigation Command, but it will help our commanders on our installations understand crime as it relates to what happens on the installation, and what happens off the installation,” Martin said.

Created after the disappearance and death last year of Fort Hood Spc. Vanessa Guillen, the Fort Hood review committee released a report in December that offered 70 recommendations, with 11 focused on improving CID through its staffing, crime-suppression efforts and deepening their investigations into drug crimes and soldier deaths.

The inefficiencies stemmed from staffing protocols and other policies and procedures that transcend Fort Hood, according to the report.

Following the release of the

report, Martin said she conducted an administrative investigation into the actions of personnel at the Fort Hood detachment and, as a result, fired the battalion operations officer because he “failed to conduct his duties as required in providing oversight of the investigation.”

In the new structure, the duties and responsibilities now assigned to one general officer serving simultaneously as the Army’s provost marshal general and the CID commander will split. The Army will hire a civilian director with criminal investigative experience to lead the restructured CID with a general remaining the provost marshal.

To maintain and ensure independence of Army criminal investigations, the civilian director will initially report to the undersecretary of the Army, the service said. The provost marshal general will continue to report to the Army chief of staff and the Army secretary.

Report: Spc. Guillen harasser was known toxic leader

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — The sexual harassment that Spc. Vanessa Guillen faced before her death last year from a noncommissioned officer at Fort Hood wasn’t an isolated incident.

There had been four other complaints filed against her platoon sergeant for his mistreatment of subordinates, yet leaders continued to move him and keep him in charge of soldiers, according to an Army report released last week.

The sergeant, whose name was redacted in the public release of the report, was known to yell, belittle and threaten soldiers with counseling, delayed promotion or denial of leave, while playing favorites

and speaking Spanish in the workplace, which isolated those who didn’t understand the language, according to the report.

Though the redacted report does not include his position in Guillen’s unit, he was identified as her platoon sergeant by Gen. Michael Garrett, the commander of Army Forces Command who initiated the internal administrative investigation, known as a 15-6.

The platoon sergeant and 20 other leaders have faced disciplinary action in the wake of the investigation and another report by the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee that was released in December. It is unclear where and in what position the sergeant

serves now, but he has been notified of an intent to relieve him from leadership, according to a military official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Punishment for some of the other leaders at Fort Hood came because they continued to place this NCO in positions of leadership, which showed poor judgment, the military official said.

The report described how a toxic leader in one platoon created an “intimidating, hostile environment,” and those able to stop the harassment failed to do so.

The Army investigation, announced in September and under the direction of Gen. John Murray, the commander of Ar-

my Futures Command, looked into every echelon of Guillen’s leadership between April 22 and July 1 to learn what her leaders knew and when they knew it. The investigation also looked into allegations from the Guillen family that she had faced sexual harassment during the 15 months that she spent at Fort Hood.

In Murray’s investigation, he found two instances of sexual harassment against Guillen from the same man, her platoon sergeant. She informally reported the harassment on two occasions. But in both instances, her supervisor failed to report the harassment, and other leaders failed to take appropriate action, according to the report.

US: China's Africa outreach poses threat

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. general for Africa is warning that a growing threat from China may come not just from the waters of the Pacific but from the Atlantic as well.

U.S. Gen. Stephen Townsend, in an interview with The Associated Press, said Beijing is looking to establish a large navy port capable of hosting submarines or aircraft carriers on Africa's western coast. Townsend said China has approached countries stretching from Mauritania to south of Namibia, intent on establishing a naval facility. If realized, that prospect would enable China to base warships in its expanding Navy in the Atlantic as well as Pacific oceans.

"They're looking for a place where they can rearm and repair warships. That becomes militarily useful in conflict," said Townsend, who heads U.S. Africa Command. "They're a long way toward establishing that in Djibouti. Now they're casting

their gaze to the Atlantic coast and wanting to get such a base there."

Townsend's warnings come as the Pentagon shifts its focus from the counterterrorism wars of the last two decades to the Indo-Pacific region and threats from great power adversaries like China and Russia. The Biden administration views China's rapidly expanding economic influence and military might as America's primary long-term security challenge.

U.S. military commanders around the globe, including several who may lose troops and resources to bolster growth in the Pacific, caution that China's growing assertiveness isn't simply happening in Asia. And they argue that Beijing is aggressively asserting economic influence over countries in Africa, South America and the Middle East, and is pursuing bases and footholds there.

