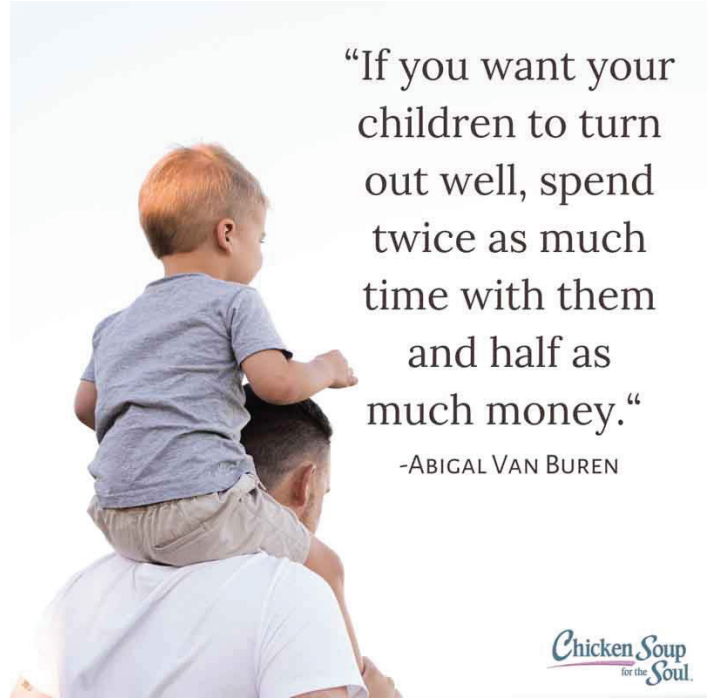


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“If you want your children to turn out well, spend twice as much time with them and half as much money.”

-ABIGAL VAN BUREN

Chicken Soup
for the Soul.

Correction

Redfield defeated Mobridge in the Region 6 American Legion championship game. The information provided by gamechanger was incorrect.



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Britton

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and night
shift
assemblers!



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Dominique Clare

Football is finally here. The rookies are reporting to camp as the team looks to kick off their 2021 campaign. Even though camp is starting the Vikings are still finding ways to improve their roster. They brought in another free agent over the weekend that will make the receiver room a much better unit. The Vikings agreed to terms with speedy receiver Dede Westbrook who will compete for the 3rd receiver position with Chad Beebe and Bisi Johnson. Even if that is the last move of the offseason, this has been one of the best offseasons by the Minnesota Vikings in a long time. If Westbrook pans out it is going to be hard for opposing corners to match up against the receiving corps of Westbrook, Adam Thielen, and Justin Jefferson.

This week we continue our roster breakdown with players who will be the last line of defense against other teams receivers corps, the safeties.

Safety has historically been a strong position for the Vikings, as they have had many studs throughout the years at the position. There will be a mix of experience for the Minnesota Vikings this year at safety.

Harrison Smith – The Vikings have been excellent at the safety position for a long time and that reason starts and ends with Harrison Smith. He is excellent at coverage, tackling, and making adjustments. He is the leader of this defense and one of the best in the NFL.

Smith is still playing at an elite level and the Vikings need to capitalize on having a generational player leading the defense.

Xavier Woods – Playing opposite of Harrison Smith is a safeties dream. We often see players get an over inflated value after playing with Smith. I expect that to be no different with Xavier Woods who the Vikings signed during this past offseason. He is currently slated to start at the free safety position.

He is solid but not a spectacular player. By the end of this season people will be talking about how good he is. It happened with Andrew Sendejo and Anthony Harris. Just remember reading this later in the year.

Josh Metellus – Metellus was selected in the 5th round of the 2020 NFL draft by the Vikings. He was on the practice squad for a bit and then the Vikings called him up to the active roster. He played in 15 games, primarily on special teams getting some NFL experience. This year he will back up Harrison Smith and look to contribute any way he can.

Camryn Bynum – The Vikings selected Bynum with the in the 4th round of the 2021 NFL draft. Bynum was actually the 16th ranked cornerback in the draft, but the Vikings plan to utilize him as a safety. This could end of being a steal because of that. Bynum is an amazing run defender and was ranked by Pro Football Focus as the best run defender in his draft class of all corner backs.

I would not be surprised to see Bynum steal that starting position from Xavier Woods by the end of the season.

The Rest – After those four players the Vikings have are bringing Luther Kirk and Myles Dorn to camp. It is also speculated that cornerback Harrison Hand may take some snaps at the safety position during camp.

Self-Diagnosis Can Be Rash

"Doc, what's this scaly rash on my arm? Do I have ringworm again?" A lot of the rashes I see in my dermatology clinic are red and scaly. In fact, what first drew me to dermatology as a profession was watching a dermatologist distinguish between seemingly similar red, scaly rashes all day. It intrigued me at the time, and I wanted to be just like her.



By Mandi Greenway, M.D. ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

I can always tell when my patient is a farmer, because they usually treat any rash as ringworm before coming to see me. How does ringworm happen and why are farmers so familiar with it? Ringworm, first of all, is not a worm. It is actually caused by a fungus that infects our skin and causes a circular rash wherever the fungus came in contact with our skin. Without treatment, the circle will continue to expand and enlarge, forming concentric rings. The rash usually itches and is bothersome.

There are several families of fungus that can cause ringworm (tinea corporis in medical speak). They can be spread directly from other people, animals, or soil. The most severe infections typically happen when we get ringworm from animals. Growing up on a farm, I am very familiar with how much farmers interact with their livestock and pets. Farmers are accustomed to diagnosing ringworm on their animals and often will treat themselves if they see a similar rash. I'm pretty sure every farm family has had at least one member who has come down with this common infection at one time.

But all that is scaly, and circular is not ringworm. I remind my patients, especially farmers, that there are lots of different rashes that can look similar. It is not always in your best interest to try to self-diagnose and treat.

Nummular eczema is a type of eczema that forms red, scaly, circular patches on our skin. Granuloma annulare is another rash that forms raised rings on the skin. These are both treated differently than fungal infections and make up the most common rashes that are misdiagnosed as ringworm.

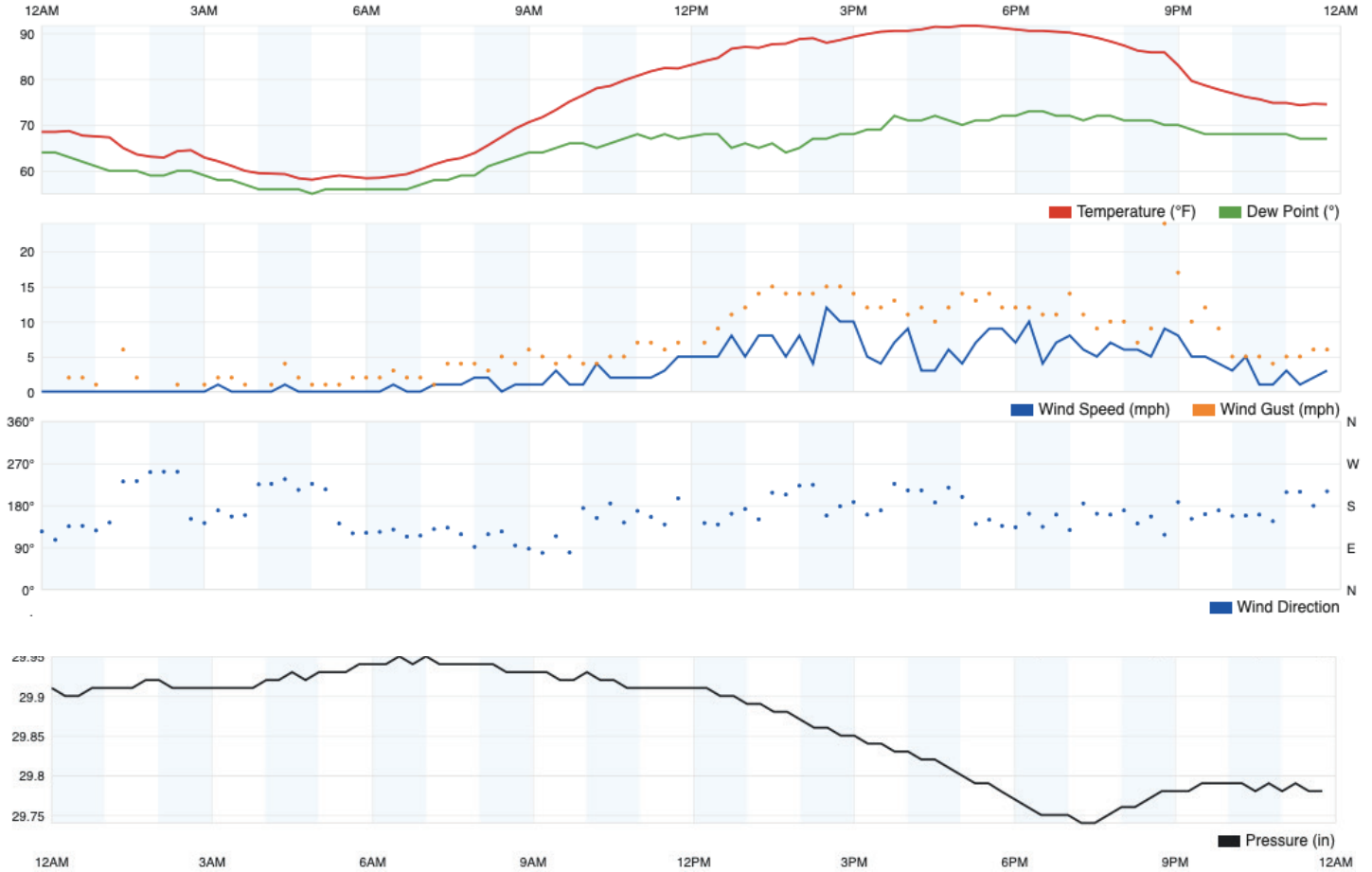
There are other, less common, rashes that can signify underlying medical conditions inside your body. Even though ringworm is a common, non-dangerous skin infection, if your rash doesn't improve with over-the-counter antifungals you should always check with your doctor.

Mandi Greenway, M.D. is a contributing Prairie Doc® columnist. She practices dermatology in Mitchell, South Dakota and is the featured guest on the show this week. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

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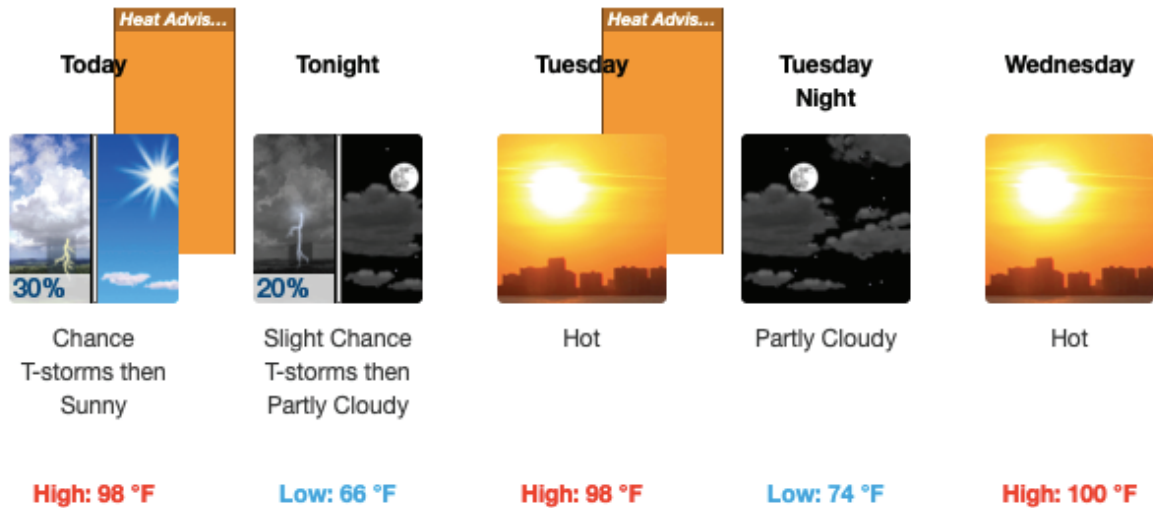
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Hot Today through Wednesday

Highs Today Lower 90s Far East/Around 105 Southwest

*Scattered Storms Northern SD/West Central MN
Today and Tonight*



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
7/26/2021 5:26 AM

An upper level heat dome will build over the central United States into Wednesday bringing highs in the 90s to around 105 degrees. Scattered storms are expected across northern South Dakota and west central Minnesota today and tonight.

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Hot & Humid James Valley East Hot & Dry Missouri Valley West

Maximum Heat Index Forecast

	7/26 Mon						7/27 Tue						7/28 Wed										
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	73	87	96	98	99	88	76	71	71	91	101	106	105	94	84	78	79	100	107	108	103	87	76
Britton	72	84	92	94	94	79	71	68	71	89	97	100	100	89	78	77	78	95	99	99	96	82	72
Eagle Butte	74	86	96	99	98	86	77	73	72	90	100	103	103	91	84	81	81	93	97	99	98	87	78
Eureka	71	86	96	98	97	86	75	70	72	90	100	103	101	90	81	78	78	92	98	100	97	84	76
Gettysburg	72	86	95	98	98	86	75	71	72	90	100	103	101	90	82	78	79	97	103	104	101	87	75
Kennebec	75	91	98	99	99	87	79	76	76	94	103	105	104	93	86	81	79	98	107	108	106	94	82
McIntosh	71	85	94	97	95	84	75	70	70	87	98	101	101	89	82	79	77	88	93	95	92	83	75
Milbank	73	85	92	93	95	85	73	71	70	87	96	99	99	86	75	73	77	96	104	104	100	86	73
Miller	74	90	98	101	98	86	77	74	74	95	104	106	105	92	83	81	82	101	108	109	106	91	78
Mobridge	75	87	96	101	99	88	79	74	73	90	103	106	105	94	85	82	79	93	102	102	99	87	78
Murdo	76	90	99	100	99	88	79	76	76	93	101	103	103	92	84	81	79	95	104	105	104	91	82
Pierre	76	92	102	103	102	89	82	77	77	95	105	107	106	94	86	82	82	98	108	109	106	95	83
Redfield	73	89	98	101	99	89	78	73	73	94	104	107	105	93	84	79	79	102	111	111	108	92	78
Sisseton	74	86	92	93	92	83	72	70	71	87	95	97	97	86	76	76	78	94	101	101	95	83	72
Watertown	73	85	90	92	93	84	76	72	72	90	99	100	100	88	79	77	78	95	101	103	102	85	73
Wheaton	71	83	90	91	91	78	71	68	70	86	93	95	95	85	74	72	75	91	96	97	94	82	72

* Table values in °F
 **Created: 11 am CDT Sun 7/25/2021
 ***Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.



weather.gov/abr

National Weather Service
 Aberdeen, SD
 Graphic Created
 7/25/2021 11:39 AM

Heat and humidity will grab the headlines this week, with temperatures some 10 to 20+ degrees above average Monday through Wednesday. The western half of the state will be hotter than the east but will also see less humidity, which may be a little more tolerable if that is any consolation.

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Today in Weather History

July 26, 1963: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 4 miles northeast of Raymond. Barns and outbuildings were destroyed on one farm, and the home was unroofed. Asphalt was ripped off a state highway.

1874: Torrential rainfall brought flash flooding to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

1890: During the morning hours, an estimated F3 tornado went through the southern part of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The tornado left 500 people homeless as the tornado destroyed 35 homes and damaged 60 others.

1897: Jewel, Maryland received 14.75 inches of rain in a 24 hour period. This record is currently the oldest, state rainfall record in the United States. All other state rainfall records are in the 1900s and 2000s.

1921: On the summit of Mt. Wellenkuppe, in Switzerland, the temperature reached 100 degrees by 10 am. The summit had an elevation of 12,830 feet and was covered in snow.

1931: A swarm of grasshoppers descends on crops throughout the American heartland, devastating millions of acres. Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, already in the midst of a bad drought, suffered tremendously from this disaster.

1979: Tropical Storm Claudette stalled over Alvin, Texas, inundating the town with 45 inches of rain in 42 hours. The total included 43 inches in 24 hours, which is the maximum 24-hour rainfall in American history.

1819 - Twin cloudbursts of fifteen inches struck almost simultaneously at Catskill, NY, and Westfield, MA. Flash flooding resulted in enormous erosion. (David Ludlum)

1943 - Tishomingo, OK, baked in the heat as the mercury soared to 121 degrees, a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1960 - The temperature at Salt Lake City, UT, hit 107 degrees, an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced hail two inches in diameter in McHenry County, IL, and wind gusts to 70 mph at Auburn, ME. A wind gust of 90 mph was recorded at Blairstown, NJ, before the anemometer broke. The high winds were associated with a small tornado. The record high of 88 degrees at Beckley, WV, was their sixth in a row. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, and in the south central U.S. Eight cities in the northwestern and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Salem, OR, hit 103 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms produced heavy rain in southeastern Texas, with more than three inches reported at the Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Chambers County. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Montana, with wind gusts to 62 mph reported at Helena. Eight cities from Maine to Minnesota reported record high temperatures for the date, including Newark, NJ, with a reading of 99 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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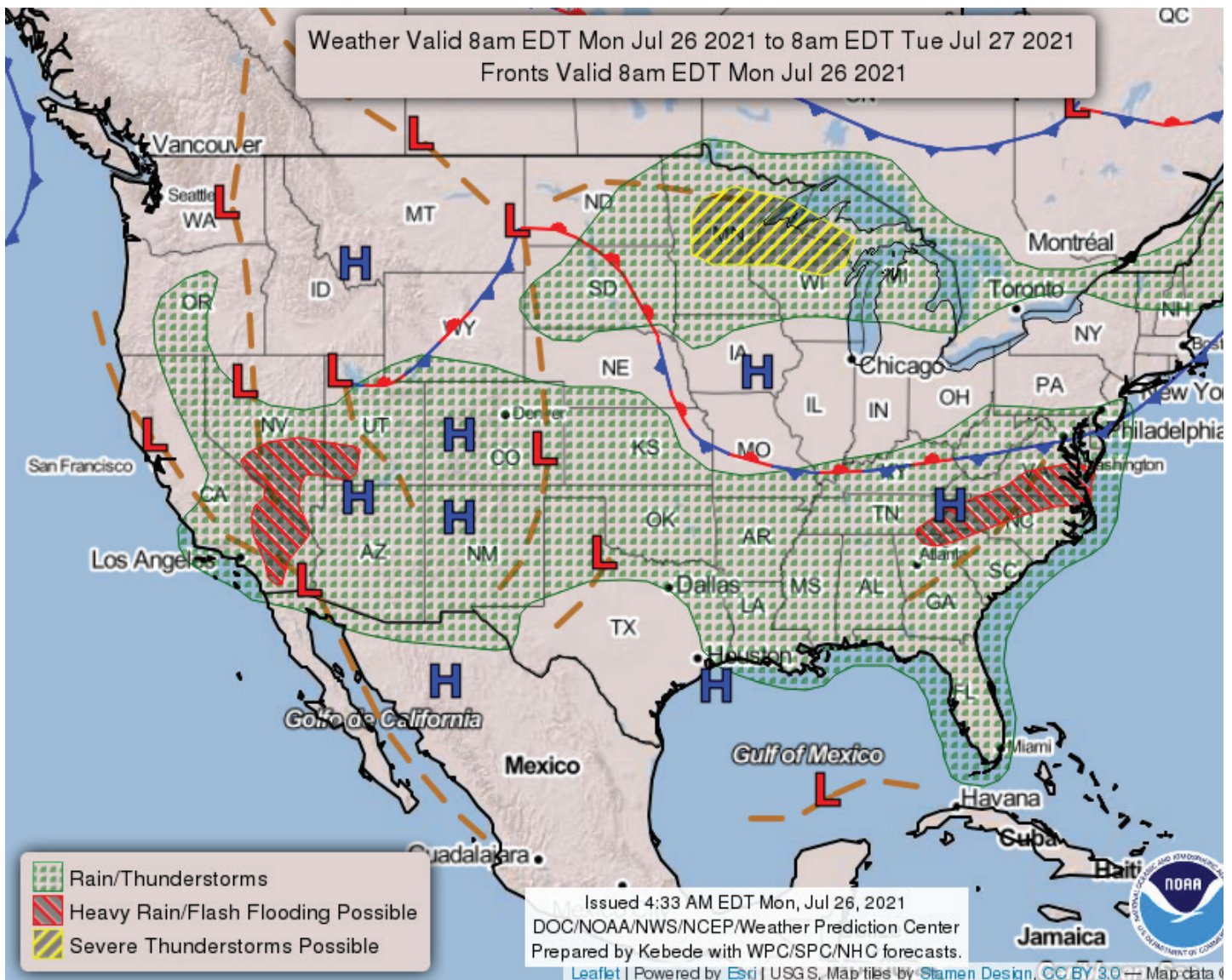
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 92 °F at 4:57 PM
Low Temp: 58 °F at 4:56 AM
Wind: 20 mph at 8:37 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 112° in 1931
Record Low: 42° in 1962
Average High: 85°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 2.60
Precip to date in July.: 2.42
Average Precip to date: 13.61
Precip Year to Date: 7.17
Sunset Tonight: 9:08 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:12 a.m.



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WHAT'S IN YOUR MOUTH?

Few of us enjoy going to a dentist. The first words we usually hear after a pleasant greeting are, "Open your mouth wide, please. Wider...Thank you!" Most of us, from our previous experiences with dentists, would rather keep our mouth shut.

When the Psalms were written, there were many different ways to show favors to their guests. For example, if a king wanted to extend a favor to a guest he would sometimes say, "Open your mouth wide," and then fill it with gems or sweets.

Our King said to us in Psalm 81, "Open wide your mouth and I will fill it!" What an unusual statement. Yet, when we think of it, our King's love is limitless and His might is measureless and His knowledge of our needs is ever on His mind!

What an encouragement for us to invest time in prayer. When we pray, we "open our mouths" and express our needs and desires to God. If, when we pray, we are earnest and honest and sincere and expect God to hear us...and if we have been obedient to His teaching... and if in our prayers we are asking Him to bless our requests in a way that will honor Him, then surely He will respond positively to our requests.

God is able and anxious to meet our every need. If we have a loved one who has not accepted His grace, or if we have a need for food on our tables, or if we have a spouse or parent or child who is suffering with a disease that some say is incurable, give us an opportunity for us to "open wide our mouths" and ask for His help, hope, and healing.

Prayer: Give us faith, Heavenly Father, to believe that Your invitation "is what it is" – to open wide our mouths and call on You. Help us to trust You more! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Open wide your mouth and I will fill it. Psalm 81:10b

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament
06/19/2021 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
08/13/2021 Groton Basketball Golf Tournament
08/28/2021 Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

News from the Associated Press

Multiple agencies fight large grain elevator fire in Clinton

CLINTON, Minn. (AP) — Firefighters from three states and a dozen departments battled a large fire at a grain elevator in small western Minnesota city where some residents were evacuated.

According to Big Stone County Sheriff Mark Brown, crews were called shortly before 11 Sunday morning to the grain elevator, which had become fully engulfed in towering flames.

Officials in Clinton, with its population of about 500 people near the South Dakota border, declared a civil emergency by midday. Residents were advised not to use water, roads were closed and those living within 3 blocks were told to evacuate.

Resident Janine Torgerson Teske posted a live video of the blaze on social media, asking for prayers for the firefighters on the scene.

"Our community could use your prayers right now, our elevator's on fire," she said.

The whole community pitched in to fight the flames at the Wheaton Dumont Co-Op elevator. Local farmers brought semitrailer trucks of water to help, and a local bar was providing food and water to the firefighters working in the heat, Teske said.

The elevator was the heart of the community, Teske said.

"It's been part of the skyline for years and we're a farming community," she said. "It brings people to town, it brings business to town."

Officials say no injuries have been reported and there's no word yet on what may have caused the fire.

Noem's border visit comes with political opportunities

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Photo ops with the troops. Political points on an issue sure to loom large in 2024 presidential debates. Another chance to tout a tough-on-illegal immigration stance that comes rarely for a governor whose state is closer to Canada than Mexico.

There's plenty of reasons for South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's Monday visit to National Guard troops she deployed to the U.S. border with Mexico. She says she is making the flight to the border city of McAllen, Texas, to check in on the roughly 50 National Guard members who volunteered for a 30-day deployment and let them know "we appreciate their service."

The visit also gives the ambitious governor a chance to pick up where former President Donald Trump left off in making hard-line immigration measures a driving force of the Republican Party. Noem eagerly joined the political fight with President Joe Biden over a surge in border crossings. She deployed the Guard members to aid Texas' push to arrest people crossing the border illegally and charge them with state crimes.

For any Republican eyeing a 2024 presidential bid, a trip to the U.S.-Mexico border may become as necessary as visiting early primary states. Among the governors who have joined Gov. Greg Abbott's initiative, Noem and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis are the only ones to stage news conferences at the border.

Noem has also used the deployment to jab at fellow Republicans as she tries to carve out a niche in an early crowd of potential 2024 presidential candidates. Abbott had specifically asked other states to send law enforcement officers because they could be deputized to make arrests, but Noem sent the message that her way — sending National Guard troops ready for an extended deployment — was superior.

"It's irresponsible right now with what we see across the country to shortchange law enforcement," Noem told the crowd at a conservative conference in Texas this month, alluding to rising crime in some American cities.

Noem's rhetoric may be more about taking a veiled dig at DeSantis, who made his own border trip last week after sending 50 law enforcement officers to Texas. She has also appeared to take aim at her fellow GOP governor — a potential early rival for the Republican presidential nomination — over his record on government restrictions during the pandemic.

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However, Noem's trip comes with its own political baggage: She was fiercely criticized for accepting \$1 million from a Republican donor to fund the deployment. Military experts said it set a troubling precedent that sent a message that military troops could be deployed at the behest of private donors.

But Noem brushed aside those concerns, and instead cast the donation as proof she is fiscally conservative. By accepting the donation, she argued, she was saving taxpayer money. And she was already eager to join the border fight when Tennessee billionaire Willis Johnson called with his \$1 million offer — she was just deliberating whether to send police officers or National Guard troops.

Meanwhile, Texas authorities last week began arresting people along the border on trespassing charges. At least 10 people were jailed, but the number of migrant arrests could increase to as many as 100 or 200 per day, according to authorities.

Large numbers of migrants have been showing up at the U.S. border with Mexico, with many turning themselves over to U.S. Border Patrol agents in seeking legal asylum status. U.S. officials reported this month that they had encountered 55,805 members of families with children in June, which was up 25% from the previous month. That figure still remains far below the high of 88,587 in May 2019.

As Noem visits the troops Monday, she will also step into a border policy debate that has no easy answers. "It's broken today," she said. "We've talked about it forever. I would say even my party has failed to put forward a comprehensive immigration reform program."

Combat training program prepares pilots, crews for real deal

By SIANDHARA BONNET Rapid City Journal

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. (AP) — Capt. Matt Cale watched F-16 flyovers growing up in Arizona, which changed his dream of wanting to be a race car driver to being a pilot.

In January 2019, he was assigned to Ellsworth Air Force Base as a B-1B Lancer pilot, his top choice for planes.

"I get giddy a lot of times when I get to go fly," Cale said during last week's Combat Raider Media Day. "Usually right when you take off and the wheels are starting to come up."

Cale is with the 34th Bomb Squadron that is participating in the Combat Raider exercise conducted on the Powder River Training Complex, the largest military air space in the continental United States. The annual training focuses on large scale exercises to train air crews on combat capabilities, the Rapid City Journal reported.

B-52 Stratofortress, F-15E Strike Eagle, F-16 Fighting Eagle, F-35 Lightning II, E-3 Sentry, E-8 Joint Stars, RC-135 Rivet Joint, KC-135 Stratotankers and KC-46 Pegasus aircraft also are participating in the exercise. Only a handful will take off from Ellsworth Air Force Base. Others will launch from their home stations and integrate with other aircraft during the training.

Lt. Col. Tina Ellis, commander of the 28th Operations Support Squadron, said the training is a balance between quality and quantity for the aircrews. She said the air space at Powder River allows crews ample room to train.

Capt. Taylor Hiester, 114th Operations Group F-16 pilot with the South Dakota Air National Guard, said the exercise brings multiple weapons systems and puts them in the same piece of sky, which is a logistical challenge.

"One of the reasons the American military is the best fighting force in the world is there's a lot of different people who've never met each other prior to the mission planning or never seen each other until they're in the air," he said. "They fly within 1,000 feet of one another and still execute the mission flawlessly without any losses."

Hiester said it takes thousands of people to get one airplane in the air. It involves support from aircraft maintainers, airfield management, munitions and others. He said there's a lot of trust involved.

B-1B aircraft maintenance crew chiefs Senior Airmen Seth Parries and Charlie Alevras said trust also comes from training each other like a second family.

"The crew's trusting us with their life when they get in the air, so I know I can trust that guy to do the

inspection upstairs while I'm doing downstairs," Alevras said.

Conventional munitions Staff Sgt. Taylor Holt said there's communication with munitions as well to make sure all of the assets are in the right buildings. He said his crew builds and does system checks to make sure ammo gets to the aircraft on time.

Hiester said the Air National Guard will specifically focus on what it takes to bring a small number of airplanes into operation with the minimum amount of equipment and personnel.

"There's a lot of ways and kinks to work out in the plan," Hiester said. "This is the way of the future, the way we're looking to deploy in the future. ... We're looking to find our weaknesses there and exploit them and fix them."

Hiester said it was his childhood dream to fly F-16s and loves that it has one seat.

"I can never repay the country or the South Dakota Guard for the opportunities I've been given," he said.

Trial moved involving US marshals charged in vaccine dispute

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A federal contempt of court trial involving three members of the U.S. Marshals Service has been moved from Aberdeen to Sioux Falls, according to court documents.

Three supervisory marshals, including the agency's Chief of Staff John Kilgallon, were accused of allowing a deputy marshal to leave the courthouse in Aberdeen with prisoners in tow on May 10, after the marshal refused to tell the judge whether she had been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Trial was originally set for Sept. 13 in Aberdeen, but will now begin Dec. 14 in Sioux Falls. U.S. District Judge Brian C. Buescher, who is presiding over the case, said Sioux Falls is a more convenient place for proceedings for all parties involved in the case, the Aberdeen American News reported.

U.S. District Judge Charles Kornmann, who filed the criminal contempt of court and obstruction of justice charges, has dropped out of the case. Buescher is based in Nebraska.

In court documents recusing himself from the case, Kornmann wrote that Department of Justice policies should not trump lawful federal court order and the case "has nothing to do with requiring anyone to be fully vaccinated."

The Marshals Service operates under the DOJ, an executive branch agency, but it is tasked with the protection and enforcement of federal courts. Federal law grants the Marshal Service "final authority regarding security requirements for the judicial branch."

Olympics Latest: Russian athletes take gymnastics lead

TOKYO (AP) — The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year's delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

Russian athletes are in the lead halfway through the men's gymnastics team final.

The Russian athletes led host Japan and China by just over 2.6 points with three rotations remaining. Russia is searching for its first Olympic gold since Sydney in 2000. Artur Dalaloyan has led the way for his team despite competing on a surgically repaired Achilles tendon in his left leg.

Japan topped qualifying, with China second. The Chinese were nicked by an early fall on floor by Lin Chaopan during the first rotation of the finals.

MEDAL ALERT

Judo superstar Shohei Ono has won his second Olympic gold medal after an epic lightweight final against Georgia's Lasha Shvdatuashvili.

Ono and Shvdatuashvili went 5:26 into golden score before the Japanese champion finally threw Shvdatuashvili for a waza ari. He used both legs to get Shvdatuashvili airborne and put him harshly onto his left side.

Shvdatuashvili showed no fear against Ono, who hasn't lost a judo match since 2015. Ono was called for two penalties in golden score against the Georgian contender, who fought more aggressively and dra-

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matically avoided being caught in a match-ending throw one minute before Ono ended it.

Ono is Japan's fourth gold medalist in six weight classes so far in Tokyo in judo, the nation's homegrown martial art. Japanese judokas have also won one silver and one bronze.

South Korea's An Changrim claimed one bronze medal after a thrilling bout with Azeri No. 1 seed Rustam Urojev, and Mongolia's Tsogtbaatar Tsend-Ochir claimed the other bronze.

World Rowing officials say the remaining members of the Dutch team have tested negative for COVID-19 but will continue to stay away from other teams when not competing in Tokyo.

Dutch rower Finn Florijin tested positive after making his Olympic debut in men's single sculls on Friday. He was removed from competition. Coach Josy Verdonkschot, who oversees several Dutch women's teams, then tested positive on Sunday. Both are in isolation.

Team officials say the rest of the team has since tested negative and none of the remaining rowers and coaches are still considered close contacts of Florjin and Verdonkschot.

The decision to keep the team away from other rowers is being done "out of respect for the other stakeholders."

MEDAL ALERT

Nora Gjakova has won Kosovo's second gold medal in judo at the Tokyo Olympics with an ippon victory over France's Sarah Leonie Cysique in the women's 57-kilogram division.

Gjakova joined Distria Krasniqi, who won gold at 48kg on Saturday, as the second and third gold medalists in Kosovo's entire Olympic history. Majlinda Kelmendi won Kosovo's first at Rio de Janeiro in 2016, also in judo.

Gjakova was declared the winner 2:45 into the bout when Cysique was given a hansuko make penalty for what officials claimed was a deliberate dive onto her head in an attempt to escape a hold. Cysique seemed baffled by the decision, but Gjakova celebrated the biggest victory of her career.

Gjakova reached the final with a shocking semifinal victory over Japan's Tsukasa Yoshida, becoming the first judoka to beat the home nation's entrant before the final. Yoshida rallied to claim a bronze medal. Canada's Jessica Klimkait won the other bronze.

The team final in men's gymnastics is underway, with Japan, China and the team of Russian athletes expected to fight for the top spot.

The three teams have spent the last five years battling for supremacy. The Japanese are looking to defend the Olympic title they won in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. China captured the world championship in 2018, with Russia rising to the top in 2019.

The Japanese posted the top score in qualifying. The scores reset in the final and the format adjusts to one that requires each team to count each score. The teams were allowed to drop their lowest score during qualifying.

The U.S. and Great Britain have the best chance at reaching the podium if one of the top three falters, though both programs were well off the pace in qualifying.

Top-ranked tennis player Novak Djokovic remains on course for a Golden Slam after a 6-4, 6-3 win over Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany at the Tokyo Games.

Djokovic is attempting to become the first man to win all four Grand Slam titles and Olympic gold in the same calendar year.

The Serb already won the Australian and French Opens as well as Wimbledon this year. He now needs the Tokyo title and the U.S. Open trophy to complete the unique collection.

Steffi Graf was the only tennis player to achieve the Golden Slam in 1988.

Djokovic will next face 16th-seeded Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain. Davidovich Fokina edged John Millman of Australia 6-4, 6-7 (4), 6-3.

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MEDAL ALERT

South Korea has defended its Olympic men's archery team title at the Tokyo Games.

Energetic 17-year-old Kim Je-deok came up clutch in the semifinals to hold off host nation Japan and then again in a 6-0 win over Chinese Taipei during the gold-medal match at Yumenoshima Park Archery Field.

One of the tricky things was trying to figure out an inconsistent wind on the eve of a possible typhoon moving into the region. The impending high wind and rain has already led to moving some of the following day's matches to a different time.

In the bronze medal match, Hiroki Muto helped Japan beat the Netherlands in a shoot-off with a walk-off arrow that nearly landed in the heart of the target.

The U.S. has rallied to beat Japan 2-1 to win their Olympic softball group stage, and the right to bat last in the gold medal game.

Kelsey Stewart hit a game-ending home run leading off the seventh inning, and the United States rallied late to beat Japan 2-1 Monday and win the Olympic softball group stage.

"It's like you dream about when you're a little kid, about hitting a home run at the Olympics, let alone a walk-off," Stewart said.

In August 2018, Stewart's single capped a three-run 10th inning off Japan ace Yukiko Ueno that gave the U.S. a 7-6 win at the Women's Softball World Championship in Chiba, earning the Olympic berth.

She had been 1 for 12 with no RBIs at the Olympics before she drove the 98th pitch from Yamato Fujita (0-1) just over the glove of leaping right fielder Yuka Ichiguchi for the first U.S. home run of the tournament.

American players ran onto the field to celebrate their second straight walk-off win.

MEDAL ALERT

Tom Pidcock has won the Olympic men's mountain bike race, extending Britain's dominance from the road and track to the dirt.

Leaving reigning champion Nino Schurter and his Swiss teammate Mathias Flueckiger behind on the fourth of seven laps, the 21-year-old multidiscipline prodigy proceeded to dominate the toughest course in Olympic history.

Flueckiger gave chase in vain and was left with a silver medal. David Valero Serrano of Spain won a surprise bronze.

Pidcock, who splits time between the road and mountain biking, won the World Cup race at Nove Mesto earlier this year to become an Olympic favorite. But then he was hit by a car and broke his collarbone on a training ride, keeping him off a bike for about a week in June, and some wondered whether he'd have the same legs for the Tokyo Games.

Turns out they were even better.

Imagine if gymnast Simone Biles didn't make the cut for the Olympic all-around.

That's how Brady Ellison viewed his squad's early exit from the team archery competition. He and his U.S. teammates were knocked out in the quarterfinals of the men's team competition at the Yumenoshima Park Archery Field. On a windy afternoon, the combination of Ellison, Jack Williams and Jacob Wukie lost 5-1 to Japan.

The U.S. men's team earned silver medals in each of the last two versions of the Olympics.

"I mean, walking away here without a medal wasn't even a reality for this team," Ellison said. "It would be like Simone Biles not making the cut in the all-around. I don't know what else to say."

MEDAL ALERT

Vincent Hancock has become the first skeet shooter to win three Olympic gold medals, giving the Americans a sweep after Amber English won the women's event.

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Hancock repeated as gold medalist in 2008 and 2012, but had a disappointing finish at the 2016 Rio Games.

The 38-year-old from Fort Worth, Texas, hit his first 26 targets in the Tokyo final and set an Olympic record with 59 of 60 overall. He beat Denmark's Jesper Hansen by four.

Kuwait's Abdullah Al-Rashidi won bronze after taking bronze at the Rio Games as an Independent Olympic Athlete.

MEDAL ALERT

Slovenia's Benjamin Savsek has won the men's canoe slalom ahead of the Czech Republic's Lukas Rohan and Germany's Sideris Tasiadis.

Savsek is ranked No. 7 in the world. He knew he had the time to beat after a clean run with no time penalties, and pumped his fist as he crossed the finish line. He didn't have long to wait to see his time of 98.25 seconds hold up as the winner.

Rohan's run included a gate touch and 2-second penalty and he finished 3.71 seconds off the lead. Tasiadis, who came in ranked No. 1 in the world and won silver in 2012, was a distant 5.45 seconds slower than Savsek.

MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Tom Daley and Matty Lee have won gold in men's 10-meter synchronized diving, ending any chance of a sweep by China at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Daley and Lee sealed their victory with a brilliant final dive and received one perfect 10 from the judges. Every other mark but one was a 9.0 or 9.5.

Daley and Lee finished with a total score of 471.81 points, edging China's Cao Yuan and Chen Aisen by a mere 1.23. It was the first Olympic gold for Daley, long the star of British diving. He had previously claimed a pair of bronze medals.

The Chinese team had a strong final dive, waiting at the edge of the pool for their scores to be posted. When the marks went up, the British contingent in the mostly empty stands erupted in cheers. Daley and Lee, watching nervously from the pool deck, pumped their fists and embraced when they realized the gold was theirs.

The bronze went to Russia's Aleksandr Bondar and Viktor Minibaev with 439.92.