"The Chinese are outmaneuvering the U.S. in select countries in Africa," said

Townsend. "Port projects, economic endeavors, infrastructure and their agreements and contracts will lead to greater access in the future. They are hedging their bets and making big bets on Africa."

China's first overseas naval base was built years ago in Djibouti and it is steadily increasing its capacity. Townsend said as many as 2,000 military personnel are at the base, including hundreds of Marines who handle security there.

Henry Tugendhat, a senior policy analyst with the United States Institute of Peace, said China has a lot of economic interests on Africa's west coast, including fishing and oil. China also has helped finance and build a large commercial port in Cameroon.

He said that any effort by Beijing to get a naval port on the Atlantic coast would be an expansion of China's military presence. But the desire for ocean access, he said, may be primarily for economic gain, rather than military capabilities.

Pacific Fleet's new leader takes command of post

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, a naval aviator who most recently commanded U.S. 5th Fleet and Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain, took the helm of U.S. Pacific Fleet during a ceremony Wednesday at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

He replaces Adm. John Aquilino, who assumed leadership of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command on Friday.

Paparo is a graduate of the Navy Fighter Weapons School and has flown the F-14 Tomcat, F-15 Eagle and F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets, among others, the Navy said in a news release.

Among his operational command tours at sea were Strike Fighter Squadron 195 at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan; command of Carrier Air Wing 7, which was embarked in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Strike Group; and command of Carri-

er Strike Group 10, according to his official biography.

As head of 5th Fleet, Paparo kept naval watch on Iran during a period of heightened tension over its nuclear program.

From Hawaii, Paparo's attention will turn to China, what Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at his Senate confirmation hearing in January called the "pacing threat" to U.S. interests in the region.

Paparo said in the news release that he looked forward to leading a Navy fleet with an area of responsibility spanning 100 million square miles and 14 time zones, an expanse over which about 60% of the world's trade passes.

"The U.S. remains committed to a free and open Indo-Pacific that can only be achieved by the teamwork of like-minded partners, all working with a common commitment to upholding international law and the rules-based, international order," he said.

Blinken reaffirms support for Ukraine amid Russia moves

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with top Ukrainian officials in Kyiv on Thursday and reaffirmed Washington's support for the country in the wake of heightened tensions with Russia, fueled by its recent troop buildup near the borders with Ukraine.

The top American diplomat met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and reiterated the U.S.'s commitment to Ukraine's "sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence," while also underscoring the importance of Ukraine's efforts to tackle widespread corruption and carry out reforms.

"Ukraine is facing two challenges: aggression from outside, coming from Russia, and in effect aggression from within, coming from corruption, oligarchs and others who are putting their interests ahead of those of the Ukrainian people," Blinken told

a news conference after his meeting with Zelenskyy.

By visiting so early in his tenure, before any trip to Russia, Blinken signaled that Ukraine is a high foreign-policy priority for President Joe Biden's administration.

His visit was highly anticipated in Ukraine, with hopes for increased military aid and strong support for NATO membership being voiced on the frontlines of the battle against Russia-backed separatists in the east and in the halls of government in Kyiv.

Ukraine has seen an increase in hostilities in the east in recent months. Ukraine's military says 34 of its soldiers have been killed by rebel attacks this year. Russia, which claims its soldiers are not on the ground in eastern Ukraine, fueled the tensions further this year by massing troops and conducting large-scale military exercises near the border with Ukraine.

Sailor rescued migrants in capsized boat

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Cale Foy had just started hiking with his wife and three kids as they do every Sunday when he noticed what he thought was an abandoned fishing vessel approaching the rocky, wind-swept San Diego coastline as 5-to-8-foot waves were crashing.

A moment later, a wave slammed the boat and Foy saw it hit the rocks. Then he spotted people tossed into the rough sea before the vessel broke into pieces.

“All of a sudden, we see people jumping into the waves and on top of the rocks and it was: ‘I have to be there. I have to help,’” Foy said.

The Navy rescue swimmer immediately started running toward the shore in what would become the most dramatic rescue mission of his 17-year career: A migrant smuggling boat overloaded with 32 people on board had capsized and smashed apart as its passengers plunged into the treacherous waters.