MEDAL ALERT

American shooter Amber English has set an Olympic record to knock off reigning women's skeet champion Diana Bacosi of Italy.

English, ranked No. 1 in the world, hit 56 of 60 targets to bounce back from just missing the U.S. Olympic team for the 2012 and 2016 Games.

Bacosi matched English by hitting 47 of 50 shots to reach the final, but missed on her third attempt and a chance to repeat as Olympic champion.

China's Wei Meng took bronze after tying a world record in qualifying.

Organizers of the Tokyo Olympics say 153 people accredited for the Games have tested positive for COVID-19 in Japan since July 1.

The total includes 19 athletes who tested positive in Japan from July 1 through Sunday. Some of those athletes are residents of the Olympic Village, where 16 people have tested positive.

Those people left the apartment blocks overlooking Tokyo Bay to stay in quarantine hotels.

The International Tennis Federation says Dutch player Jean-Julien Rojer has tested positive for COVID-19 and been withdrawn from the doubles tournament with partner Wesley Koolhof.

The eighth-seeded pair were scheduled to play Marcus Daniell and Michael Venus of New Zealand. Daniell and Venus received a walkover into the quarterfinals.

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Rojer has been placed in isolation.

A second judo athlete has dropped out of the Olympics before facing Israel's Tohar Butbul in the 73-kilogram division.

Olympic officials say Sudan's Mohamed Abdalrasool didn't show up to face Butbul in their round of 32 bout Monday despite weighing in for the bout earlier.

The International Judo Foundation didn't immediately announce a reason why Abdalrasool didn't compete, and the governing body didn't respond to requests for comment. Sudanese Olympic officials also didn't immediately comment.

Algeria's Fethi Nourine was sent home from the Tokyo Games and suspended by the IJF on Saturday after he withdrew to avoid a potential round of 32 matchup with Butbul. Nourine was supposed to face Abdalrasool for the right to meet Butbul.

Abdalrasool is the world's 469th-ranked judoka in his weight class, while the accomplished Butbul is seventh.

Nourine also quit the World Judo Championships in 2019 right before he was scheduled to face Butbul.

Momiji Nishiya of Japan has won the first ever Olympic skateboard competition for women.

The 13-year-old gave the host nation a sweep of golds in the street event a day after Yuto Horigome won the men's event.

Rayssa Leal, a 13-year-old from Brazil, won the silver. That's her country's second in skateboarding after Brazilian Kelvin Hoefler took silver on Sunday in the men's event.

The women's bronze went to Funa Nakayama, also from Japan.

The men's volleyball team from Russia has beaten the United States in pool-play action.

The Russians took control when they held off two match points before taking the second set 27-25 to go up 2-0. The Americans rallied to win the third set before falling 25-23 in the final set for their first loss of the tournament.

The U.S. had swept France in its opening pool play match. The ROC team is now 2-0 after beating Argentina in their first match.

In an earlier pool play match Monday, Iran beat Venezuela 3-0 for its second straight win.

Naomi Osaka is into the third round of the Tokyo tennis tournament.

The host country's superstar stepped up her game when she needed to in a 6-3, 6-2 win over 49th-ranked Viktorija Golubic of Switzerland to reach the last 16 at Ariake Tennis Park.

The second-ranked Osaka will next face either 2019 French Open runner-up Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic or Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania.

The men's surfing contest at the Olympics has been delayed 90 minutes due to low tide at Tsurigasaki beach, about 90 miles east of Tokyo.

The International Surfing Association, the sport's Olympic governing body, said low tide combined with the shifting weather has destabilized the quality of the surf conditions for the sport's big debut.

The call came at the end of the eight 1-on-1 heats for the women's competition, and now the men's game is pushed back to start at 1:18 p.m. local time.

Such delays are not unusual in competitive surfing, as it is perhaps the only organized sport that is both dependent on an uncontrollable variable — the weather — and defined by a literal uneven playing field — the ocean.

MEDAL ALERT

Caeleb Dressel is off on his quest for six swimming gold medals at the Tokyo Games, leading off an

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American victory in the men's 4x100-meter freestyle relay.

Dressel gave the U.S. a lead it never relinquished, swimming the first leg in a blistering 47.26 seconds. Blake Pieroni and Bowe Becker kept the Americans out front before Zach Apple turned in an anchor leg of 46.69 to leave no doubt at the end.

The U.S. won in 3 minutes, 08.97 seconds, the third-fastest relay in history. Italy took the silver in 3:10.11, with the bronze going to Australia in 3:10.22.

MEDAL ALERT

Australia's Ariarne Titmus has defeated American Katie Ledecky in the 400-meter freestyle at the Tokyo Olympics.

Titmus won one of the most anticipated races of the games, capturing the gold medal with the second-fastest time in history.

Titmus, who trailed by nearly a full body-length at the halfway mark of the eight-lap race, turned on the speed to touch in 3 minutes, 56.69 seconds.

Defending Olympic champion and world-record holder Ledecky settled for the silver this time in 3:57.36 -- the fourth-fastest time ever recorded.

No one else was even close. The bronze went to China's Li Bingjie in 4:01.08.

MEDAL ALERT

Britain's Adam Peaty has repeated as Olympic champion in the men's 100-meter breaststroke at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Peaty was perhaps the surest best at the Olympic pool, being the first man to break both 58 and 57 seconds in his signature event. He posted the fifth-fastest time in history (57.37 seconds) to blow away the field.

Arno Kamminga of the Netherlands claimed the silver in 58.00, while the bronze went to Italy's Nicolò Martinenghi in 58.33. American Michael Andrew was next in 58.84 -- the second straight final in which a U.S. swimmer finished fourth and was denied a medal.

The Olympic archery schedule has been altered for Tuesday due to expected high wind and rain from a forecasted typhoon.

The morning sessions involving first- and second-round matches are officially delayed until noon local time at the Yumenoshima Park Archery Field. But the afternoon session has been postponed.

The plan is to make up the matches Wednesday and Thursday. The individual finals for the men and women at the Tokyo Games are still scheduled for Friday and Saturday.

It's the first time the Olympic archery scheduled has been majorly influenced by weather, according to World Archery. At the 2008 Beijing Games, there was an hour delay.

MEDAL ALERT

Maggie MacNeil has captured Canada's first gold medal at the pool with a victory in the women's 100-meter butterfly.

The reigning world champion touched first in 55.59 seconds, edging out China's Zhang Yufei (55.64) for the top spot. Australia's Emma McKeon took the bronze in 55.72, beating American teenager Torri Huske by one-hundredth of a second.

Huske went out fast, as is her style, and appeared to be close to the front with about 10 meters to go. But she faded on her final strokes and just missed a spot on the podium.

The U.S. team was denied a medal for the first time in the swimming competition.

Defending champion and world-record holder Sarah Sjöström of Sweden was seventh.

Vatican trial opens into financial scandal rocking papacy

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By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A cardinal who allegedly induced an underling to lie to prosecutors. Brokers and lawyers who pulled a fast one over the Vatican No. 2 to get him to approve a disastrous real estate deal. A self-styled intelligence analyst who bought Prada and Louis Vuitton items with the Vatican money that she was supposed to send to rebels holding a Catholic nun hostage.

Vatican prosecutors have alleged a jaw-dropping series of scandals in the biggest criminal trial in the Vatican's modern history, which opens Tuesday in a modified courtroom in the Vatican Museums. The once-powerful cardinal and nine other people are accused of bleeding the Holy See of tens of millions of dollars in donations through bad investments, deals with shady money managers and apparent favors to friends and family. They face prison sentences, fines or both if convicted.

The trial, which will likely be postponed for several months after the first hearings Tuesday and Wednesday, is the culmination of a two-year investigation into the Holy See's flawed 350 million-euro London real estate venture. That operation exposed the Vatican's once-secret financial dealings and its structural dysfunction, which allowed just a few people to do so much damage to the Vatican's finances and reputation, with little expertise or oversight.

But the prosecutors' case also suggests that Pope Francis and his top lieutenants were not only aware of some of the key transactions, but in some cases explicitly authorized them, even without full documentation or understanding the details. Given the hierarchical nature of the Holy See and the obedience required of underlings to their religious superiors, questions also remain about why some people were charged and others not.

One Vatican monsignor who until recently was considered by prosecutors to be a key suspect, Monsignor Alberto Perlasca, managed to avoid indictment. Perlasca's office handled the London investment from start to finish and his boss had identified him as the main in-house culprit in obscuring the deal's costly outcome. But prosecutors suggested that Perlasca flipped and became an important witness, in part after coming under pressure to recant his testimony by the lone cardinal on trial, Angelo Becciu.

Francis, who as absolute monarch wields supreme legislative, executive and judicial power in Vatican City, has in many ways already convicted Becciu.

Last year, Francis presented Becciu with evidence that he had sent 100,000 euros in Vatican funds to a Sardinian charity run by Becciu's brother. Francis secured Becciu's resignation as head of the Vatican's saint-making office and then stripped him of his rights as cardinal, a sanction that was announced immediately by the Vatican press office.

Becciu, who is charged with embezzlement and pressuring Perlasca to recant, has denied any wrongdoing.

The onetime chief of staff in the Vatican secretariat of state, Becciu is also linked to a mysterious figure who is also on trial, Cecilia Marogna, whom he hired in 2016 as an external security consultant. Prosecutors allege Marogna embezzled 575,000 euros in Vatican funds that Becciu had authorized for ransoms to free Catholic hostages. Bank records from her Slovenian front company show the Vatican wire transfers were used instead to pay bills at luxury shops and boutique hotels. Marogna says the money was legitimate compensation and reimbursement for her intelligence-related expenses.

The London real estate deal dates to 2014, when the Vatican's secretariat of state decided to invest an initial 200 million euros in a fund operated by Italian businessman Raffaele Mincione, with half the money put into the London building, half in other investments.

By November 2018, the original investment had lost 18 million euros, prosecutors say, prompting the Vatican to seek an exit strategy while retaining its stake in the building in London's swank Chelsea neighborhood.

Enter Gianluigi Torzi, another broker, who helped arrange a 40 million euro payout to Mincione.

But prosecutors say Torzi then hoodwinked the Holy See by secretly restructuring 1,000 shares in the property's new holding company in a way that gave him full voting rights. Prosecutors say Torzi then extorted the Vatican for 15 million euros to get control of the building that it thought it had already acquired.

Mincione and Torzi, who are accused of fraud, money laundering, embezzlement and other charges,

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have denied wrongdoing.

Becciu's successor as chief of staff, Archbishop Edgar Pena Parra, told prosecutors that Francis had made clear by November 2018 that he wanted to lose as little money as possible to finally secure ownership of the building and "turn the page and start over." It was a message Francis repeated to Torzi himself during a January 2019 meeting, Pena Parra told prosecutors.

After realizing that Torzi actually controlled the building and based on Francis' desire to move forward, Pena Parra said the Vatican had two choices. Those were to sue him or pay him off for the 1,000 voting shares that he owned. Pena Parra said the Vatican's concern was that suing him could take years and even possibly end in Torzi's favor.

"Between these two options, with the advice of lawyers and experts, option No. 2 was chosen because it was considered more economical, with more contained risks and in a more manageable time frame," Pena Parra wrote in his testimony seen by The Associated Press. "It also simply aligned with the desire of the Superior," a reference to Francis.

And yet the payout of 15 million euros to Torzi is at the heart of the case. Prosecutors accuse Torzi of extorting the Vatican for the money and the Vatican's financial oversight agency of failing to stop the deal. The oversight's managers say the Vatican had no choice but to pay Torzi, given the Secretariat of State — knowingly or not — signed legally binding contracts that gave Torzi control of the building.

Prosecutors say the secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, was deceived into approving Torzi's contract by a lawyer who drafted a one-page memo describing the deal but omitting key details, including Torzi's voting stake. Pena Parra said only later did the Vatican realize the lawyer was associated with Torzi. Quoting Parolin's own notes, Pena Parra said the cardinal approved the deal based on the lawyer's brief memo and assurances from Perlasca and another Vatican money manager, Fabrizio Tirabassi.

Parolin, Pena Parra and Perlasca were not charged. Tirabassi is charged with corruption, extortion, embezzlement, fraud and abuse of office; he denies wrongdoing.

VIRUS DIARY: A really, really, REALLY long Olympic journey

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

SOMEWHERE OVER THE PACIFIC (AP) — My location was Haneda Airport in Tokyo. My destination was the Main Press Center for the Olympics — also in Tokyo.

Turns out the quickest route was through Seattle.

Let me explain.

Among the requirements to cover the Tokyo Olympics were two negative COVID-19 test results within 96 hours and 72 hours of travel.

This wasn't easy to begin with. The 96-hour test would have to be on Sunday, July 18, right about the time the final group in the British Open was on the sixth hole. I missed the Open for the first time since 1996 — Tiger Woods' last major as an amateur — because of the UK quarantine laws and the difficulty of getting home and tested in time for the Tokyo flight.

I made it through the Sunday and Monday tests, both results were returned on Wednesday, my flight was Thursday. Life was good.

I thought my flight from Atlanta was 11 a.m. It was a 11:39 a.m. No big deal, right? I've spent a lifetime erring on the side of being early rather than late, so I never gave this another thought.

Then I landed at Haneda.

The quarantine employee looked at my boarding pass, my 72-hour test result and her log. She called her supervisor (bad sign). They called another supervisor (really bad sign). They took me to a room for questions, and I finally realized the issue.

The negative test is required within 72 hours of the flight leaving for Japan. Mine was 72 hours and 39 minutes. There was no budging.

Their recommendation was to call the clinic — it was 2 a.m. in Jacksonville, Florida — and "negotiate." When I called that night (Friday morning in Florida), the clinic said no go.

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I asked about taking the test at Haneda — another test was required before entry, anyway. They said I technically had not “entered” Japan. The testing area was on the other side of the entry desk. I had no choice but to sign a form that entry was denied.

All the while, my colleagues at the AP were contacting IOC officials for help. Antony Scanlan, the head of the International Golf Federation with a long history at the Olympics, was calling everyone he could for help. The answers all contained some variation of the phrase, “Very strict.”

Short answer: No.

I had two options: Go to a quarantine hotel for six full days and be tested three times. If all went well, I could get to Kasumigaseki Country Club in time for the final round. The other was to return to the U.S. for another test and then come back. This sounded absurd.

However, that would mean a 6:20 p.m. flight to Seattle on Saturday (arriving about noon on Saturday), testing in the airport when I arrived, and then returning to Tokyo on the 11:35 a.m. flight on Sunday that would arrive Monday afternoon, and then start the entry process over. I could be at work on Tuesday.

The quickest route.

(If you’re wondering — as I did: Because of severe travel restrictions in both places, Delta has suspended its nonstop service to Honolulu).

Total air miles: somewhere around 17,000. Time spent in the main cabin: roughly 35 hours. I looked out the window when we landed in Seattle and saw snow-capped Mount Rainier, so I sent a photo to a friend in Florida who replied, “Mount Fuji?”

Uh, no.

So the itinerary thus far is Jacksonville to Atlanta to Tokyo to Seattle to Tokyo. Golf hasn’t even started, and I’ve already made three trips across the International dateline in a span of three days. I had estimated my door-to-door travel time at 22 hours.

I was off by three days.

Pandemic Olympics endured heat, and now a typhoon’s en route

By JENNA FRYER AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — First, the sun. Now: the wind and the rain.

The Tokyo Olympics, delayed by the pandemic and opened under oppressive heat, are due for another hit of nature’s power: a typhoon arriving Tuesday morning that is forecast to disrupt at least some parts of the Games.

“Feels like we’re trying to prepare for bloody everything,” said New Zealand rugby sevens player Andrew Knewstubb.

Don’t worry, Japanese hosts say: In U.S. terms, the incoming weather is just a mid-grade tropical storm. And the surfers at Tsurigasaki beach say Tropical Storm Nepartak could actually improve the competition so long as it doesn’t hit the beach directly.

But archery, rowing and sailing have already adjusted their Tuesday schedules. Tokyo Games spokesman Masa Takaya said there were no other changes expected.

“It is a tropical storm of three grade out of five, so you shouldn’t be too much worried about that, but it is a typhoon in Japan interpretation,” Takaya said. “This is the weakest category, but this is still a typhoon so we should not be too optimistic about the impact of the course.”

On the beach about 90 miles east of Tokyo, the competitors want the change in weather so long as the rain and wind don’t make total landfall. The surfing competition was delayed Monday because of low tide. But if the storm hits as expected, it could deliver waves twice as high as expected.

“As a homeowner I say, ‘Oh no, stay away!’” said Kurt Korte, the official Olympic surfing forecaster. “But as a surfer, ‘OK, you can form if you stay out there,’ Everybody can agree a storm out in the distance is the best.”

The Japan Meteorological Agency said Nepartak was headed northwest over the Pacific Ocean east of Japan on Monday with landfall expected Tuesday afternoon. The storm could bring strong winds, up to

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5.9 inches (150 millimeters) of rainfall and high waves as it cuts across Japan's northeastern region.

In advance, organizers made the first major alterations to the Olympic archery schedule because of weather. There was an hour delay at the Beijing Games in 2008. Here, the Tuesday afternoon sessions have been postponed until Wednesday and Thursday.

"We've heard that storm could be anything from rain or 80-mph wind," said American archer Jack Williams.

Added Brady Ellison, his teammate: "Unless there's lightning, right here, we'll shoot it. We'll deal with whatever it's going to be. Rain just starts to suck in general."

Beach volleyball plays in everything but lightning. Both the women's final at the Beijing Games and men's final at the Rio Games were held in heavy rain.

At Ariake Tennis Park, center court has a retractable roof that can be closed for inclement weather, but play on outer courts would have to be suspended.

"They can move every match, I think, if there is really going to be a typhoon with rain," said Daniil Medvedev, the No. 2 player in the world. "We never know. I guess they will maybe try to move six matches, but it depends how long the matches will be."

Any sort of rain — typhoon, tropical storm, or even light sprinkling — will be a wild swing from the first three days of the Games.

Svetlana Gomboeva collapsed from heatstroke on the first day of archery but recovered to win a silver medal. Top-seeded Novak Djokovic and Medvedev, who who complained his first round match was "some of the worst" heat he'd ever played in, successfully leaned on the International Tennis Federation to give Olympics players extra time during breaks to offset the high temperatures.

Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova had resorted to shoving bags of ice up her skirt, and fiddled with a tube blowing cold air next to her seat. At skateboarding, the intense sun turned the park into a furnace, radiating off the light concrete with such blinding effect that skaters complained the heat was softening the rubber joints on their wheel axles and making the boards harder to control.

July and August in Japan are notoriously hot and humid. Japan has faced criticism for not accurately describing the severity and instead, during the bidding process, calling it mild and ideal.

Daytime highs regularly hit 95 degrees (35 Celsius) but have exceeded 104 degrees (40 Celsius) in some places in recent years. The Environment Ministry began issuing heatstroke alerts in July 2020 for the Tokyo areas and in April for the entire nation.

Japan reported 112 deaths from June to September last year, as well as 64,869 people taken to hospitals by ambulance for heat-related issues. Tokyo logged the largest number of heat stroke sufferers at 5,836 during the three-month period.

Australian canoeist Jessica Fox, the gold medal favorite in the kayak slalom, said the wild weather swings have been a disruption to the Olympic event. "It is like a bath," she said. "It is like paddling in bathwater."

And the impending typhoon disruption?

"I am a bit concerned about that," Fox said. "I saw the surfers and they were all excited about the weather, which isn't ideal for us."

If Tuesday's bronze medal softball game is postponed, the Canada team worries it could get stuck in Japan because members had flights the following day.

"We very much hope that the game goes (Tuesday) so that we can get on a plane and go home," coach Mark Smith said. "As you probably know, with the pandemic, that flights are very hard to come by."

The weather extremes are just another obstacle Olympic organizers have faced during these beleaguered Games, already delayed a year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Asked on Monday if Tokyo officials feel they can't catch a break, Takaya said they've had to be flexible.