Three people were killed and two Mexican migrants remain hospitalized, including one in serious condition, said Carlos Gutierrez Gonzalez, Mexico’s consul general in San Diego.

All but two people on the boat were Mexican citizens without legal status in the United States. The others were a Guatemalan

citizen without legal status in the U.S. and a U.S. citizen who was identified as the pilot, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said. Among those rescued were two Mexican minors who had been traveling alone—a 15-year-old boy and a 15-year-old girl. They were being placed in shelters, Gutierrez Gonzalez said.

Foy and another young sailor who was also out hiking and is in basic training as a Navy SEAL recruit were among the first to respond to the accident Sunday.

“We saw a lot of debris and a lot of people still in the water and nobody was out there helping other than two or three of the park rangers, and there were

three or four civilians in about ankle-deep water trying to get people out as well,” Foy said.

Foy, who teaches water rescue for the Navy, asked the sailor if he was a strong enough swimmer to get past the high surf. He assured him he was. The two stood for a second on a rise to see what was happening before drawing up what he called the “game plan.”

“We could hear people frantic, kind of chaos, screaming,” Foy said, adding that the cries for help were muffled by the sound of the waves crashing onto the rocks.

“We just jumped in and helped out with what we could,” Foy said.

Army trainee hijacked school bus

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

ATLANTA — An armed Army trainee from Fort Jackson was arrested Thursday morning after he hijacked a bus full of elementary school children using a service rifle, according to law enforcement officials in South Carolina.

The trainee will face multiple charges including kidnapping after he was apprehended at about 8 a.m., shortly after abandoning the school bus near Columbia, S.C., Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott said in a news conference just hours after the incident. None of the people aboard the bus — 18 children and the driver — were injured in the incident, he said.

“Probably one of the scariest calls we can get in law enforcement is that a school bus has been hijacked with kids on it with someone with a gun,” Lott said.

Lott declined to name the suspect Thursday morning. Fort Jackson officials said they were aware the incident involved one of their trainees, but they did not immediately provide further information about the suspect including whether he was in Basic Combat Training or another training program.

“We are working closely with Richland County Sheriff Department to respond to this incident,” Fort Jackson spokeswoman L.A. Sully said in a statement.

Lott said the trainee was wearing an Ar-

my physical training uniform and carrying a service rifle during the incident. The trainee ran off the post about 7 a.m. and was attempting to flag down cars on Interstate 77, the sheriff said.

Unable to find a ride on the interstate, the trainee moved to a service road bus stop where he followed children onto the school bus bound for Forest Lake Elementary School.

“He told the bus driver he didn’t want to hurt him, but he wanted him to drive him to the next town,” Lott said.

The sheriff said the driver began driving the bus as instructed.

Some of the children on the bus began using cellphones to call parents to let them know what was happening, Lott said. After some of the children asked repeatedly if the trainee planned to hurt them or the driver, the trainee “got a little frustrated” and ordered the bus stopped, allowing the driver and children to get off, Lott said. He then drove the bus several miles before abandoning it, with the rifle inside.

The man then “went through neighborhoods” nearby, Lott said, looking for clothes, was subsequently spotted by deputies and arrested without incident.

The sheriff said his deputies were working with Fort Jackson to investigate the incident. He said additional details, including the Army trainee’s name, would be released later.

Marines in Europe, Africa get new boss

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — A two-star general took command Thursday of Marines in Africa and Europe, where the service has expanded its mission in recent years with a heavy focus on security in the Arctic region.

Maj. Gen. Tracy W. King, who previously served as director of expeditionary warfare in the office of the chief of naval operations, will lead Marines from his headquarters near Stuttgart.

“The commandant of the Marine Corps has clearly articulated a vision of how our service will confront the security challenges of the 21st century,” King said in a statement. “In close partnership with the Navy, we will work to implement that vision here, making us a more lethal and dynamic force, better able to support our allies and partners in this theater.”

King replaces Maj. Gen. Michael Langley, who arrived in Germany in November to command Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa.

Langley will return to his previous post as deputy commander of Fleet Marine Force Atlantic in Norfolk, Va., a position that the Corps has used in the past to fill other command vacancies as the need arises.

Langley filled in after the previous commander, Maj. Gen. Stephen Neary, was relieved in October in connection with allegations he used a racial slur in front of Marines.

US backs waiving protections for vaccines

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Wednesday joined calls for more sharing of the technology behind COVID-19 vaccines to help speed the end of the pandemic, a shift that puts the U.S. alongside many in the developing world who want rich countries to do more to get doses to the needy.

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced the government's position, amid World Trade Organization talks about a possible temporary waiver of its protections that would allow more manufacturers to produce the life-saving vaccines.

"The Administration believes strongly in intellectual property protections, but in ser-

vice of ending this pandemic, supports the waiver of those protections for COVID-19 vaccines," Tai said in a statement.

She cautioned that it would take time to reach the required global "consensus" to waive the protections under WTO rules, and U.S. officials said it would not have an immediate effect on the global supply of COVID-19 shots.

In a tweet, the director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, John N. Nkengasong, said the Africa CDC welcomed the waiver and called the decision "leadership in action."

He added: "History will remember this decision as a great act of humanity!"

Tai's announcement came hours after WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala spoke to a closed-door meeting of ambassadors from developing and developed countries that have been wrangling over the issue, but agree on the need for wider access to COVID-19 treatments.

The WTO's General Council took up the issue of a temporary waiver for intellectual property protections on COVID-19 vaccines and other tools, which South Africa and India first proposed in October. The idea has gained support among some progressive lawmakers in the West.

Opponents — especially from industry — say a waiver would be no panacea.

Unemployment claims in US fall to under 500,000

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment aid fell last week to 498,000, the lowest point since the viral pandemic struck 14 months ago and a sign of the job market's growing strength as businesses reopen and consumers step up spending.

Thursday's report from the Labor Department showed that applications declined 92,000 from a revised 590,000 a week earlier. The number of weekly jobless claims — a rough measure of the pace of layoffs — has declined significantly from a peak of 900,000

in January as employers have ramped up hiring.

At the same time, the pace of applications is still well above the roughly 230,000 level that prevailed before the viral outbreak tore through the economy in March of last year.

As vaccinations have been more widely administered, restrictions on businesses have gradually lifted and consumers have become more willing to travel, shop and dine out, stronger spending has boosted hiring, slowed layoffs and accelerated growth. The economy grew last quarter at a vigorous 6.4% annual rate, with expectations that the current quar-

ter will be even better.

In March, employers added nearly 1 million jobs, the most since August. Roughly the same number is expected to be reported Friday when the government issues the jobs report for April. Even so, the economy will still be more than 7 million jobs short of its pre-pandemic level.

The government's report Thursday showed that about 16.2 million people were continuing to collect unemployment benefits in the week that ended April 17, down from 16.6 million in the previous week. That's a sign that some former recipients have found jobs.

India hits another virus record as oxygen demand jumps

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Infections in India hit another grim daily record on Thursday as demand for medical oxygen jumped sevenfold and the government denied reports that it was slow in distributing life-saving supplies from abroad.

The number of new confirmed cases breached 400,000 for the second time since the devastating surge began last month. The 412,262 new cases pushed India's official

tally to more than 21 million. The Health Ministry also reported 3,980 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 230,168. Experts believe both figures are an undercount.

Eleven COVID-19 patients died when pressure in an oxygen line dropped suddenly in a government medical college hospital in Chengalpet in southern India on Wednesday night, possibly because of a faulty valve, The Times of India newspaper reported.

Hospital authorities said they repaired the pipeline last week, but the consumption of oxygen had doubled since then, the newspaper said.

Demand for hospital oxygen has increased sevenfold since last month, a government official said, as India scrambles to set up large oxygen plants and transport oxygen. India created a sea bridge on Tuesday to ferry oxygen tankers from Bahrain and Kuwait in the Persian Gulf, officials said.

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O's Means throws no-no against Mariners

Associated Press

SEATTLE — The clubhouse celebration that awaited John Means was more than 50 years in the making for the Baltimore Orioles and felt more like a playoff berth being clinched rather than a Wednesday win in May.

Only a wild pitch in the dirt kept the Orioles from celebrating perfection. That's how dominant Means was in throwing the major leagues' third no-hitter of the season in Baltimore's 6-0 win over the Seattle Mariners on Wednesday.