"I mean, you know, we're supposed to react to any situation, that's one of our jobs," he said. "This is absolutely a regular exercise we have to face."

Tensions in Tunisia after president suspends parliament

By BOUAZZA BEN BOUAZZA Associated Press

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TUNIS, Tunisia (AP) — Troops surrounded Tunisia's parliament and blocked its speaker from entering Monday after the president suspended the legislature and fired the prime minister following nationwide protests over the country's economic troubles and coronavirus crisis.

Protesters celebrated President Kais Saied's decision late Sunday night with shouts of joy, honking horns and waving Tunisian flags. But his critics accused him of a power grab that threatens Tunisia's young democracy, and the North African country's overseas allies expressed concern.

Police intervened Monday to prevent clashes outside the parliament building between lawmakers from Islamist party Ennahdha, which dominates the Assembly of the Representatives of the People of Tunisia, and demonstrators supporting the president. Both sides shouted and some stones were thrown, according to an Associated Press reporter and videos circulating online.

Security forces also moved in Monday on the Tunis offices of broadcaster Al Jazeera, ordering it to shut down, according to a statement by the Qatar-based network on its Facebook page. The reason for the move was not immediately clear.

The dissolution of parliament had been among demands of thousands of protesters who defied virus restrictions and scorching heat to demonstrate Sunday in the capital, Tunis, and other cities. The largely young crowds shouted "Get out!" and slogans calling for early elections, and also pushed for economic reforms. Clashes erupted in many places.

Tunisia's economy has been struggling for years, and the country recently reimposed lockdowns and other virus restrictions because it's facing one of Africa's worst virus outbreaks.

The president said he had to fire the prime minister and suspend parliament because of concerns over public violence.

"We have taken these decisions...until social peace returns to Tunisia and until we save the state," he said in a military-style televised address.

The parliament speaker, Ennahdha party leader Rached Ghannouchi, tried to enter parliament overnight but police and military forces guarding the site stopped him. On Monday morning, Ghannouchi was parked in a car in front of the building. His next steps were unclear.

He called the president's move "a coup against the constitution and the (Arab Spring) revolution," and insisted the parliament would continue to work.

Saied defended his decision, saying in a statement Monday that he acted according to the law.

Saied visited protesters overnight on the capital's main thoroughfare, Avenue Bourguiba, the epicenter of mass demonstrations that pushed out Tunisia's autocratic leader in 2011 and ushered in uprisings around the Arab world.

He warned against any breach of public order, threatening severe penalties.

The president invoked an article of Tunisia's Constitution allowing him to take "exceptional measures in the event of imminent danger threatening the institutions of the nation and the independence of the country and hindering the regular functioning of the public powers."

The measure allows him to assume executive power and freeze parliament for an unspecified period of time until normal institutional workings can be restored. But Ghannouchi said the president didn't consult with him and the prime minister as required by the article. The three have been in conflict.

Others also criticized the president's decision, both inside and outside Tunisia.

Former President Moncef Marzouki called for political dialogue, saying in a Facebook video, "We made a huge leap backward tonight, we are back to dictatorship."

In a written statement, EU Commission spokesperson Nabila Massrali said Monday, "We call on all Tunisian actors to respect the Constitution, its institutions and the rule of law. We also call on them to remain calm and to avoid any resort to violence in order to preserve the stability of the country."

Turkey's government said it was "deeply concerned" by the suspension of the Tunisian parliament's activities and said it hoped that "democratic legitimacy" is soon restored.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement called Tunisia an "exemplary success story in terms of the democratic process" and said it was imperative that its "democratic achievements" are preserved. Tunisia's 2011

revolt is often regarded as the only success story of the Arab Spring protests.

'We have to get it right,' Dem vows as Jan. 6 probe begins

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Bennie Thompson, didn't realize the severity of the Jan. 6 insurrection until his wife called him.

He was inside the Capitol, sitting in the upper gallery of the House, hoping for what he called a "bird's-eye view of the process" and to be able to tell his grandchildren that he was there when Congress certified Joe Biden's presidential victory.

People are breaking into the building, London Thompson told him, and it was on television. "I'm watching people climbing over the wall right now," she said.

"It doesn't register," the Mississippi Democrat recalled in an interview with The Associated Press. "I said, 'You can't break in. There's police and barricades and a lot of things out there.'"

But it was not long before the House chamber was under siege. Police rushed Thompson and several dozen other members of Congress to another side of the gallery and told them to duck under their seats as supporters of then-President Donald Trump tried to break down the doors to the chamber below.

"It was a horrible day," said Thompson, "still almost surreal that it even occurred."

Like Thompson, many who serve and work in the Capitol are trying to make sense of the chaos that unfolded on Jan. 6. And he now has a guiding role in the process, appointed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., as the chairman of a select committee that will investigate the attack. The panel will hold its first hearing Tuesday with police officers who battled the rioters.

As the longtime chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, Thompson is accustomed to dealing with grave matters of national security. But his stewardship of the Jan. 6 panel will be a test unlike any other, as he tries to untangle the events of a violent insurrection that many House Republicans increasingly play down and deny.

"We have to get it right," Thompson said. If the committee can find ways to prevent anything like it from happening again, "then I would have made what I think is the most valuable contribution to this great democracy."

Thompson, 73, is a liberal fixture in Congress and longtime champion of civil rights, the only Democrat in the Mississippi delegation, hailing from a majority-black district in the state's western half. He has avoided the limelight during his more than 15 years on the Homeland Security Committee, notching achievements with careful bipartisan outreach.

Several Democrats and Republicans said Thompson was the right choice to lead an investigation that is certain to be partisan and fraught.

"I've dealt with Bennie for 15 years, and we disagreed on a lot, but I don't think there was ever a harsh word between us," says former Republican Rep. Pete King of New York, who was the chairman and top Republican on the Homeland Security Committee for years opposite Thompson. "Bennie is low key, he manages his side well. He was a good guy to work with. He was strong and knew what he wanted, but there was very little drama."

New York Rep. John Katko, who is now the top Republican on the Homeland Security Committee, gave a similar assessment. Thompson is "a good man, a patriotic American" and a "productive partner," Katko said in statement.

Pelosi chose Thompson as chairman after he crafted legislation with Katko that would have created an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate the Jan. 6 attack. That bill won almost three dozen Republican votes in the House only to flame out in the Senate, where the opposition of Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell was decisive.

Far fewer House Republicans supported creating the House select committee, dismissing the effort as partisan. House Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy said the GOP won't participate after Pelosi rejected two of his appointments, Republican Reps. Jim Banks of Indiana and Jim Jordan of Ohio.

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Only two Republicans voted to create the panel — Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney and Illinois Rep. Adam Kinzinger. Pelosi first appointed Cheney to the committee and then added Kinzinger on Sunday after McCarthy withdrew his picks.

"I'm looking forward, in the long run, to try to have as many of the 13 members that I can," Thompson said last week.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, who was appointed to the Jan. 6 committee, said Thompson's history of working with Republicans and his popularity among members will make it harder to malign the panel's work. Reaching the bipartisan deal with Katko was not an easy task, he said.

"I think he has a very even keel that will help him get through this," Schiff said.

Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, another Democrat appointed to the select committee, says both parties have "partisan brawlers" — and Thompson is not one of them.

"He's a workhorse, so he likes getting stuff done," Raskin said. "And I think that's the right spirit for this."

Still, Thompson has taken sharply partisan stances. He joined with about 30 Democrats in a 2005 vote to invalidate President George W. Bush's victory — not unlike the dozens of Republicans who voted to invalidate Biden's in January. In that challenge, the dissenting Democrats claimed irregularities if not fraud in Ohio's vote.

The effort did not end in violence and John Kerry, the defeated Democratic presidential candidate, did not lead or join the effort to deny Bush his victory.

A frequent critic of Trump, Thompson joined other Democrats in filing a lawsuit against the former president after the insurrection, charging that he incited the attack and conspired to prevent Congress from certifying Biden's victory.

Last week, Thompson withdrew his participation in that lawsuit, which he joined soon after the Senate acquitted Trump, at his second impeachment trial, of inciting the insurrection. Thompson's withdrawal petition said he "wishes to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest between his role on the Select Committee and his role as a Plaintiff in this litigation."

The lawsuit, which is still active, names as defendants Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer, and the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers. The Justice Department has filed charges against members of those groups in connection to the attack, and the panel is expected to investigate them as part of its probe.

Domestic extremism and its links to white supremacy are a familiar subject for Thompson not only from his time on the Homeland Security Committee but also from his early involvement in the civil rights movement in Mississippi. He was active with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in college and organized voter registration drives before he was elected mayor of his small hometown of Bolton.

The FBI's assessments about the growing dangers of domestic extremism, he said, show that "the significance of this committee's work is as important as it can ever get."

Pandemic leaves Indians mired in massive medical debts

By KRUTIKA PATHI and YIRMIYAN ARTHUR Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — As coronavirus cases ravaged India this spring, Anil Sharma visited his 24-year-old son Saurav at a private hospital in northwest New Delhi every day for more than two months. In May, as India's new COVID-19 cases broke global records to reach 400,000 a day, Saurav was put on a ventilator.

The sight of the tube running into Saurav's throat is seared in Sharma's mind. "I had to stay strong when I was with him, but immediately after, I would break down as soon as I left the room," he said.

Saurav is home now, still weak and recovering. But the family's joy is tempered by a mountain of debt that piled up while he was sick.

Life has been tentatively returning to normal in India as new coronavirus cases have fallen. But millions are embroiled in a nightmare of huge piles of medical bills. Most Indians don't have health insurance and costs for COVID-19 treatment have them drowning in debt.

Sharma exhausted his savings on paying for an ambulance, tests, medicines and an ICU bed. Then he took out bank loans.

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As the costs mounted, he borrowed from friends and relatives. Then, he turned to strangers, pleading online for help on Ketto, an Indian crowdfunding website. Overall, Sharma says he has paid over \$50,000 in medical bills.

The crowdfunding provided \$28,000, but another \$26,000 is borrowed money he needs to repay, a kind of debt he has never faced before.

"He was struggling for his life and we were struggling to provide him an opportunity to survive," he said, his voice thick with emotion. "I was a proud father -- and now I have become a beggar."

The pandemic has devastated India's economy, bringing financial calamity to millions at the mercy of its chronically underfunded and fragmented healthcare system. Experts say such costs are bound to hinder an economic recovery.

"What we have is a patchwork quilt of incomplete public insurance and a poor public health system. The pandemic has shown just how creaky and unsustainable these two things are," said Vivek Dehejia, an economist who has studied public policy in India.

Even before the pandemic, healthcare access in India was a problem.

Indians pay about 63% of their medical expenses out-of-pocket. That's typical of many poor countries with inadequate government services. Data on global personal medical costs from the pandemic are hard to come by, but in India and many other countries treatment for COVID is a huge added burden at a time when hundreds of millions of jobs have vanished.

In India, many jobs returned as cities opened up after a severe lockdown in March 2020, but economists worry about the loss of some 12 million salaried positions. Sharma's job as a marketing professional was one of them.

When he asked his son's friends to set up the campaign on Ketto to raise funds, Sharma hadn't seen a paycheck in 18 months. Between April and June this year, 40% of the 4,500 COVID-19 campaigns on the site were for hospitalization costs, the company said.

The pandemic has driven 32 million Indians out of the middle class, defined as those earning \$10 to \$20 a day, according to a Pew Research Center study published in March. It estimated the crisis has increased the number of India's poor -- those with incomes of \$2 or less a day -- by 75 million.

"If you're looking at what pushes people into debt or poverty, the top two sources often are out-of-pocket health expenditure and catastrophic costs of treatment," said K Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India.

In the northeastern city of Imphal, 2,400 kilometers (1,490 miles) away, Diana Khumanthem lost both her mother and sister to the virus in May.

Treatment costs wiped out the family's savings, and when the private hospital where her sister died wouldn't release her body for last rites until a bill of about \$5,000 was paid, she pawned the family's gold jewelry to moneylenders.

When that wasn't enough, asked her friends, relatives and her sister's colleagues for help. She still owes some \$1,000.

A health insurance scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018 was intended to cover around 500 million of India's 1.3 billion people and was a major step toward easing medical costs. But it doesn't cover the primary care and outpatient costs that comprise most out-of-pocket expenses. So it hasn't "effectively improved access to care and financial risk protection," said a working paper by researchers at Duke University.

The program also has been hobbled by disparities in how various states implemented it, said Shawin Vitsupakorn, one of the paper's authors.

Another paper, by the Duke Global Health Institute and the Public Health Foundation of India, found costs of ICU hospitalization for COVID-19 are equivalent to nearly 16 months of work for a typical Indian day laborer or seven to 10 months for salaried or self-employed workers.

Meager funding of healthcare, at just 1.6% of India's GDP, is less, proportionately, than what Laos or Ethiopia spends. At the outbreak's peak in May, hospitals everywhere were overrun, but public facilities

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lacked the resources to handle the floods of patients coming in.

"The result is a suffering public health system, where the provision of care is often poor, prompting many to flock to private hospitals," said Dehejia.

A public hospital treated Khumanthem's mother, but her sister Ranjita was admitted to a private one that cost \$1,300 per day.

Ranjita was the family's only earner after Khumanthem left her nursing job last year to return home during the first wave of the virus. She's now hunting for work while looking after her father and her sister's 3-year-old son.

At her home in Imphal, Khumanthem grieved for her mother by remembering her favorite food — chagem pomba, a type of gruel made with vegetables, rice and soybeans. Every few minutes, she looked toward the front gate.

"This is usually the time Ranjita would return home from work," she said. "I still keep thinking she could walk through the gate any moment now."

Back in New Delhi, Sharma sighed in relief as an ambulance brought his son home from the hospital last week. Saurav needs physiotherapy to build up his weakened muscles, a daily nurse and a long list of medications. It may be weeks before he will be able to stand on his own, and months before the ambitious lawyer who graduated among the top of his class will be able to go to court again.

The costs will continue.

"Our first priority was to save him," Sharma said. "Now we will need to figure out the rest."

EXPLAINER: How the Russians caught the U.S. in gymnastics

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Tom Forster's words were jarring. Not because they were controversial or insincere, but because they simply hadn't been uttered by someone in charge of the USA Gymnastics women's program for a long, long time.

"I want to say congratulations to Russia for the amazing competition they did today, for the transformation they've made since 2019," Forster said after the team representing the Russian Olympic Committee finished ahead of the Americans during Olympic qualifying on Sunday.

The strides made by the U.S.'s longtime rival were lost amid the immediate shock of having the U.S. team led by reigning Olympic champion Simone Biles find itself looking up at the scoreboard to someone above them for the first time since the 2010 world championships.

Three of the four Americans who went to work at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre on Sunday — Biles, Sunisa Lee and Grace McCallum — were part of the squad that rolled to victory in Stuttgart in October 2019.

There, the U.S. topped qualifying and the finals by more than five points, a massive margin in a sport where mere tenths can often be the difference between the gold and going home empty-handed. The Russians finished a distant second, just like every team trying to catch the Americans over the last decade.

In Japan, the gap has closed considerably. Maybe completely. Competing in the subdivision ahead of the U.S., Angelina Melnikova and her teammates put on a dazzling display of artistry and execution. Their 171.629 total was their highest in a major team competition since the Code of Points was updated in 2017.

It's not that the Americans were bad. They weren't. They just weren't great. The Russians were, which should offer Tuesday night's team final something it has lacked for a decade: actual drama.

So how did we get here, and how does it work? Let's take a look.

WHAT'S WITH THIS SCORING SYSTEM?

The days of Nadia Comaneci and the perfect 10 are long gone. The International Gymnastics Federation switched to a new system following a judging controversy at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

Starting in 2006, scores were broken down into two parts. The difficulty (D) score is based on what a gymnast does during their routine. The harder the elements the athlete successfully strings together, the higher the total.

In theory, the D-score can be open-ended. Most elite routines carry a D-score between 5.4 and 6.0. Ex-

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ceptional routines — like what Biles does on floor or what Lee does on uneven bars — score 6.5 or higher. The second score is the execution (E) score. It is based on a 10.0 scale, but the perfectly executed routine does not exist. Not even Biles has managed to hit that plateau during her rise from prodigy to the unquestioned greatest gymnast of all-time.

Any execution score over 8.00 is good. Anything over 8.5 — particularly on bars, beam and floor, where deductions quickly pile up — is extraordinary.

On Sunday, Biles received a 6.7 D score for a floor routine that includes two elements named after her. Judges dinged her for sloppy — again, by her standards — performance, giving her a 7.733, for a 14.133 total, second-best of the day behind Italy's Vanessa Ferrari.

Upshot: a 14.0 is good. A 14.5 is really good. Anything over 15.000 and you're likely to head home with some serious hardware in your carry-on.

WHY HAVE THE AMERICANS BEEN DOMINANT FOR SO LONG?

The scoring system forces coaches and athletes to do their own version of risk vs. reward. Do you pack routines with really hard elements at the risk of execution? Or do you opt for an easier set you could potentially do more cleanly?

For years, the Americans — Biles in particular — haven't had to choose. Not only have they done the hardest gymnastics out there, they've done them better than anyone else.

That's still the case in Tokyo. The combined difficulty scores the Americans used on all four events during qualifying was 71.9. The ROC's total was 69.7.

So why did ROC finish ahead of the U.S.? Execution. Where the Americans were messy, the Russians were precise. It made all the difference.

HOW MUCH BETTER HAVE THE RUSSIANS GOTTEN?

The Russians were so good Sunday that reigning European champion Viktoria Listunova will watch the all-around finals from the stands after teammates Melnikova and Vladislava Urazova finished ahead of her in qualifying.

For the Americans, Biles put up the top score as usual and will compete in all five finals. But she was not at her unparalleled best. The 24-year-old bounded well off the mat at the end of a tumbling pass on floor and her block on her Cheng vault was so crooked it's amazing she managed to land anywhere inside the arena.

Lee, McCallum and Chiles all had significant form breaks at some point. McCallum stepped out on floor. Chiles fell off the beam. Lee's execution on her double-twisting Yurchenko vault lacked the crispness of the ones done by Chiles and McCallum.

Yet despite those miscues, the U.S. total of 170.562 would still have been good enough to finish atop the table in both qualifying and the team finals at the 2018 and 2019 world championships.

HOW DO THINGS CHANGE FOR THE FINALS?

During qualifying, each member of the four-person team competes on each event, with teams being able to drop their lowest score. That will change during Tuesday's finals, when the competition moves to three-up/three-count.

It's a format the Americans have thrived in for more than a decade. The higher the pressure, the better they've done.

That hasn't been the case for the Russians. Falls on beam in the team final at 2019 world championships cost them. The Americans beat them by 2.5 points on the mentally taxing event where every wobble costs valuable tenths and a fall is basically a white flag.

SO WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?

If the Americans can simply match the execution scores of the Russians, they should be fine. Their built-in advantage on difficulty gives them a head start before they even salute the judges.

Biles tends to respond to the occasional "off" day by summoning her singular greatness. Chiles has been so consistent in 2021 that she was bound to have a misstep at some point. Maybe qualifying was the sport's way of evening the score.

First openly transgender Olympians are competing in Tokyo

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — For Quinn, a midfielder for the Canadian women's soccer team, the opening match of the Tokyo Games carried more emotional weight than their previous Olympic appearances.

Quinn became the first openly transgender athlete to participate in the Olympics when they started on Wednesday night in Canada's 1-1 draw with Japan in Sapporo.

Quinn, who is nonbinary and uses they/them pronouns, posted their feelings on Instagram.

"I feel proud seeing `Quinn' up on the lineup and on my accreditation. I feel sad knowing there were Olympians before me unable to live their truth because of this world," they wrote. "I feel optimistic for change. Change in legislature, Changes in rules, structures, and mindsets."

Quinn, who came out as transgender last year, was also a member of the Canadian team that won the bronze medal at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

"Mostly, I feel aware of the realities," Quinn continued. "Trans girls being banned from sports. Trans women facing discrimination and bias while trying to pursue their Olympic dreams. The fight isn't close to over ... and I'll celebrate when we're all here."