A franchise still in the midst of a rebuild with little to celebrate in recent seasons was happy to put the spotlight on its tall lefty who overmatched the Mariners with an array of unhittable fastballs, breaking pitches and a terrific changeup.

No, it wasn't perfection. But it was about as close as it comes.

"I never really thought I'd be here. I'd always write 'MLB player' when I was a kid on the sheet when asked what you wanted to do when you're older, but I never thought it was a reality," Means said. "And now that it is, and now I'm able to throw this, it's crazy and I don't even know how to describe it."

This wasn't a fluke performance—Means has been one of the best pitchers in the American League to start this season. This was domination.

Means (4-0) struck out 12 and walked none. Seattle's only baserunner was Sam Haggerty after he raced to first after swinging at a curveball in the dirt for strike three with one out in the third inning. The 1-2 pitch bounced away from catcher Pedro Severino and ended up being the only blemish that separated Means from a perfect game.

Haggerty wasn't on base long, getting thrown out attempting to steal second.

It was Means' first complete game in 44 career big league starts, and he said he couldn't care less that it wasn't a perfect game.

Means pitched the first non-perfect no-hitter in which the opposing team did not reached on a walk, hit by pitch or error, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Means threw 79 strikes among 113 pitches, including first-pitch strikes to 26 of 27 batters. When Seattle did make contact against the 28-year-old left-hander, it was weak and there were no threats to fall in for a hit.

Means lowered his ERA to 1.37 and became the first individual Orioles pitcher to toss a no-hitter since Jim Palmer against Oakland on Aug. 13, 1969. It was the 10th no-hitter in franchise history, including six as Baltimore after four as the St. Louis Browns.

"It's such a crazy feeling. It's such a whirlwind of an experience. I don't think I've been able to process it yet," Means said. "But to be in the same breath as Palmer, I don't think that it gets much better than that."

In a season in which batters are on track to hit a record-low .234, Means joined a no-hit club that includes San Diego right-hander Joe Musgrove at Texas on April 9 and Chicago White Sox left-hander Carlos Rodón against Cleveland on April 14.

In addition, Arizona left-hander Madison Bumgarner pitched a seven-inning no-hitter against Atlanta on April 25, but that is not recognized as an official no-hitter by Major League Baseball because the game did not go at least nine innings, shortened under pandemic rules in effect for a second straight season.

It's the first time since 1969 there have been three complete game no-hitters this early in the season.

Reds take White Sox in 10, lose Votto to injury

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Cincinnati's Joey Votto fractured his left thumb in the Reds' 1-0 10-inning victory over the Chicago White Sox on Wednesday.

Votto was hit by Dallas Keuchel's pitch in the fourth inning. Votto remained in the game, but was replaced at first base by Kyle Farmer in the sixth. Votto is not expected to need surgery, but could miss up to a month.

Jesse Winker hit a winning single in the 10th inning after Chicago's Leury García was caught stealing in the top half.

Yankees 6, Astros 3: Giancarlo Stanton homered again and knocked in four runs, Aaron Hicks hit a tiebreaking single in the eighth inning and host New York beat Houston for its fifth straight victory.

With fans in the Bronx chanting curses at José Altuve and several other Astros for the second consecutive night, the Yan-

kees (16-14) got three innings of scoreless relief from their major league-best bullpen and won for the 10th time in 13 games to move two games above .500 for the first time this season.

Cubs 6, Dodgers 5 (11): Anthony Rizzo capped host Chicago's two-run 11th inning with an RBI single to complete a three-game sweep of Los Angeles.

The Cubs' Matt Duffy tied it when he drove in Wilson Contreras with a two-out single against Garrett Cleavinger (0-3). Duffy stole third and pinch-hitter Tony Wolters walked before Rizzo singled on a sharp grounder to left.

Blue Jays 9, Athletics 4: Teoscar Hernández hit a tiebreaking RBI single during his team's five-run eighth inning, and Toronto won at Oakland.

Cardinals 4-2, Mets 1-7: Tomás Nido hit a two-run homer and Jonathan Villar added a solo shot and an RBI single, power-

ing New York over host St. Louis for a doubleheader split.

The loss ended a six-game winning streak for the NL Central-leading Cardinals (19-13).

St. Louis won the opener 4-1 as Paul DeJong hit a two-run homer.