Quinn, who plays professionally for OL Reign in the National Women's Soccer League, is not the only transgender athlete participating in the Tokyo Games. Probably the most visible is Laurel Hubbard, a transgender woman competing in weightlifting for New Zealand. Chelsea Wolfe, a transgender cyclist, is a reserve on the U.S. women's BMX Freestyle team.

There was the possibility for several more elite transgender athletes to compete in Tokyo. Nikki Hiltz did not qualify in the women's 1,500 meters at the U.S. track and field trials, while CeCe Telfer was declared ineligible in her bid to run in the 400-meter hurdles. Volleyball player Tiffany Abreu did not make Brazil's final Olympic roster.

The International Olympic Committee has allowed transgender athletes to participate at the Olympics since 2004, but until this year, none had done so openly. In addition to Quinn, Hubbard and Wolfe, some transgender athletes are competing without discussing their transition. Some have been outed and harassed online by people who oppose transgender athletes competing.

The current rules specify certain conditions for transgender women to compete in women's sports. Among them, athletes must demonstrate lower testosterone levels for 12 months before competing, and athletes can only qualify four years after transitioning, at the earliest.

Chris Mosier, a triathlete and activist who came out as a transgender in 2010, competed last year in the Olympic trials for the men's 50K racewalk but had to withdraw because of injury.

Last week in an interview with The Associated Press, Mosier said he considered it a major milestone for human rights that transgender athletes would be competing at the Olympics for the first time in Tokyo.

"As somebody who has been out and tried to raise visibility for transgender athletes, through my website and through my own participation in sports for over a decade, I feel as proud of this moment as I do of any of my accomplishments. Because this is what I've been working for," Mosier said. "I want spaces in sport for trans athletes to be their authentic selves and compete at the highest level, and know that they are loved and that they belong there. So I'm very excited to see Laurel and Quinn both participate."

Transgender visibility at the Olympics comes amid a wave of anti-transgender legislation sweeping the United States.

Proposed laws banning or restricting transgender athletes from participating in youth, high school and even college sports have been introduced in 37 states. At least seven states have enacted laws — but many of those face legal challenges.

The U.S. Department of Justice has challenged a ban targeting transgender athletes in West Virginia, and another law impacting children in Arkansas, calling both violations of federal law.

In June, the DOJ filed statements of interest in lawsuits that seek to overturn new laws in those states. In West Virginia, a law prohibits transgender athletes from competing in female sports. Arkansas became the first state to ban gender confirming treatments or surgery for transgender youth.

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The DOJ said the laws in both states violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. It also said the West Virginia law violates Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity receiving federal funds.

Federal judges blocked both laws last week.

Fallon Fox is a retired mixed martial arts fighter who came out as a transgender woman in 2013. In a decidedly male-dominated sport, she faced widespread criticism at the time.

She's also proud in this moment.

"I think it's awesome that we're finally getting trans representation at the Olympics. This has been a long time coming. Some of the athletes, some transgender athletes, have tried to qualify for the Olympics in the past and all have failed. And we finally have some that have qualified," Fox said. "I think that actually says something: I'm not surprised it took this long, given the fact that we have no unfair advantages."

At Tokyo Olympics, skateboarding teens blaze trail for women

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — On the Olympic podium stood three teenage girls — 13, 13 and 16 — with weighty gold, silver and bronze medals around their young necks, rewards for having landed tricks on their skateboards that most kids their age only get to see on Instagram.

After decades in the shadows of men's skateboarding, the future for the sport's daring, trailblazing women suddenly looked brighter than ever at the Tokyo Games on Monday.

It's anyone's guess how many young girls tuned in to watch Momiji Nishiya of Japan win the debut Olympic skateboarding event for women, giving the host nation a sweep of golds in the street event after Yuto Horigome won the men's event.

But around the world, girls trying to convince their parents that they, too, should be allowed to skate can now point to the 13-year-old from Osaka as an Olympic-sized example of skateboarding's possibilities.

A champion of few words — "Simply delighted," is how she described herself — Nishiya let her board do the talking, riding it down rails taller than she is. She said she'd celebrate by asking her mother to treat her to a dinner of Japanese yakiniku barbecue.

The silver went to Rayssa Leal, also 13 — Brazil's second silver in skateboarding after Kelvin Hoefler finished in second place on Sunday in the men's event.

Both Nishiya and Leal became their countries' youngest ever medalists. The bronze went to 16-year-old Funa Nakayama of Japan.

"Now I can convince all my friends to skateboard everywhere with me," Leal said.

She first caught the skateboarding world's attention as a 7-year-old with a video on Instagram of her attempting, and landing, a jump with a flip down three stairs while wearing a dress with angel wings.

"Skateboarding is for everyone," she said.

But that hasn't always been true for young girls, even among the 20 female pioneers who rode the rails, ramps and ledges at the Ariake Urban Sports Park.

The field included Leticia Bufoni of Brazil, whose board was snapped in two by her dad when she was a kid to try to stop her from skating.

She was 10.

"I cried for hours," she recalled. "He thought girls shouldn't skate because he had never seen a woman skate before."

Bufoni added, half-joking, that getting him to relent had been harder than qualifying for the Tokyo Games.

"So I want be that girl that the little girls can show their parents and be like, 'She can skate. I want to be like her,'" Bufoni said.

Annie Guglia of Canada said she didn't see any other girls skate during her first two years on her board. The first contest she entered, at the age of 13, had no women's category, so organizers had to create one for her.

"And I won, because I was the only one," the 30-year-old Guglia said. "We have come a long way." Skaters predicted that by time the next Olympics roll around, in Paris in 2024, the women's field will have a greater depth of talent and tricks, built on the foundations they laid in Tokyo.

"It's going to change the whole game," U.S. skater Mariah Duran said. "This is like opening at least one door to, you know, many skaters who are having the conversations with their parents, who want to start skating.

"I'm not surprised if there's probably already like 500 girls getting a board today."

Nishiya is going places with hers. She said she aims to be at the Paris Games "and win."

"I want to be famous," she said.

But first — barbecue. Her delighted mom didn't take much convincing.

"I'll definitely take her," she said.

Some French health workers resent, resist mandatory vaccines

By CONSTANTIN GOUVY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — While most French health care workers are vaccinated against the virus, a small but vocal minority is holding out. With infections exploding, a new law requiring them to get the shots is exposing the divide.

The French government, which has declared that the nation has officially entered its "fourth wave" of the pandemic, pushed the law mandating COVID-19 vaccines for health care workers, to protect hospitals and avoid a new lockdown. Government spokesman Gabriel Attal says the move isn't meant to stigmatize reluctant health care workers but to limit risks to the vulnerable people they care for.

The law, adopted by parliament early Monday, also sets up a "health pass" for everyone in order to access restaurants and other public venues. Both measures have prompted intense debate and two straight weekends of protests around France. Health care workers in white coats have been among the demonstrators.

Many cite incorrect information about the vaccines circulating on the internet, worry about their long-term effects or want more time to decide. Several health workers said they took issue with the mandate, not the vaccines themselves.

At one Paris protest, some carried signs reading "My body, my choice," and a health worker dressed as the Statue of Liberty called it an "act of violence" to force people to get vaccinated.

Céline Augen, a secretary at a doctor's office, knows she may lose her job if she refuses to get a shot but protested Saturday anyway.

"I'm here today in favor of the freedom to chose to get vaccinated or not," she said.

Solene Manable, a recent nursing school graduate who is working in a Lille hospital, said, "There are many health workers who don't want to get vaccinated because we don't know much about the vaccines."

Scientists say that is simply not true anymore. The vaccines used in France — Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson — were tested in tens of thousands of people around the world, and results of the studies have been shared with the public. More than 2 billion people worldwide have now received coronavirus vaccines, including most French adults, providing a broad overview of vaccines' impact on people's health.

Vaccine hesitancy among some health workers has been an issue in the U.S. and elsewhere, too. But the French mandate is stirring up anger on the political fringes in a country long considered more vaccine-skeptic than its European neighbors.

France has faced medical scandals in recent decades involving vaccines, diet pills and breast implants that have seeded doubts about the medical establishment. Suspicion of big pharmaceutical companies is relatively common, and politicians on both the extreme right and the left are now fueling that skepticism for their own ends.

Retired doctor Bruno de Ligny, who volunteers in vaccination centers in Normandy, stressed that the technology behind the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines widely used in France, while new, has been under research for more than 20 years. He also noted that French health workers must already be vaccinated

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against hepatitis B – a vaccine not compulsory for the rest of the population — but “no one claimed that was dictatorial when it was implemented.”

“These health workers say they want the ‘freedom’ not to be vaccinated,” he said. “They do not realize that what they are really asking for is the freedom to kill.”

Patrick Pelloux, president of the emergency room doctors’ union Association des Médecins Urgentistes de France, lauded the French government for taking decisive action in the face of rising infections. The country is now seeing about 20,000 new infections a day, up from just a few thousand in early July, and has counted over 111,000 virus-related deaths in the pandemic.

Pelloux said workers in the lowest-skill health care jobs are among the most vaccine-wary, a symptom of what he called an overlooked “class struggle” in public hospitals, where there is little interaction between different levels of medical workers.

In June, France’s public health agency estimated that 72.2% of doctors had received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, against only 58.7% of nurses and 50% of assistant nurses. The discrepancy predates the pandemic: according to health authorities, 72.2% of doctors received a vaccine against the flu in the winter of 2018, while only 20.9% of assistant nurses did.

Some health workers feel they are being talked down to and are underappreciated in general.

Vaccine resistance in his profession infuriates Pelloux.

“Our job is to cure people, not to kill them. We have an ethical ... and civic duty to get vaccinated and limit hospital-acquired COVID infections,” he said, adding that most of those who died of COVID-19 in France would still be alive today if they had received a vaccine. And health workers have been among those most exposed, and infected.

Some protesters said they would eventually consent to getting the jab if given no choice, but would resent it. Others said they would attempt to buy fake vaccine certificates instead. French police have arrested several people suspected of trafficking fake virus certificates on social media, where the documents can fetch several hundred euros (dollars) each.

Yet a majority of French adults are fully vaccinated and millions more have lined up in the past two weeks. For all the high-profile protests, polls indicate that overall French vaccine hesitancy has ebbed in recent months and that most support the vaccine mandate for health care workers.

Many want the government to go even further: Two recent polls indicated that a majority of the French support a coronavirus vaccine mandate for everyone.

Senators race to seal infrastructure deal as pressure mounts

By HOPE YEN and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators are racing to seal a bipartisan infrastructure deal as soon as Monday, as pressure is mounting on all sides to show progress on President Joe Biden’s top priority.

Heading into a make-or-break week, key senators and staff spent the weekend trying to reach a final agreement. One major roadblock is how much money should go to public transit. But spending on highways, water projects, broadband and others areas remains unresolved, as is whether to take unspent COVID-19 relief funds to help pay for the infrastructure.

The lead Republican negotiator, Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, said the two sides were “about 90% of the way there” on an agreement.

A top Democrat, Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, said he was hopeful a final bill would be ready Monday afternoon — though others were not so sure.

The week ahead is crucial. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has said he wants to pass the nearly \$1 trillion bipartisan package as well as the blueprint for a larger \$3.5 trillion budget plan before the Senate leaves for its August recess. He held a procedural vote last week to begin debate on the bipartisan framework, but all 50 Senate Republicans voted against it, saying they needed to see the full details of the plan.

The White House wants a bipartisan agreement for this first phase, but as talks drag on anxious Demo-

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crats, who have slim control of the House and Senate, could leave Republicans behind and try to go it alone. If it fails, it could be wrapped into the broader package of Biden's priorities that Democrats are hoping to pass later.

The bipartisan package includes about \$600 billion in new spending on public works projects. Democrats want to see more of the money go toward boosting public transportation, which includes subways, light-rail lines and buses, in line with Biden's original infrastructure proposal and the push to address climate change.

The bipartisan group originally appeared to be moving toward agreement on more money for transit. But Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, the top Republican on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, which oversees public transit, raised questions. He cited, in part, previous COVID-19 federal relief money that had already been allocated to public transit.

"Nobody's talking about cutting transit," Toomey said Sunday. "The question is, how many tens of billions of dollars on top of the huge increase that they have already gotten is sufficient? And that's where there is a little disagreement."

Typically, spending from the federal Highway Trust Fund has followed the traditional formula of 80% for highways and 20% for transit. Democratic Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Tom Carper of Delaware say they will oppose the deal if transit funding falls below that.

The White House has declined to say whether Biden would push for the additional funding for transit.

"Transit funding is obviously extremely important to the president — the 'Amtrak President,' as we may call him," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday. "But we believe that members can get this work done and can work through these issues quite quickly."

The final package would need the support of 60 senators in the evenly split 50-50 Senate to advance past a filibuster — meaning at least 10 Republicans along with every Democratic member. Last week's test vote failed along party lines.

A Democratic aide granted anonymity to discuss the private talks said beyond transit, there are other remaining issues still unresolved around how to pay for it. For instance, details on broadband funding, as well as whether to tap into the leftover COVID relief funds previously passed by Congress, continue to be discussed, the aide said.

Democrats are seeking a compromise to pay for the package after they rejected a hike in the gas tax drivers pay at the pump and Republicans dashed a plan to boost the IRS to go after tax scofflaws.

Three rounds totaling nearly \$70 billion in federal COVID-19 emergency assistance, including \$30.5 billion that Biden signed into law in March, pulled transit agencies from the brink of financial collapse as riders steered clear of crowded spaces on subway cars and buses. That federal aid is expected to cover operating deficits from declining passenger revenue and costly COVID-19 cleaning and safety protocols through at least 2022.

But Democrats and public transit advocates see expanded public transit systems as key to easing traffic congestion, combating climate change and curbing car pollution.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, recently sent a letter with 30 Democrats on the panel warning that the Senate proposal was inadequate and that any deal should incorporate the House-passed \$715 billion infrastructure bill, which includes more money for rail and transit.

"The historical share for public transit from the Highway Trust Fund is 20%," Paul Skoutelas, president of the American Public Transportation Association, said Sunday. "It is the absolute minimum acceptable level to help sustain our nation's public transportation systems. It is imperative that we make robust, forward looking investments to modernize and expand public transit that will assist in our economic recovery from the COVID pandemic and get Americans back to work."

Portman appeared on ABC's "This Week," Toomey was on CNN's "State of the Union" and Warner spoke on "Fox News Sunday."

UN: Women, children casualties on the rise in Afghanistan

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By RAHIM FAIEZ Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — More women and children were killed and wounded in Afghanistan in the first half of 2021 than in the first six months of any year since the United Nations began systematically keeping count in 2009, a U.N. report said Monday.

The war-torn country saw a 47% increase in the number of all civilians killed and wounded in violence across Afghanistan in the first six months of the year, compared to the same period last year, according to the report.

"I implore the Taliban and Afghan leaders to take heed of the conflict's grim and chilling trajectory and its devastating impact on civilians," said Deborah Lyons, the U.N. secretary-general's special representative for Afghanistan.

"The report provides a clear warning that unprecedented numbers of Afghan civilians will perish and be maimed this year if the increasing violence is not stemmed," Lyons added in a statement accompanying the report.

The Taliban have swiftly captured significant territory in recent weeks, seized strategic border crossings with several neighboring countries and are threatening a number of provincial capitals. The advances come as the last U.S. and NATO soldiers leave Afghanistan.

The report found a particularly sharp increase in killings and injuries since May, when international military forces began their withdrawal and the fighting intensified following the Taliban's offensive.

The U.N. mission in Afghanistan reported in its Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict mid-year update 2021 that there were 1,659 civilians killed and 3,254 wounded. It said that's a 47% increase compared with the same period last year.

Women and children made up close to half of all civilian casualties in the first half of 2021 at 46%, according to the report. Thirty-two percent were children, with 468 killed and 1,214 wounded. Fourteen percent of civilian casualties were women, with 219 killed and 508 wounded, the report said.

The U.S.-NATO withdrawal is more than 95% complete and due to be finished by Aug. 31.

While making swift gains on the ground, the Taliban have also said they do not want to monopolize power. However, they insist there won't be peace in Afghanistan until there is a new negotiated government in Kabul and President Ashraf Ghani is removed from office.

Lyons, the U.N. envoy who also heads the U.N. mission in Afghanistan, called on the Taliban and Afghan leaders to intensify their efforts at the negotiating table. "Stop the Afghan against Afghan fighting. Protect the Afghan people and give them hope for a better future," she said.

The U.N. report warned that without a significant de-escalation in violence, Afghanistan is on course for 2021 to have the highest ever number of documented civilian casualties in a single year since U.N. record-keeping in the country began.

The number of civilians killed and wounded in May and June is almost as many as recorded in the preceding four months. During May and June there were 2,392 casualties, with 783 killed and 1,609 wounded. That's the highest for those months since systematic documentation began in 2009, the report said.

According to the report, much of the battlefield action during May and June took place outside of the cities. But the U.N. is concerned that if intensive military action is undertaken in urban areas with high population densities, the consequences for Afghan civilians could be catastrophic.

"The pursuit of a military solution will only increase the suffering of the Afghan people," the report said.

It blamed anti-government forces for 64% of all civilian casualties, with 39% inflicted by the Taliban, nearly 9% by the Islamic State group and 16% undetermined. Afghan security forces were responsible for 23% of civilian casualties, and pro-government armed groups for 2%.

The May 8 attack outside the Sayed ul-Shuhuda school in the Afghan capital of Kabul accounted for more than 300 civilian casualties, mostly girls, including 85 killed. No one has claimed responsibility for that attack, the report said.

The U.N. attributed 11% of all civilian casualties to crossfire during ground engagements in which the exact party responsible for casualties could not be determined.

According to the report, the main cause of civilian casualties was improvised explosive devices, followed

by fighting on the ground and targeted killings.

Sparked by pandemic fallout, homeschooling surges across US

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

Although the pandemic disrupted family life across the U.S. since taking hold in spring 2020, some parents are grateful for one consequence: They're now opting to homeschool their children, even as schools plan to resume in-person classes.

The specific reasons vary widely. Some families who spoke with The Associated Press have children with special educational needs; others seek a faith-based curriculum or say their local schools are flawed. The common denominator: They tried homeschooling on what they thought was a temporary basis and found it beneficial to their children.

"That's one of the silver linings of the pandemic — I don't think we would have chosen to homeschool otherwise," said Danielle King of Randolph, Vermont, whose 7-year-old daughter Zoë thrived with the flexible, one-on-one instruction. Her curriculum has included literature, anatomy, even archaeology, enlivened by outdoor excursions to search for fossils.

The surge has been confirmed by the U.S. Census Bureau, which reported in March that the rate of households homeschooling their children rose to 11% by September 2020, more than doubling from 5.4% just six months earlier.

Black households saw the largest jump; their homeschooling rate rose from 3.3% in the spring of 2020 to 16.1% in the fall.

The parents in one of those households, Arlena and Robert Brown of Austin, Texas, had three children in elementary school when the pandemic took hold. After experimenting with virtual learning, the couple opted to try homeschooling with a Catholic-oriented curriculum provided by Seton Home Study School, which serves about 16,000 students nationwide.

The Browns plan to continue homeschooling for the coming year, grateful that they can tailor the curriculum to fit their children's distinctive needs. Jacoby, 11, has been diagnosed with narcolepsy and sometimes needs naps during the day; Riley, 10, has tested as academically gifted; Felicity, 9, has a learning disability.

"I didn't want my kids to become a statistic and not meet their full potential," said Robert Brown, a former teacher who now does consulting. "And we wanted them to have very solid understanding of their faith."

Arlena Brown, who gave birth to a fourth child 10 months ago, worked as a preschool teacher before the pandemic. Homeschooling, she says, has been a rewarding adventure.

"In the beginning, the biggest challenge was to unschool ourselves and understand that homeschooling has so much freedom," she said. "We can go as quickly or slowly as we need to."

Race played a key role in the decision by another African American family to homeschool their 12-year-old son, Dorian.