Braves 5, Nationals 3: Marcell Ozuna hit Atlanta's third grand slam in four games and Max Fried pitched five strong innings in his return from the injured list in a win at Washington.

Rockies 6, Giants 5: Jon Gray tossed six strong innings and helped himself with an RBI single in Colorado's victory over visiting San Francisco.

Phillies 5, Brewers 4: Didi Gregorius hit his eighth career grand slam and host Philadelphia beat Milwaukee for its third straight victory.

Rays 3, Angels 1: Brandon Lowe hit a three-run homer and Tampa Bay overcame five scoreless innings from Shohei

Ohtani to beat host Los Angeles.

Tigers 6, Red Sox 5 (10): Jeimer Candelario hit a tie-breaking three-run homer in the 10th inning, and Detroit won at Boston.

Marlins 8, Diamondbacks 0: Adam Duvall hit his fifth home run and finished with four RBIs, Miguel Rojas scored three times and five Miami pitchers scattered five hits to lead the team over visiting Arizona.

Indians 5, Royals 4: Josh Naylor homered in the ninth inning, sending Cleveland to a win at Kansas City.

Padres 4, Pirates 2: Jake Cronenworth hit a go-ahead, two-run single in the sixth inning and host San Diego beat Pittsburgh.

Rangers 3, Twins 1: Hyeon-Jong Yang made his first major league start after 14 years in the Korea Baseball Organization, getting Texas off to a strong start in a victory at Minnesota.

Clarkson leads Jazz's rout of Spurs

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Jordan Clarkson and Bojan Bogdanovic are rounding into form at the right time.

Clarkson scored 30 points, Bogdanovic added 24 and the Utah Jazz routed the San Antonio Spurs 126-94 on Wednesday night.

Bogdanovic helped stake the Jazz to an early lead and Clarkson pushed it out of reach.

"Just trying to be aggressive, I know the team needs me to score more without especially Donovan (Mitchell)," Bogdanovic said.

With Atlanta's 135-103 victory over Phoenix, the Jazz reclaimed the No. 1 spot in the NBA and Western Conference play-off race despite the All-Star backcourt of Mitchell (ankle) and Mike Conley (hamstring) missing another game.

Luka Samanic scored 15 points to lead the Spurs for the first time this season. Devin Vassell and Drew Eubanks each had 14 for the Spurs. They have lost five straight as they fight for the final spot in the NBA play-in tournament.

Bucks 135, Wizards 134: Jrue Holiday scored 29 points

and host Milwaukee withstood a triple-double from Russell Westbrook to beat Washington.

Westbrook had 29 points, 17 assists and 12 rebounds for his 179th career triple-double, but the Wizards still lost for just the fourth time in their last 17 games. He's just two shy of Oscar Robertson's NBA record of 181 career triple-doubles.

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 23 points for the Bucks before fouling out with 1:54 left. Donte DiVincenzo had 19.

Hawks 135, Suns 103: Clint Capela scored 18 points to lead seven scorers in double figures and Atlanta pulled away late to overcome Devin Booker's 30 points and rout visiting Phoenix.

The Suns began the night even with the Utah Jazz in the race for the NBA's best record, thanks to a five-game winning streak. Phoenix faded badly in the fourth quarter of the back-to-back following Tuesday night's 134-118 overtime win at Cleveland.

Nuggets 113, Knicks 97: Nikola Jokic scored 24 of his 32 points in a dominant first quarter in host Denver's victory.

Jokic finished with 12 rebounds to help lead the Nuggets

to their 10th victory in 12 games. Denver, which led by as much as 31, moved back into a tie with the Los Angeles Clippers for third place in the Western Conference.

Celtics 132, Magic 96: Boston guard Kemba Walker tied a season high with 32 points in his return from a four-game injury absence and Evan Fournier had 18 points in his first game back in Orlando since being traded to the Celtics.

Jayson Tatum shook off a slow start and finished with 27 points for Boston, which swept the three-game series with the Magic and beat Orlando for a sixth straight time over the past two seasons. The Celtics made 21 three-pointers, just two fewer than their season-best 23 against the Magic on March 21.

76ers 135, Rockets 115: Joel Embiid had 34 points in just 25 minutes and visiting Philadelphia routed Houston for its sixth straight victory.

The Eastern Conference leaders were up by double figures for most of the night and their starters barely had to play in the fourth quarter to keep the NBA's longest active winning streak going. The Rockets, who have

the NBA's worst record at 16-50, lost their third straight and eighth in nine games.

Grizzlies 130, Timberwolves 135: Ja Morant had 37 points and 10 assists and Memphis won at Minnesota.

Desmond Bane scored 22 points off the bench, including a few key three-pointers late, and Kyle Anderson added 20 points for the Grizzlies.

Trail Blazers 141, Cavaliers 105: Damian Lillard had 32 points and nine assists and Enes Kanter had 18 points and 13 rebounds, leading Portland to its highest points total of the season in a win at Cleveland.

Lillard scored 16 points in the first quarter and 14 points in the third as the Trail Blazers moved within a half-game of the Mavericks and Lakers for fifth place in the West. Portland is seventh and would be the top seed in the play-in tournament.

Kings 104, Pacers 93: Marvin Bagley III kept Sacramento's slim playoff hopes alive, scoring a season-high 31 points and grabbing 12 rebounds to lead the team to a win at Indiana.

Delon Wright added 23 points to help the Kings win their fourth straight—all on the road.

Lightning continue domination of Stars this season

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Defenseman Erik Cernak had a goal and two assists to help the Tampa Bay Lightning beat the Dallas Stars 6-2.

The defending champion Lightning have won six of the seven meetings this season between the 2020 Stanley Cup Finalists. The teams will meet again Friday night in Tampa.

The Stars remained alive for the fourth and final spot in the Central Division after Nashville's loss in Columbus. Dallas is four points back with three games remaining.

Andrei Vasilevski finished with 20 saves for his 31st victory of the season.

Kings 4, Coyotes 2: Anze Kopitar had an

assist to reach 1,000 career points, Gabriel Vilardi scored twice and Los Angeles eliminated host Arizona from playoff contention.

Kopitar became the fourth Kings player to reach 1,000 career points on Sean Walker's empty-net goal. Cal Petersen had 28 saves and Jaret Anderson-Dolan also scored for Los Angeles.

Golden Knights 3, Wild 2 (OT): Alex Pietrangolo scored at 1:53 of overtime to lift Vegas to a win at Minnesota.

Blue Jackets 4, Predators 2: Mikhail Grigorenko scored the go-ahead goal in the third period and host Columbus prevented Nashville from clinching a playoff spot.

Ducks 3, Blues 2 (SO): Troy Terry scored the shootout winner in Anaheim's victory at St. Louis.

Sharks 3, Avalanche 2: Tomas Hertl had two goals and an assist in his 500th career NHL game and Erik Karlsson scored a go-ahead goal in the third period to lead host San Jose past Colorado.

Jets 4, Flames 0: Adam Lowry and Blake Wheeler each scored twice and Winnipeg won at Calgary to snap a seven-game losing streak and clinch a playoff spot.

Senators 5, Canadiens 1: Erik Brannstrom had three assists for his first career multi-point game, Shane Pinto scored his first NHL goal and host Ottawa stalled Montreal's playoff charge.

Capitals 4, Rangers 2: T.J. Oshie had a hat trick, Vitek Vanecek made 19 saves and visiting Washington beat depleted New York in a fight-filled game.

Lower-round quarterbacks face long odds

Associated Press

The five teams that took quarterbacks in the first round of the NFL Draft head into the offseason program full of optimism that they have found the franchise cornerstone that will lead to great success for the next decade.

History indicates that at least a couple of those teams will be looking for new answers sooner than they hoped with the hit rate on successful first-round quarterbacks being no better than a coin toss, something the New York Jets know all too well after taking Zach Wilson second overall just three years after making Sam Darnold the third overall pick.

The chances that the five teams that selected quarterbacks after round one found a keeper is considerably smaller based on the recent track records of those picks.

The days of first-round snubs going on to superstar careers such as Tom Brady, Brett Favre, Drew Brees, or becoming solid long-term starters such as Matt Hasselbeck, Trent Green and Mark Brunell are a thing of the past.

Since a stretch in 2011-12 when Russell Wilson, Andy Dalton, Kirk Cousins and Colin Kaepernick fashioned successful careers after being passed over in round one, only a rare few have made it since.