Angela Valentine said Dorian was often the only Black student in his classes at a suburban Chicago public school, was sometimes treated unfairly by administrators, and was dismayed as other children stopped playing with him.

As the pandemic eased, the family decided to keep Dorian at home and teach him there, using a curriculum provided by National Black Home Educators that provides content for each academic subject pertaining to African American history and culture.

"I felt the burden of making the shift, making sure we're making the right choices," Valentine said. "But until we're really comfortable with his learning environment, we'll stay on this homeschool journey."

Charmaine Williams, who lives in the St. Louis suburb of Baldwin, also is using the National Black Home Educators curriculum as she homeschools her 10-year-old son, Justin, and 6-year-old daughter, Janel.

Williams said she and her husband tried two previous stints of homeschooling for Justin after school officials complained about his behavior. Now — with the new curriculum and an accompanying support network — they feel more confident about choosing it as a long-term option.

"At school, children have to follow a certain pattern, and there's bullying, belittling — compared to being home where they're free to be themselves," Williams said.

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"There's no turning back for us now," she added. "The pandemic has been a blessing — an opportunity to take ownership of our children's education."

Joyce Burges, co-founder and program director of National Black Home Educators, said the 21-year-old organization had about 5,000 members before the pandemic and now has more than 35,000.

Many of the new families experienced difficulties, including lack of internet access, that limited their children's ability to benefit from virtual learning during the pandemic, Burges said.

"It got so they didn't trust anything but their own homes, and their children being with them," she said. "Now they're seeing the future — seeing what their children can do."

For some families, the switch to homeschooling was influenced by their children's special needs. That's the case for Jennifer Osgood of Fairfax, Vermont, whose 7-year-old daughter Lily has Down syndrome.

Having observed Lily's progress with reading and arithmetic while at home during the pandemic, Osgood is convinced homeschooling is the best option for her going forward.

She has made the same decision for her 12-year-old son Noah, who didn't like the remote classes offered by his public school in the spring of 2020, and did homeschooling throughout the 2020-21 school year. It went so well that they want to continue for at least a few more years.

"He told me he was learning so much more at home than he ever did in school," Osgood recalled. "He said, 'School is just so chaotic — we don't get very much done in any particular class. Here, I sit down, you tell me what to do, and minutes later I'm done.'"

Heather Pray of Phoenix, Maryland, says homeschooling has been a major success for her 7-year-old son, Jackson, who has autism. The family made the switch because Jackson was struggling with the virtual learning that his school provided during the pandemic.

"My son did great (with homeschooling), even with just two hours of schoolwork a day," Pray said. "I got him into piano lessons, taught him to read."

Pray is also homeschooling her daughter, Hayley, who's going into 7th grade and had been attending a Christian school.

"I had no idea how this was going to go — I just dove in headfirst," said Pray. "I felt God was holding my hand."

The Gonzalez family from Appomattox, Virginia — who are devout Catholics — opted to homeschool their three sons, ages 9, 13 and 15, after their Catholic school in Lynchburg closed in 2020 due to falling enrollment.

They're using the Catholic-focused curriculum from Seton Home Study School, which Jennifer Gonzalez, the boys' mom, described as rigorous but well-organized.

"My kids have just excelled," she said. "We're able to be home and be together."

Dressel wins US Olympic swimming gold; Aussie beats Ledecy

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Caeleb Dressel got started on his quest for six gold medals in swimming, while Katie Ledecy found herself in a very unusual position.

Second place.

Dressel led off a U.S. victory in the men's 4x100-meter freestyle relay Monday at the Tokyo Olympics, easing a bit of America's sting from Ledecy's first Olympic loss.

Australian Ariarne Titmus — nicknamed the "Terminator" — lived up to her billing when she chased down Ledecy in the 400 freestyle to win one of the most anticipated races of the Summer Games.

Titmus, who trailed by nearly a full body-length at the halfway mark of the eight-lap race, turned on the speed to touch in 3 minutes, 56.69 seconds. It was the second-fastest time in history, surpassed only by Ledecy's world record of 3:56.46 from the 2016 Rio Games.

The defending Olympic champion settled for the silver this time in 3:57.36 -- the fourth-fastest time ever recorded and her best performance in three years.

Just not good enough.

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"I fought tooth and nail," Ledecky said. "She definitely swam a really smart race. She was really controlled up front. I felt pretty smooth and strong going out and flipped at the 300 and it was like, 'Oh, she's right there.'"

And then she was gone.

For the first time in her brilliant Olympic career, Ledecky felt the sting of defeat, dished out by a rival from Down Under who made it clear she was not intimidated by the American star.

"It's probably the biggest thing you could pull off in your sporting career," Titmus said, "so I'm over the moon."

No one else was even close. The bronze went to China's Li Bingjie in 4:01.08.

Then the spotlight shifted to Dressel, who has been hailed as the successor to Michael Phelps.

Dressel put the U.S. out front, and the three who followed him in the relay made sure it stood up.

"I felt good the whole way, I knew I had to get my hand in the wall first and get some clean water," Dressel said. "And everyone did their job. It's a relay for a reason, it's four guys for a reason, it's certainly not just me. It's certainly not just one guy."

The 24-year-old, tattooed Floridian swam the first leg in a blistering 47.26. Blake Pieroni and Bowe Becker kept the Americans out front before Zach Apple turned in an anchor leg of 46.69 to leave no doubt at the end.

The U.S. won in 3:08.97, the third-fastest time in history. Italy took the silver in 3:10.11, with the bronze going to Australia in 3:10.22.

"The scariest part was my leg for myself, because I had control over that," Dressel said. "I knew they were going to get the job done, I wasn't scared at all. Especially when Zach hit the water. I saw him break out and I knew it was over."

Apple climbed from the pool to an embrace from Dressel, who is set for a grueling schedule of three individual events and three relays in Tokyo.

One down, five to go.

Ledecky's disappointment was a downer for the Americans, who won six of 12 medals on Sunday but were shut out in the first two finals Monday.

Torri Huske and Michael Andrew just missed medals with fourth-place finishes, then it was Ledecky settling for the second spot on the podium — a stunner for perhaps the greatest women's freestyle swimmer in history.

Ledecky lost an individual Olympic final for the first time after winning the 800 free at the 2012 London Games, then capturing three more golds in the 200, 400 and 800 free at Rio de Janeiro five years ago.

"I knew it was going to be a battle to the end," Ledecky said. "I didn't feel like I died. She just had that faster 50 or 75. Can't get much better than that."

Titmus was every bit the Terminator at the end.

"Honestly, at the 200 I was a little bit worried," the Aussie said. "I knew she would be there. No one is going to come to the Olympics and catch a Katie Ledecky unprepared. I guess I just had to trust myself.

"I tried to stay as composed as I could and use the easy speed that I have. And to pull it off in the back end against someone who has an amazing second half of her race, I'm really proud of that. "

Ledecky will get another crack at Titmus in the 200 free, and the American is heavily favored to repeat in the 800 and add another gold in the 1,500 — a new event for the women at these games.

After racing each other right in the middle of the pool, the swimmers clasped hands when it was over.

They climbed out of the pool together, giving each other a hug.

"I just thanked her," Titmus said. "She's set this standard for middle-distance freestyle. If I didn't have someone like her to chase I definitely wouldn't be swimming the way I am."

Perhaps the surest bet at the pool, Britain's Adam Peaty repeated as Olympic champion in the men's 100 breaststroke.

Peaty was the world-record holder and the first man to break both 58 and 57 seconds in his signature event. He posted the fifth-fastest time in history (57.37) to blow away the field.

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Arno Kamminga of the Netherlands claimed the silver in 58.00, while the bronze went to Italy's Nicolò Martinenghi in 58.33. Andrew was next in 58.84.

In the first final of the day, Maggie MacNeil captured gold for Canada in the 100 butterfly.

The reigning world champion touched first in 55.59, beating Zhang Yufei of China (55.64) for the top spot. Emma McKeon of Australia took the bronze in 55.72, edging the 18-year-old Huske by one-hundredth of a second.

Huske went out fast, as is her style, and appeared to be in front with about 10 meters to go. But she faded on her final strokes and just missed a spot on the podium.

Defending champion and world-record holder Sarah Sjöström of Sweden was seventh.

"I knew the challenge for me would be win one race then get ready for the next one," said Sjöström, who had a metal plate and six screws inserted to hold her right arm together after a February fall.

"I did everything I physically could, all the mental preparations. I couldn't do anything more."

Fauci says US headed in 'wrong direction' on coronavirus

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — The United States is in an "unnecessary predicament" of soaring COVID-19 cases fueled by unvaccinated Americans and the virulent delta variant, the nation's top infectious diseases expert said Sunday.

"We're going in the wrong direction," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, describing himself as "very frustrated."

He said recommending that the vaccinated wear masks is "under active consideration" by the government's leading public health officials. Also, booster shots may be suggested for people with suppressed immune systems who have been vaccinated, Fauci said.

Fauci, who also serves as President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser, told CNN's "State of the Union" that he has taken part in conversations about altering the mask guidelines.

He noted that some local jurisdictions where infection rates are surging, such as Los Angeles County, are already calling on individuals to wear masks in indoor public spaces regardless of vaccination status. Fauci said those local rules are compatible with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation that the vaccinated do not need to wear masks in public.

More than 163 million people, or 49% of the total U.S. population, are fully vaccinated, according to CDC data. Of those eligible for the vaccine, aged 12 and over, the figure rises to 57%.

"This is an issue predominantly among the unvaccinated, which is the reason why we're out there, practically pleading with the unvaccinated people to go out and get vaccinated," Fauci said.

Fauci said government experts are reviewing early data as they consider whether to recommend that vaccinated individuals to get booster shots. He suggested that some of the most vulnerable, such as organ transplant and cancer patients, are "likely" to be recommended for booster shots.

He also praised Republicans, including Govs. Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas and Ron DeSantis of Florida, and the second-ranking House leader, Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, for encouraging their constituents to get vaccinated. Their states have among the lowest vaccination rates in the country.

"What I would really like to see is more and more of the leaders in those areas that are not vaccinating to get out and speak out and encourage people to get vaccinated," Fauci said.

A Mexican state suffers bloody fallout of cartel rivalry

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

VALPARAÍSO, Mexico (AP) — When they heard gunfire in the valley, residents locked their doors and cowered inside their homes. Some 200 armed men had just looted a gas station, according to a witness, and the shooting would continue for hours as an equal number from an opposing group confronted them.

The authorities didn't arrive until the next day. When they did, they found 18 bodies in San Juan Capistrano, a small community in Valparaíso, Zacatecas. The north-central Mexican state holds strategic importance for drugs being shipped to the United States. Mexico's two strongest cartels — Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation — are locked in a battle for control.

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One month after the June 24 killings, there have been no arrests. The military has sent reinforcements, but killings continue across Zacatecas: a doctor here, a police officer there, a family hacked to pieces, eight killed at a party, two girls shot along with their parents.

In a country that has suffered more than a decade of violence at the hands of powerful drug cartels, the situation in Zacatecas, as well as violence-plagued states like Michoacán and Tamaulipas, shows that neither the head-on drug war launched by former President Felipe Calderón in 2006, nor the softer "hugs not bullets" approach of current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador have managed to break Mexico's cycle of violence.

Zacatecas' 746 murders in the first half of the year, compared to 1,065 for all of 2020, give it the highest murder rate per 100,000 residents in the country through June, according to the Mexican government.

"The day they (soldiers) leave, we know from experience that quickly the criminal groups are going to fight over territory," said Eleuterio Ramos, Valparaíso's worried mayor.

What makes Zacatecas worth fighting for is its location. It borders eight other states. Among other things, the cartels are battling to control the most lucrative drug: fentanyl. Zacatecas sits between the drug's production and its consumers.

After the chemical precursors enter the Pacific ports, they are finished into fentanyl pills in labs in Nayarit, Jalisco and Sinaloa to the west of Zacatecas, said Oscar Santiago Quintos, head of the analysis and intelligence department of Mexico's Attorney General's Office. To the east sits San Luis Potosi, a logistics hub filled with shipping companies that can move the tiny pills north. Highways running north to key border cities pass through Zacatecas, providing a direct route for northbound drugs and southbound guns.

"The battle for Zacatecas is part of the larger war to dominate the fentanyl market, which is the largest source of money for the cartels in the United States," said Mike Vigil, former head of international operations for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. In 2020, some 93,000 people died of fentanyl overdoses in the U.S., a record high.

Nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Madre, Valparaíso sits on one of those critical highways.

For the past month, a shot up pick-up truck has rested here. It's a reminder that residents remain in the line of fire even as the army and National Guard patrol the area.

The larger currents of the international drug trade engulfing these Zacatecan communities may not be clear to their residents, but the impact is inescapable.

When the shootouts rumble across the plains dotted with ranches, farmers often can't go out to feed their livestock. Goods to stock store shelves and medical care frequently don't arrive for fear of cartel roadblocks. Gunmen stop residents and demand their cell phones to look for information that could tie them to the other cartel. They sometimes beat people or tie them up regardless to instill fear.

If someone doesn't stop, they open fire. Earlier this month, a doctor was killed in neighboring Jerez for not stopping. Two paramedics carrying a woman in an ambulance from neighboring Jalisco state to a hospital were killed a few days before passing through Valparaíso.

Last month, a priest was killed in crossfire on the highway. Residents said he had been helping them get electricity back after an armed group cut the power to some ranches.

"One town is controlled by Sinaloa, the next by Jalisco, the next Sinaloa again," said a community leader, who like more than a dozen people interviewed requested anonymity to avoid repercussions. He said just sharing territory with one group makes residents complicit in the eyes of their enemies.

A rumor circulated that the cartels were forcing youth snatched from the communities to work for them.

"There was panic," said a 21-year-old man, the oldest of five siblings. They stayed only because "there wasn't any way to go, nor any place."

Plenty of families left, some for other Mexican cities to wait for the situation to calm, others to the United States where some 1 ½ million Zacatecans — the same number as in Mexico — reside.

Others just stayed inside. "There were 15 days that we didn't go out for anything," said Claudina Betancourt, a nurse born in San Juan Capistrano. She continues working here, but recently moved her belongings to Fresnillo where her daughter and mother live in case she has to quickly leave one day for good.

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There's no cellular coverage and just two phone booths, isolation that adds to the uncertainty.

Days after the June 24 shootout, authorities found two more corpses, raising the death count to 20. Valparaíso's mayor could not confirm or deny figures given by some residents that were double that. A detective who apparently was investigating the shootout and was pulled out of Valparaíso for his safety was later killed.

Similar violence is occurring in other states like Michoacán and Guerrero, where residents caught between competing gangs suffer extortion, abductions and killings.

For years, attention focused on violence along Mexico's northern border in cities like Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez and Nuevo Laredo. Zacatecas had it then too as cartels battled for control, but it was overshadowed. Now Zacatecas, including in the state capital of the same name, have awoken on several occasions to corpses dangling from overpasses.

Murders occur daily in Fresnillo, a city that mixes the local offices of major mining companies with farmers working the bean fields. With 239 murders per 100,000 residents, Fresnillo has the highest perception of insecurity in Mexico: more than 96% of its population lives in fear, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography.

"There is anxiety and uncertainty not knowing where to find safety for your family," said Ramos, Valparaíso's mayor, who was just re-elected to a third term. He said he has not been directly threatened, but he has the same fear as everyone.

Mexico's federal government defends its policy of targeting the root causes of violence — poverty, corruption, impunity — with social programs while deploying the National Guard and soldiers. There are more than 100,000 guardsmen deployed in the Mexico, plus the military, yet the violence continues apace.

Arturo Nahle, Zacatecas' former attorney general and current state supreme court president, said those policies could be right, but will take years to bear fruit. "The strategies that the Mexican government has implemented over the last 15 years have not worked," he said.

López Obrador's party just won the governorship in Zacatecas, but it remains to be seen if coordination with federal authorities will improve.

"If we don't manage to pacify Mexico, regardless of what has been done, we are not going to be able to historically prove our administration," the president said earlier this month.

Last Wednesday, he announced a "special strategy" to address the cities with the most murders, among them Fresnillo: more military presence and more social development.

More troops would be welcome in Zacatecas, though the effectiveness of their patrols is debated.

"With the army the bad guys don't move in," said a 74-year-old farmer in San Juan Capistrano, who teared up talking about the situation in his community. "The government, if it pays attention, can put a stop to everything."

But a resident from the same area had a different hope for peace: that one cartel wins soon.

1960s civil rights activist Robert Moses has died

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

Robert Parris Moses, a civil rights activist who was shot at and endured beatings and jail while leading Black voter registration drives in the American South during the 1960s and later helped improve minority education in math, has died. He was 86.

Moses, who was widely referred to as Bob, worked to dismantle segregation as the Mississippi field director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the civil rights movement and was central to the 1964 "Freedom Summer" in which hundreds of students went to the South to register voters.

Moses started his "second chapter in civil rights work" by founding in 1982 the Algebra Project thanks to a MacArthur Fellowship. The project included a curriculum Moses developed to help struggling students succeed in math.

Ben Moynihan, the director of operations for the Algebra Project, said Moses' wife, Dr. Janet Moses, told him her husband passed away Sunday morning in Hollywood, Florida. Information was not given as

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to the cause of death.

"Bob Moses was a hero of mine. His quiet confidence helped shape the civil rights movement, and he inspired generations of young people looking to make a difference," said former President Barack Obama on Twitter.

Moses was born in Harlem, New York, on January 23, 1935, two months after a race riot left three dead and injured 60 in the neighborhood. His grandfather, William Henry Moses, has been a prominent Southern Baptist preacher and a supporter of Marcus Garvey, a Black nationalist leader at the turn of the century.

Like many Black families, the Moses family moved north from the South during the Great Migration. Once in Harlem, his family sold milk from a Black-owned cooperative to help supplement the household income, according to "Robert Parris Moses: A Life in Civil Rights and Leadership at the Grassroots," by Laura Visser-Maessen.

Moses didn't spend much time in the Deep South until he went on a recruiting trip in 1960 to "see the movement for myself." He sought out the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta but found little activity in the office and soon turned his attention to SNCC.

"I was taught about the denial of the right to vote behind the Iron Curtain in Europe," Moses later said. "I never knew that there was (the) denial of the right to vote behind a Cotton Curtain here in the United States."

The young civil rights advocate tried to register Black people to vote in Mississippi's rural Amite County where he was beaten and arrested. When he tried to file charges against a white assailant, an all-white jury acquitted the man and a judge provided protection to Moses to the county line so he could leave.

In 1963, he and two other activists — James Travis and Randolph Blackwell — were driving in Greenwood, Mississippi, when someone opened fire on them and the 20-year-old Travis was hit. In a press release from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Moses described how bullets whizzed around them and how Moses took the wheel when Travis was struck and stopped the car.

"We all were within inches of being killed," Moses said in the 1963 press release.

A reoccurring theme in Moses' life and work was the need to listen and work with the local populations where activists were trying to effect change, whether that was registering Black voters in some of the most staunchly anti-integration parts of Mississippi or years later working with students and teachers to come up with ways to improve math knowledge.

In an interview with the National Visionary Leadership Project, he talked about the need for civil rights workers to earn the trust of the local population in Mississippi.

"You had to earn the right for the Black population in Mississippi to decide that they were going to work with you because why should they risk everything to work with you if you were somebody or a collection of people who were just not serious?" he said.

He later helped organize the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which sought to challenge the all-white Democratic delegation from Mississippi in 1964. But President Lyndon Johnson prevented the group of rebel Democrats from voting in the convention and instead let Jim Crow southerners remain, drawing national attention.

Disillusioned with white liberal reaction to the civil rights movement, Moses soon began taking part in demonstrations against the Vietnam War then cut off all relationships with whites, even former SNCC members.

Moses worked as a teacher in Tanzania, Africa, returned to Harvard to earn a doctorate in philosophy and taught high school math in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He later taught math in Jackson, Mississippi, while commuting back and forth to Massachusetts on the weekends.