Of the 70 quarterbacks taken after round 1 from 2013-20, including 26 who went in rounds two through four, only Dak Prescott, Derek Carr and Jimmy Garoppolo have become successful starters.

The jury is still out on a few others such as Jalen Hurts, picked in the second round last year by Philadelphia, and 2019 second-rounder Drew Lock in Denver, but that history doesn't bode well for this year's class.

Five quarterbacks were drafted after the first round this year, matching the fewest taken after round one in the common draft era that started in 1967. As more teams elevate quarterbacks up their draft boards to take them in the first round, the quality in the later rounds has dropped.

There was speculation that a record-tying six quarterbacks could go in the first round this year with Trevor Lawrence, Wilson, Trey Lance, Justin Fields and Mac Jones near locks. The next to go off the board ended up being Florida's Kyle Trask, who went to Tampa Bay with the final pick of the second round.

Texas A&M's Kellen Mond and Stanford's Davis Mills then went to Minnesota and Houston respectively with back-to-back picks early in the third round, Notre Dame's Ian Book went to New Orleans in the fourth and Indianapolis took Sam Ehlinger out of Texas in the sixth round.

With the possible exception of Mills, who could be rushed into play depending on the status of Deshaun Watson with the Texans, the other young quarterbacks are behind entrenched veterans and will be given time to develop.

"This is a great place for a quarterback to come and be groomed," said Tampa Bay general manager Jason Licht, who won the Super Bowl last season with Tom Brady.

"To be playing with the G.O.A.T. and you have some great, great coaching."

Trask, who started 22 games in college, will get to watch the 43-year-old Brady and learn from coach Bruce Arians and offensive coordinator Byron Leftwich. Assistants Clyde Christensen and Tom Moore, who have helped develop several young passers in their decades in the league, also will provide a big help.

Mond has much more college experience than Trask with 44 starts at Texas A&M, but will have time in Minnesota to learn behind Kirk Cousins, who is under contract for two more seasons.

"With a young guy you try to track that as they come out whether they're spiraling up or spiraling down and we felt he was on the right trajectory and has a lot of upside to develop," general manager Rick Spielman said.

Mills might not get the luxury of waiting depending on how Watson's situation in Houston plays out. Watson's future with the team is in question after 22 women filed lawsuits alleging that he sexually assaulted or harassed them. Houston police and the NFL are investigating the allegations, leaving his future with the team up in the air.

Even before all that Watson had been unhappy with the direction of the team and requested a trade earlier this year.

The Texans also have Tyrod Taylor and general manager Nick Caserio says he and first-year coach David Culley will see how things play out before determining how quickly Mills plays.

NFL warns players off-site injuries could void deals

Associated Press

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The NFL is reminding teams following Ja'Wuan James' potentially season-ending Achilles injury that they're not obligated to pay salaries of players who get hurt away from team facilities.

The memo sent to all 32 teams Wednesday and obtained by The Associated Press was spurred by James' injury he sustained while working out at a private gym away from Broncos headquarters on Tuesday.

The league encouraged teams to "remind players of the significant injury-related protection provided if they choose to work out at the club facility and the risks they undertake in choosing to train in non-NFL locations."

Players are protected against lost wages if

they sustain an injury at a team's facility. They don't have the same protection if they're injured working out anywhere else.

Players from 20 teams, including the Broncos, are boycotting voluntary offseason workouts at team facilities over COVID-19 concerns.

The NFL said in the memo that several teams had raised the issue of compensation after James, the Broncos' starting right tackle, got hurt.

The league said the Broncos are off the hook for James' \$10 million salary for 2021, which would have been fully guaranteed had he gotten hurt while working out at the team's facilities.

"Injuries sustained while a player is working out 'on his own' in a location other than

an NFL facility are considered 'Non-Football Injuries' and are outside the scope of a typical skill, injury and cap guarantee," the memo said.

"Such injuries are also not covered by the protections found in paragraph 9 of the NFL Player Contract, meaning that clubs have no contractual obligation to provide salary continuation during the year in which the injury was sustained."

"By contrast," the memo added, "injuries sustained by a player while working out at a club facility or as specifically authorized by his club are considered 'Football-Related Injuries.' Under our agreement with the NFL Players Association, players that sustain 'Football Related Injuries' are entitled to significant protections."