The press-shy Moses started his "second chapter in civil rights work" by founding in 1982 the Algebra Project using money he received through the MacArthur Foundation Fellows program — often referred to as "genius" grants — to improve math literacy among underserved populations. Ben Moynihan from the Algebra Project said Moses saw the work of improving mathematics literacy as an extension of the civil rights work he had started in the 1960s.

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"Bob really saw the issue of giving hope to young people through access to mathematics literacy.... as a citizenship issue, as critical as the right to vote has been," Moynihan said.

Ernesto Cortés Jr., director emeritus and senior advisor to the Industrial Areas Foundation which helps develop community organizers, worked with Moses over four decades during which Moses would come to seminars and trainings. Cortés said Moses did not talk fast and was very attentive and deliberate. One of the key lessons Moses imparted was his "steadfastness" — sticking to a goal despite being repeatedly knocked down — and his generosity.

"Bob always looked to develop other people, and give them recognition and give them their due," Cortés said.

Gymnastics team, tired of 'sexualization,' wears unitards

By CLAIRE GALOFARO Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The team's outfits looked similar to the others in the room as the arena lights gleamed off crystals crisscrossing their chests and down their crimson and white sleeves.

But the German gymnastics team's new Olympic suits didn't stop at their hips.

For decades, female gymnasts have worn bikini-cut leotards. In qualifying on Sunday, however, the German team instead wore unitards that stretched to their ankles, intending to push back against sexualization of women in gymnastics.

The Tokyo Olympics are the first Summer Games since Larry Nassar, a former USA Gymnastics national team doctor, was sent to prison for 176 years for sexually abusing hundreds of gymnasts, including some of the sport's greatest stars. At his sentencing, athletes — some of them Olympians — described how the sport's culture allowed for abuse and objectification of young women and girls.

Male gymnasts wear comparatively body-covering clothes: singlets, with loose shorts for their floor exercise and vault, and long pants on bar and pommel horse routines.

The German team first wore unitards at the European Artistic Gymnastics Championships in April.

Sarah Voss, a 21-year-old German, said they weren't sure they would decide to wear them again during Olympic competition until they got together before the meet.

"We sat together today and said, OK, we want to have a big competition," Voss said. "We want to feel amazing, we want to show everyone that we look amazing."

Their wardrobe revolution, while widely championed, has not so far started a trend. Leotards that leave the legs bare were worn by every other female gymnast during qualifying at the Tokyo Games.

At 4-foot-8, American superstar Simone Biles said in June that she prefers leotards because they lengthen the leg and make her appear taller.

"But I stand with their decision to wear whatever they please and whatever makes them feel comfortable," Biles said. "So if anyone out there wants to wear a unitard or leotard, it's totally up to you."

Matt Cowan, the chief commercial officer for GK Elite, the U.S.' premier leotard manufacturer, said most requests for unitards now come from countries that require modesty for cultural and religious reasons. They have otherwise seen no rush toward catsuits.

"Would we do it? Absolutely. We have the capabilities of designing it and doing it, and we have done it," Cowan said. "But from a consumer demand perspective, we are not there yet."

Gymnastics is often viewed as a sport best performed by very young women and girls. Biles, at 24, often jokes about being old; she recently called herself a grandma on social media.

But other nations have defied that emphasis on youth, including the Germans: Elisabeth Seitz is 27, Kim Bui is 32, Pauline Schafer is 24, and Voss is 21. Their average age of 26. Voss said that gymnastics customs should leave room for female bodies as they age and change.

Their outfits comply with the wardrobe rules of the International Gymnastics Federation. But that doesn't mean female athletes are generally free to cover their bodies as they choose.

Just days before the Games began, the Norwegian women's beach handball team refused to play in bikini bottoms during European tournaments, opting instead for skin-tight shorts. For that, they received

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a fine for violating a wardrobe requirement.

But at gymnastics qualifying Sunday, the announcer over the loudspeaker called the outfits "very nice indeed." The German team did not qualify for finals, but the announcer pondered if their team debut on the Olympic stage might increase unitards' popularity.

Senators race to overcome final snags in infrastructure deal

By HOPE YEN and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers racing to seal a bipartisan infrastructure deal early this coming week are hitting a major roadblock over how much money should go to public transit, the group's lead Republican negotiator said Sunday.

As discussions continued through the weekend, Ohio Sen. Rob Portman said both sides were "about 90% of the way there" on an agreement.

"We have one issue outstanding, and we're not getting much response from the Democrats on it," he said. "It's about mass transit. Our transit number is very generous."

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has said he wants to pass a bipartisan package and an accompanying \$3.5 trillion budget plan before the Senate leaves for its August recess. He held a procedural vote last week to begin debate on the broad framework, but all 50 Senate Republicans voted against it, saying they needed to see the full details of the plan.

Democrats want to see more of the money in the roughly \$1 trillion infrastructure agreement go toward boosting public transportation, which includes subways, light-rail lines and buses, in line with President Joe Biden's original infrastructure proposal.

The bipartisan group originally appeared to be moving toward agreement on more money for transit. But Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, the top Republican on the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, which oversees public transit, was still negotiating the details. He cited, in part, previous COVID-19 federal relief money that had already been allocated to public transit.

"Nobody's talking about cutting transit," Toomey said Sunday. "The question is, how many tens of billions of dollars on top of the huge increase that they have already gotten is sufficient? And that's where there is a little disagreement."

Typically, spending from the federal Highway Trust Fund has followed a formula of 80% for highways and 20% for transit. Democratic Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Tom Carper of Delaware say they will oppose the deal if it reduces that.

The White House has declined to say whether Biden would push for the additional funding for transit.

"Transit funding is obviously extremely important to the president — the 'Amtrak President,' as we may call him," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday. "But we believe that members can get this work done and can work through these issues quite quickly."

The final package would need the support of 60 senators in the evenly split 50-50 Senate to advance past a filibuster — meaning at least 10 Republicans along with every Democratic member. Last week's test vote failed along party lines.

A Democratic aide granted anonymity to discuss the private talks said beyond transit, there are other remaining issues still unresolved around how to pay for it. For instance, details on broadband funding, as well as whether to tap into leftover COVID relief funds previously passed by Congress, continue to be discussed, the aide said.

Democrats are seeking a compromise to pay for the package after Republicans dashed a plan to boost the IRS to go after tax scofflaws, though Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, a Democratic negotiator in the group, said he remains optimistic about reaching a deal soon.

"We're down to the last couple of items, and I think you're going to see a bill Monday afternoon," Warner said Sunday.

Three rounds totaling nearly \$70 billion in federal COVID-19 emergency assistance, including \$30.5 billion that Biden signed into law in March, pulled transit agencies from the brink of financial collapse as

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riders steered clear of crowded spaces on subway cars and buses. That federal aid is expected to cover operating deficits from declining passenger revenue and costly COVID-19 cleaning and safety protocols through at least 2022.

But Democrats and public transit advocates see expanded public transit systems as key to easing traffic congestion, combating climate change and curbing car pollution.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, recently sent a letter with 30 Democrats on the panel warning that the Senate proposal was inadequate and that any deal should incorporate the House-passed \$715 billion infrastructure bill, which includes more money for rail and transit.

"The historical share for public transit from the Highway Trust Fund is 20%," Paul Skoutelas, president of the American Public Transportation Association, said Sunday. "It is the absolute minimum acceptable level to help sustain our nation's public transportation systems. It is imperative that we make robust, forward looking investments to modernize and expand public transit that will assist in our economic recovery from the COVID pandemic and get Americans back to work."

Portman appeared on ABC's "This Week," Toomey was on CNN's "State of the Union" and Warner spoke on "Fox News Sunday."

French parliament OKs restaurant COVID pass, vaccine rules

PARIS (AP) — France's parliament approved a law early Monday requiring special virus passes for all restaurants and domestic travel and mandating vaccinations for all health workers.

Both measures have prompted protests and political tensions. President Emmanuel Macron and his government say they are needed to protect vulnerable populations and hospitals as infections rebound and to avoid new lockdowns.

The law requires all workers in the health care sector to start getting vaccinated by Sept. 15, or risk suspension. It also requires a "health pass" to enter all restaurants, trains, planes and some other public venues. It initially applies to all adults, but will apply to everyone 12 and older starting Sept. 30.

To get the pass, people must have proof they are fully vaccinated, recently tested negative or recently recovered from the virus. Paper or digital documents will be accepted. The law says a government decree will outline how to handle vaccination documents from other countries.

The bill was unveiled just six days ago. Lawmakers worked through the night and the weekend to reach a compromise version approved by the Senate on Sunday night and by the National Assembly after midnight. The rules can be applied through Nov. 15, depending on the virus situation.

Macron appealed for national unity and mass vaccination to fight the resurgent virus, and lashed out at those fueling anti-vaccine sentiment and protests.

About 160,000 people protested around France on Saturday against a special COVID-19 pass for restaurants and mandatory vaccinations for health workers. Many marchers shouted "liberty!" and said the government shouldn't tell them what to do.

Visiting a hospital in French Polynesia afterward, Macron urged national unity and asked, "What is your freedom worth if you say to me 'I don't want to be vaccinated,' but tomorrow you infect your father, your mother or myself?"

While he said protesters are "free to express themselves in a calm and respectful manner," he said demonstrations won't make the coronavirus go away.

He criticized "people who are in the business of irrational, sometimes cynical, manipulative mobilization" against vaccination. Among those organizing the protests have been far-right politicians and extremist members of France's yellow vest movement tapping into anger at Macron's government.

More than 111,000 people with the virus have died in France, which is registering about 20,000 new infections daily compared to just a few thousand earlier this month. Concerns for hospitals are resurfacing.

California's largest fire burns homes as blazes scorch West

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INDIAN FALLS, Calif. (AP) — California's largest wildfire merged with a smaller blaze and destroyed homes in remote areas with limited access for firefighters, as numerous other fires gained strength and threatened property across the U.S. West.

The massive Dixie Fire, which started July 14, had already leveled over a dozen houses and other structures when it combined with the Fly Fire and tore through the tiny Northern California community of Indian Falls after dark Saturday.

An updated damage estimate was not available Sunday, though fire officials said the blaze had charred nearly 298 square miles acres (772 square kilometers) of timber and brush in Plumas and Butte counties. It was 21% contained.

Firefighters carrying hand tools were forced to hike through rugged terrain where engines can't go, said Rick Carhart, spokesman for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

"It has been burning in extremely steep canyons, some places where it is almost impossible for human beings to set foot on the ground to get in there," he said. "It's going to be a long haul."

Still, crews made progress Saturday by proactively setting fires to rob the main blaze of fuels, Carhart said.

The fire prompted evacuation orders in several small mountain communities and along the west shore of Lake Almanor, a popular resort area. About 10,000 homes remained under threat, officials said.

Firefighters also reported progress against the nation's largest wildfire, the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon, containing 46% of the blaze that had consumed nearly 640 square miles (1,657 square kilometers).

More than 2,200 firefighters battled the blaze, focusing Sunday on constructing containment lines at the north and eastern edges in dense timber. Crews could get a break from rain and higher humidity predicted for this week, said Marcus Kauffman, spokesman for the Oregon Department of Forestry.

The lightning-caused fire has burned 67 homes, mainly cabins, and at least 2,000 houses were under evacuation orders.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown told CNN's "State of the Union" that it's imperative federal and state authorities invest in mitigation such as tree thinning and preventive burns to limit the number of similar massive blazes. But she conceded that "the harsh reality is that we're going to see more of these wildfires."

"They're hotter, they're more fierce, and obviously much more challenging to tackle. And they are a sign of the changing climate impacts," Brown said Sunday.

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for four northern counties because of wildfires that he said were causing "conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property." The proclamation opened the way for more state support.

Such conditions are often from a combination of unusual random, short-term and natural weather patterns heightened by long-term, human-caused climate change. Global warming has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years.

In southwest Montana, officials were focusing on structure protection for three fires amid weather forecasts of rising temperatures, low humidity and westerly winds this week, factors that could produce explosive growth.

Crews were trying to protect about 200 homes and cabins and prevent the 44-square-mile (144-square-kilometer) Trail Creek blaze from reaching the Big Hole National Battlefield in Beaverhead County, fire spokesman Jason Nedlo said. The battlefield site, operated by the National Park Service, has been closed because of the fire threat.

Five federal firefighters were in stable condition Sunday after being burned when swirling winds blew a lightning-caused wildfire back on them in eastern Montana on Thursday. The five were building a defensive line at the Devil's Creek Fire in Garfield County when the weather shifted suddenly.

Elsewhere in California, the 104-square-mile (269-square-kilometer) Tamarack fire south of Lake Tahoe continued to burn through timber and chaparral and threatened communities on both sides of the California-Nevada state line. The fire, sparked by lightning July 4 in Alpine County, California has destroyed at least 23 buildings, including more than a dozen in Nevada. It was 27% contained Sunday, and officials were able to lift evacuation orders.

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Heavy smoke from that blaze and the Dixie Fire lowered visibility and may at times ground aircraft providing support for fire crews. The air quality south of Lake Tahoe and across the state line into Nevada deteriorated to very unhealthy levels.

In north-central Washington, firefighters battled two blazes in Okanogan County that threatened hundreds of homes and again caused hazardous air quality conditions Saturday. And in northern Idaho, east of Spokane, Washington, a small fire near the Silverwood Theme Park prompted evacuations Friday evening at the park and in the surrounding area. The theme park was back open Saturday with the fire half contained.

Although hot weather with afternoon winds posed a continued threat of spreading blazes, weekend forecasts also called for a chance of scattered thunderstorms in California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and other states. However, forecasters said some could be dry thunderstorms that produce little rain but a lot of lightning, which can spark new blazes.

More than 85 large wildfires were burning around the country, most of them in Western states. They had burned over 1.4 million acres (2,135 square miles, or more than 553,000 hectares).

EXPLAINER: The Olympic soccer team that doesn't quite exist

By ROB HARRIS AP Global Soccer Writer

TOKYO (AP) — It was Caroline Weir's hesitancy about a seemingly innocuous question that piqued curiosity about the British soccer team at the Olympics: Would she sing Britain's national anthem "God Save the Queen" in Japan?

"Just for certain reasons," she pondered, "it's something I have to think about."

Certain reasons — like the question of her nationality. The 26-year-old midfielder, a Scot, faced an awkward decision after agreeing to represent what is known as "Team GB" for the first time. Representing her country previously has only meant singing "Flower of Scotland" before kickoff.

The dilemma helps explain the challenges Britons face over their national identities — particularly for a proud Scot like Weir — and in forming unified sports teams.

If it wasn't for the Olympics, Weir would never be playing soccer for Britain. Instead, as she did at the 2019 Women's World Cup, she'd represent the saltire of Scotland — a nation with its own legal system and church.

Now consider this: "Team GB" did not technically even qualify for Olympic soccer. That place was earned by the England team. Even when an Olympics spot has been available to Britain, it has been sacrificed upon the altars of internal squabbling and the politics of world soccer.

Where did all this complexity come from? The intricate history of the British Empire, mainly.

WHAT IS BRITAIN, EXACTLY?

The fractious journey of Britain's Olympic soccer team encapsulates the interlinking and colliding sense of belonging in modern Britain, where devolving power from the government in London to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has separated national identities.

To truly understand the conflicted sense of national affiliation requires unpacking the construction of the country. Is it Britain or the United Kingdom?

The soccer players carried passports stating "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland" to enter Japan for these Olympics. But Britain only incorporates England, Wales and Scotland. It's why people in Northern Ireland can feel piqued and neglected by the use of "Team GB" as the country's Olympic brand.

The construct of Great Britain stems from the 18th-century Act of Union, which united Scotland with England. The broader United Kingdom to incorporate all four of the home nations — initially with the entire island of Ireland — came with the unifying act of 1801.

But even a "Team UK" wouldn't cover all eligible athletes. The British Olympic Association's jurisdiction covers not only the nearby Isle of Man and Channel Islands but also lands known as the British Overseas Territories, including the Falkland Islands in the southern Atlantic Ocean.

When soccer and rugby started to formalize more from the 1870s, there were no international opponents

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yet. So any games that would now be considered international fixtures saw Englishmen play against their Scottish counterparts in the two different codes of football.

It established the system in place today that established England and Scotland — as well as Northern Ireland and Wales — as separate entities in world sport.

PLAYING SEPARATELY

At a soccer World Cup, there can be teams competing as England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (if they qualify, as they all did in 1958). But a Britain team? No go. To confuse matters more, in rugby, Ireland plays as a united team despite the partition of 1921.

In the Olympics' early years, Britain was represented in soccer by purely English amateur men in teams run by the English Football Association that won three golds in the early 1900s. The World Cup was first staged by FIFA in 1930.

How is this related to team GB? Because Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland worried that if they joined it, they'd give up their individual identities — that their independence within FIFA as separate playing nations would be jeopardized.

Ultimately, having not qualified anyway since 1960, the English FA stopped entering after failing to reach the 1972 Olympics because it no longer ran an amateur team. When the qualification route for the Olympics changed, in 1992, Britain sacrificed its places when performances by England or Scotland met the threshold for a spot at the Games.

GAME CHANGER

It was only London hosting the 2012 Olympics that brought the British soccer team back into existence. And for the first time, there would be a women's team as well.

The path was not smooth. There was initial resistance by the federations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, which had been warned by FIFA they risked their independent status by participating in a British team.

"If this is the case, then why the hell do they have four associations and four votes and their own vice presidency?" FIFA's president at the time, Sepp Blatter, asked in 2008.

But in a public row that ran through the buildup to the 2012 Olympics, Blatter eventually offered assurances that the autonomy of the home nations would be protected and their status not eroded in the world game even if they let players compete.

While the men's team of mostly players under the age of 23 due to Olympic regulations only saw English and Welsh selected, the women's squad was all-English apart from three Scots. Both teams reached the quarterfinals.

While the unified British team was agreed as a one-off for 2012, there was a desire in England for it to return for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics. But some, particularly Scotland, found it difficult to trust Blatter's assurances about their FIFA status. So despite the women qualifying by virtue of England's semifinals appearance at the 2015 World Cup, the Olympic place was sacrificed.

TEAM RE-FORMS

After reaching another Women's World Cup semifinals in 2019, England did not want to miss another Olympics that could help the women's game grow. And unlike at Rio, a combined team was given the clearance by the other home nations.

Last week, the Scotland women's team did congratulate Kim Little for being appointed a co-captain of the British team, a duty shared with Steph Houghton of England and Sophie Ingle of Wales to reflect the combined contribution of three of the British nations. But @ScotlandNT made no reference to a British team featuring Little and Weir opening in Japan with a 2-0 win over Chile, nor the 1-0 victory over the host nation on Saturday.

"The fact there are Scots and Sophie Ingle in the squad," Weir said, "hopefully that will unite the home nations and everyone can get behind us."

Yet even if that happens, the soccer team that only exists sometimes still faces an uncertain future. Even if Britain wins gold at the Tokyo Games, there's no guarantee when — or even if — Team GB will play again.

Only Tokyo could pull off these Games? Not everyone agrees

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Staging an Olympics during the worst pandemic in a century? There's a widespread perception that it couldn't happen in a better place than Japan.

A vibrant, open democracy with deep pockets, the host nation is known for its diligent execution of detail-laden, large-scale projects, its technological advances, its consensus-building and world-class infrastructure. All this, on paper, at least, gives the strong impression that Japan is one of the few places in the world that could even consider pulling off the high-stakes tightrope walk that the Tokyo Games represent.

Some in Japan aren't buying it.

"No country should hold an Olympics during a pandemic to start with. And if you absolutely must, then a more authoritarian and high-tech China or Singapore would probably be able to control COVID better," said Koichi Nakano, a politics professor at Sophia University in Tokyo.

The bureaucratic, technological, logistical and political contortions required to execute this unprecedented feat — a massively complicated, deeply scrutinized spectacle during a time of global turmoil, death and suffering — have already put an unwelcome spotlight on the country.

Most of all, it has highlighted some embarrassing things: that much of Japan doesn't want the Games, that the nation's vaccine rollout was late and is only now expanding, and that many suspect the Games are being forced on the country because the International Olympic Committee needs the billions in media revenue.

The worry here isn't that Tokyo's organizers can't get to the finish line without a major disaster. That seems possible, and would allow organizers to claim victory, of a kind.

The fear is that once the athletes and officials leave town, the nation that unwillingly sacrificed much for the cause of global sporting unity might be left the poorer for it, and not just in the tens of billions of dollars it has spent on the Games.

The Japanese public may see an already bad coronavirus situation become even worse; Olympics visitors here have already carried fast-spreading variants of the virus into a nation that is only approaching 25% fully vaccinated.

The Tokyo Olympics are, in one sense, a way for visitors to test for themselves some of the common perceptions about Japan that have contributed to this image of the country as the right place to play host. The results, early on in these Games, are somewhat of a mixed bag.

On the plus side, consider the airport arrivals for the thousands of Olympics participants. They showcased Japan's ability to harness intensely organized workflow skills and bring them to bear on a specific task — in this case, protection against COVID-19 that might be brought in by a swarm of outsiders.

From the moment visitors stepped from their aircraft at Narita International Airport, they were corralled — gently, cheerfully, but in no uncertain terms firmly — into lines, then guided across the deserted airport like second-graders heading to recess. Barriers, some with friendly signs attached, ensured they got documents checked, forehead temperatures measured, hands sanitized and saliva extracted.

Symmetrical layouts of chairs, each meticulously numbered, greeted travelers awaiting their COVID-19 test results and Olympic credentials were validated while they waited. The next steps — immigration, customs — were equally efficient, managing to be both crisp and restrictive, but also completely amiable. You emerged from the airport a bit dizzy from all the guidance and herding, but with ego largely unbruised.

But there have also been conspicuous failures.

After the opening ceremony ended, for instance, hundreds of people in the stadium were crammed into a corral-like pen, forced to wait cheek by jowl for hours with only a flimsy barricade separating them from curious Japanese onlookers, while dozens of empty buses idled in a line stretching for blocks, barely moving.

Japan does have some obvious advantages over other democracies when it comes to hosting these Games, such as its economic might. As the world's third-largest economy, after the United States and China, it was able to spend the billions needed to orchestrate these protean games, with their mounting costs and changing demands.

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Another advantage could be Japan's well-deserved reputation for impeccable customer service. Few places in the world take as much pride in catering to visitors' needs. It's an open question, however, whether that real inclination toward hospitality will be tested by the extreme pressure.

A geopolitical imperative may be another big motivator. Japanese archrival China hosts next year's Winter Games, and many nationalists here maintain that an Olympic failure is not an option amid the struggle with Beijing for influence in Asia. Yoshihide Suga, the prime minister, may also be hoping that a face-saving Games, which he can then declare successful, will help him retain power in fall elections.

And the potential holes in the argument that Japan is the perfect host nation for a pandemic Games? Start, maybe, with leadership. It has never been clear who is in charge. Is it the city of Tokyo? The national government? The IOC? The Japanese Olympic Committee?

"This Olympics has been an all-Japan national project, but, as is often pointed out, nobody has a clear idea about who is the main organizer," said Akio Yamaguchi, a crisis communications consultant at Tokyo-based AccessEast. "Uncertainty is the biggest risk."

Japan has also faced a problem particular to democracies: a fierce, sometimes messy public debate about whether it was a good idea to hold the Games.

"After the postponement, we have never had a clear answer on how to host the Olympics. The focus was whether we can do it or not, instead of discussing why and how to do it," said Yuji Ishizaka, a sports sociologist at Nara Women's University.

"Japan is crucially bad at developing a 'plan B.' Japanese organizations are nearly incapable of drafting scenarios where something unexpected happens," Ishizaka said. "There was very little planning that simulated the circumstances in 2021."

Another possibly shaky foundation of outside confidence in Japan is its reputation as a technologically adept wonder of efficiency.

Arriving athletes and reporters "will probably realize that Japan is not as high-tech or as efficient as it has been often believed," Nakano said. "More may then realize that it is the utter lack of accountability of the colluded political, business and media elites that 'enabled' Japan to hold the Olympics in spite of very negative public opinion — and quite possibly with considerable human sacrifice."

The Tokyo Games are a Rorschach test of sorts, laying out for examination the many different ideas about Japan as Olympic host. For now, they raise more questions than they answer.

Will virus cases and deaths spike? Will political fortunes be reversed? Will an international reputation for high-tech efficiency be exposed as not quite right?

Japan has taken a big risk, gambling that it can pull off these unprecedented Games. Whatever the politicians and nationalists say about their success in coming days, a true answer about whether Japan really was the right place to host will have to wait until after the Olympic flame is snuffed out and the visitors leave. Only then, with some distance, will clarity arrive.

Pelosi appoints 2nd GOP critic of Trump to Jan. 6 committee

By HOPE YEN and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Sunday named a second Republican critic of Donald Trump, Rep. Adam Kinzinger, to a special committee investigating the Capitol riot and pledged that the Democratic-majority panel will "get to the truth." Kinzinger said he "humbly accepted" the appointment even as his party's leadership is boycotting the inquiry.

With the committee set to hold its first meeting, hearing from police officers who battled the rioters, Pelosi said it was imperative to learn what happened on Jan. 6, when insurrectionists disrupted the congressional certification of Joe Biden's presidential victory, and why the violent siege took place. That mission, she said, must be pursued in a bipartisan manner to ensure "such an attack can never happen again."

Kinzinger, an Illinois Republican, will bring "great patriotism to the committee's mission: to find the facts and protect our Democracy," she said in a statement.

He joins Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, as the two committee's Republicans, both selected by the leader

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of the opposition party. Kinzinger and Cheney were among the 10 House Republicans to vote for Trump's second impeachment. They were the only two Republicans who voted last month to form the special committee.

"For months, lies and conspiracy theories have been spread, threatening our self-governance," Kinzinger said in a statement. "For months, I have said that the American people deserve transparency and truth on how and why thousands showed up to attack our democracy."

"I will work diligently to ensure we get to the truth and hold those responsible for the attack fully accountable," he said.

House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy has said the GOP will not participate after Pelosi, D-Calif., refused to accept two of the members he picked.

McCarthy, R-Calif., has said the committee was a "sham process" and withdrew his five members when Pelosi rejected two of them, Reps. Jim Banks of Indiana and Jim Jordan of Ohio. Both voted on Jan. 6 against certifying Biden's election victory over Trump and both are outspoken allies of the former president.

In a statement Sunday, McCarthy said Pelosi's decision to reject his picks and appoint members "who share her preconceived narrative will not yield a serious investigation" and is intended "to satisfy her political objectives."

Kinzinger and Cheney have faulted Trump as a factor in spurring the insurrection with his persistently false claims that the 2020 election was "stolen" due to voting fraud.

In recent weeks, Kinzinger has suggested he would be open to serving on the committee, despite threats from McCarthy that Republicans who accept a spot could be stripped of their regular committee assignments as retaliation for participating.

"It's clear that Pelosi only wants members on this committee who will stick to her talking points and stick to her narrative. That's why she's picked the group that she's already picked," Banks said on "Fox News Sunday." He said that "anyone that she asks to be on this committee, from this point moving forward, will be stuck to her -- her narrative, to her point of view. There won't be another side."

The House voted in May to create an independent investigation that would have been evenly split between the parties, but Senate Republicans blocked that approach. Pelosi said the new panel was being created only because a bipartisan commission was no longer an option.

Currently Cheney sits on the committee along with seven Democrats — ensuring they have a quorum to proceed, whether other Republicans participate or not.

Pelosi expressed confidence that the committee's work will be seen as bipartisan and credible even with McCarthy's effort to boycott the panel.

"We have to, again, ignore the antics of those who do not want to find the truth," she said. "We will find the truth. That truth will have the confidence of the American people because it will be done patriotically and not in a partisan way."

Seven people died during and after the rioting, including a woman who was shot by police as she tried to break into the House chamber and three other Trump supporters who suffered medical emergencies. Two police officers died by suicide in the days that followed, and a third officer, Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, collapsed and later died after engaging with the protesters. A medical examiner determined he died of natural causes.

28 abducted Baptist school students freed in Nigeria

By IBRAHIM GARBA and SAM OLUKOYA Associated Press

KANO, Nigeria (AP) — Armed kidnappers in Nigeria have released 28 of the more than 120 students who were abducted at the beginning of July from the Bethel Baptist High School in the northern town of Damishi.

Church officials handed those children over to their parents at the school on Sunday. But the Rev. Israel Akanji, president of the Baptist Convention, said more than 80 other children are still being held by the gunmen.

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So far 34 children kidnapped from the school on July 5 have either been released or have escaped from the custody of the gunmen. It is unclear when the other children will be released. The gunmen have reportedly demanded 500,000 Naira (about \$1,200) for each student.

Akanji said the church did not pay any ransoms because it is opposed to paying criminals, but he added the church was unable to stop the children's families from taking any actions they deem fit to secure their release.

A spokesman for the Nigerian Police, Mohammed Jalige, said security forces and civilian defense forces were on a routine rescue patrol July 12 around the forests near the village of Tsohon Gaya when they found three exhausted kidnapped victims roaming in the bush. Two other students escaped on July 20 when they were ordered to fetch firewood from a nearby forest. Jalige said they were undergoing medical examinations.

Gunman called bandits have carried out a spate of mass abductions from schools in northern Nigeria this year, mainly seeking ransoms.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, who won election on hopes that he would tackle Nigeria's security challenges, has not been able to do much in addressing the growing cases of mass abductions from Nigerian schools.

Germans divided over restrictions for the unvaccinated

By EMILY SCHULTHEIS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German politicians were deeply divided Sunday over a warning by Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief of staff that restrictions for unvaccinated people may be necessary if COVID-19 infection numbers reach new heights in the coming months.

Chief of staff Helge Braun told the newspaper Bild am Sonntag that he doesn't expect another coronavirus-related lockdown in Germany. But Braun said that unvaccinated people may be barred from entering venues like restaurants, movie theaters or sports stadiums "because the residual risk is too high."

Braun said getting vaccinated is important to protect against severe disease and because "vaccinated people will definitely have more freedoms than unvaccinated people." He said such policies would be legal because "the state has the responsibility to protect the health of its citizens."

His comments fueled a debate in German politics about potential vaccination requirements. The issue has proven divisive, even within Merkel's own Christian Democrats party. Its candidate to replace Merkel as Germany's leader, Armin Laschet, said he opposes any formal or informal vaccine requirements for the time being.

"I don't believe in compulsory vaccinations and I don't believe we should put indirect pressure on people to get vaccinated," he told the German broadcaster ZDF on Sunday. "In a free country there are rights to freedom, not just for specific groups."

If Germany's vaccination rates remain too low this fall, other options could be considered, Laschet said, adding "but not now."

With the highly transmissible delta variant spreading in Germany, politicians have debated the possibility of compulsory vaccinations for specific professions, including medical workers. No such requirements have been implemented yet.

Germany's vaccine efforts have slowed in recent weeks and that has led to discussions about how to encourage those who haven't yet received a vaccine to do so. More than 60% of the German population has received at least one dose while over 49% are fully vaccinated.

During a recent visit to the Robert Koch Institute, the government run disease control agency, Merkel ruled out new vaccine requirements "at the moment," but added, "I'm not ruling out that this might be talked about differently in a few months either."

Other elected officials have struck a similar tone. Baden-Württemberg governor Winfried Kretschmann, a member of the Greens, noted Sunday that the delta variant and others that may emerge could make vaccine requirements more attractive down the line.

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While there are no current plans to require people to get vaccinated, he told the German news agency dpa that "I can't rule out compulsory vaccinations for all time."

Karl Lauterbach, a health expert from the center-left Social Democrats, spoke in favor of possible restrictions. He told the Süddeutsche Zeitung that soon one of the only remaining options to fight new variants will be "to restrict access to spaces where many people come together" to those who have either been vaccinated or recovered from the virus.

Others immediately pushed back against Braun's comments on Sunday. Some expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of such restrictions, while others warned against having rights based on one's vaccination status.

"Of course, we need incentives to reach the highest possible vaccination rate," Marco Buschmann, parliamentary group leader for the pro-business Free Democrats, told the RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland newspaper group.

Still, he said, if unvaccinated people who have been tested or recovered from the virus pose no greater danger than vaccinated people, to impose such restrictions on the unvaccinated "would be a violation of their basic rights."

Rolf Mützenich, head of the Social Democrats' parliamentary group, said politicians should be focusing more on getting willing citizens vaccinated than penalizing the unvaccinated.

"We're not going to sustainably change the vaccination behavior of individuals with threats," he told RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland.

On a quiet weekend, 'Old' tops, 'Snake Eyes' sinks

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

M. Night Shyamalan's "Old" easily won a slower weekend at the North American box office, while the G.I. Joe pic "Snake Eyes" lived up to its name.

Although both fresh offerings from major studios, moviegoers turned out in modest numbers on a weekend where there was the notable distraction of the Olympics as well as rising concerns about the delta variant.

Universal on Sunday said that "Old" grossed an estimated \$16.5 million. Paramount's "Snake Eyes" origin story brought in an estimated \$13.4 million in ticket sales.

While not wildly far apart in grosses, "Snake Eyes," starring Henry Golding as the warrior-in-training, cost significantly more with a reported \$88 million price tag, excluding advertising.

Meanwhile "Old," starring Gael García Bernal and Vicky Krieps as the heads of a family whose tropical vacation turns into a horror when they begin to rapidly age, was independently financed for around \$18 million. Including international grosses, "Old," which is based on the graphic novel "Sandcastle," grossed \$23 million worldwide in its first weekend.

"It's an extraordinary debut," said Jim Orr, Universal's head of distribution. "M. Night Shyamalan is an amazing filmmaker and one of the best in the industry."

Orr said he also expects "Old" will continue to play well in the coming weeks.

Neither audiences nor critics reviewed the two new films especially well. "Old" has a 52% on Rotten Tomatoes and got a C+ CinemaScore, while "Snake Eyes" is currently at 42% on Rotten Tomatoes with a B- CinemaScore, which historically does not bode well for long-term potential.

Disney and Marvel's "Black Widow" crept ahead to third place with \$11.6 million, bringing its global total to \$314.9 million, while last week's No. 1 film "Space Jam: A New Legacy" grossed \$9.6 million, down 69% from last weekend. Both are available to watch at home too: "Space Jam" is streaming on HBO Max, while Disney+ subscribers can rent "Black Widow" for \$30.

"This is part of the natural ebb and flow of the box office as we are still on the road to recovery." said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "You're going to have bigger weekends, and you're going to have smaller weekends. It's still an unusual marketplace."

The entire North American box office weekend generated around \$68 million in revenue, according to Comscore. It's a far cry from just three weeks ago when "Black Widow" alone made \$80 million.

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But, Dergarabedian said, it's also worth noting where the box office was a year ago when drive-ins were the only option and the weekend grosses totaled just \$746,000.

"How much the industry has recovered over the course of one year is nothing short of astounding," Dergarabedian said. "We're in a really good spot and next weekend, when 'Jungle Cruise' opens, should be a solid weekend as well."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Old," \$16.5 million.
2. "Snake Eyes," \$13.4 million.
3. "Black Widow," \$11.6 million.
4. "Space Jam: A New Legacy," \$9.6 million.
5. "F9," \$4.7 million.
6. "Escape Room: Tournament of Champions," \$3.4 million.
7. "The Boss Baby: Family Business," \$2.7 million.
8. "The Forever Purge," \$2.3 million.
9. "A Quiet Place Part II," \$1.3 million.
10. "Roadrunner: A Film About Anthony Bourdain," \$830,000.

US loses to France 83-76, 25-game Olympic win streak ends

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

SAITAMA, Japan (AP) — The final buzzer sounded and France barely celebrated.

To them, beating the United States again wasn't really a surprise. And that might be the biggest indicator yet that the Americans — even after three consecutive Olympic gold medals — are no longer feared by other top international teams.

A 25-game Olympic winning streak for the U.S. is over, ending Sunday when France closed the game on a 16-2 run to beat the Americans 83-76 in the Tokyo Games. Evan Fournier's 3-pointer off a broken play with just under a minute left put France ahead for good, as the Americans simply fell apart in the final minutes.

"They are better individually," Fournier said of the Americans, "but they can be beaten as a team."

That's been proven with alarming regularity in the last two years. Starting with France's win over the U.S. in the Basketball World Cup quarterfinals at China two years ago, the Americans are merely 3-5 in their last eight games with NBA players in the lineup.

The U.S. missed its final nine shots, five of them coming in a 21-second span in the final minute shortly after Fournier — who led all scorers with 28 points — made the go-ahead 3-pointer. Rudy Gobert wildly missed a layup on that play, but Guerschon Yabusele chased down the bouncing rebound and just before he dove into the U.S. bench he made a desperation swipe at the ball in an effort to knock it into Fournier's direction.

Fournier turned Yabusele's dive into a dagger, and just like that the Americans are in Olympic trouble.

"I think that's a little bit of hubris if you think the Americans are supposed to just roll out the balls and win," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said. "We've got to work for it just like everybody else. And for those 40 minutes, they played better than we did."

The Americans lost for only the sixth time in 144 games at the Olympics all-time, and fell to 53-4 in the Olympics with NBA players on the roster. The 2004 team at the Athens Games lost the other three, and won bronze. Every other U.S. team in the era that started with the "Dream Team" in 1992 won the gold and this one still can — but it's far from a certainty.

"When you lose a game, you're not surprised," Popovich said. "You're disappointed."

Fournier had 28 points for France, while Rudy Gobert scored 14 and Nando de Colo had 13. Jrue Holiday had 18 points for the U.S., Bam Adebayo had 12, Damian Lillard 11 and Kevin Durant had 10 for the

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Americans — who are just 2-3 in their games this summer, the first four of them exhibitions in Las Vegas that weren't supposed to mean much.

The Olympics, they were supposed to be different.

They weren't. They lost, again.

"I mean, it's great," Gobert said. "But until we have what we want to have around our neck it doesn't really matter."

The idea of anyone else leaving an Olympics with gold hasn't been all that realistic in recent years. Now, it's very real.

A 10-point U.S. lead in the third quarter was wasted, and so was a 12-point barrage from Holiday in the opening 4 ½ minutes of the fourth quarter as the Americans went from six points down to start the period to six points up with 5:23 remaining.

The U.S. lead was seven with 3:30 left. France outscored the U.S. 16-2 from there, and the Americans missed all nine of their shots — five of them in a 21-second span on the same trip down the floor in the final minute, three of those from 3-point range.

"Evan was amazing," France coach Vincent Collet said. "I don't want to use big, big, big words, but he made some very big shots."

The loss doesn't knock the U.S. out of medal contention, but it essentially eliminates the margin for error. The Americans play Iran on Wednesday and then the Czech Republic on Saturday in its final two Group A games; win both of those, and the U.S. will be in the quarterfinals. Lose another one, and the Americans might not even finish in the top eight of this 12-team tournament.

The Americans scored three points in a seven-minute span of the third, Durant picked up his fourth foul — the FIBA limit is five with 16:45 left in the game, and that once-comfortable lead was soon gone. De Colo's 3-pointer with 2:42 remaining in the third put France up 55-54, its first lead since the game's first four minutes.

France led 62-56 going to the final quarter. Holiday — who arrived in Tokyo on Saturday, less than a week removed from helping Milwaukee win the NBA title — did all he could to will the U.S. to a win in the fourth, but simply didn't get enough help.

"He was outstanding," Popovich said.

It was the first time the U.S. and France played since the quarterfinals of the Basketball World Cup two years ago, a game that the Americans lost on the way to a seventh-place finish — the worst ever by a USA Basketball team with NBA players.

The U.S. got outscored 22-5 in the final 7 ½ minutes of that game, losing 89-79. This time, the final run was 16-2 in the final 3:17 to lose by seven.

That loss in China ended World Cup medal hopes. This one doesn't end the Americans' Olympic chances — but another loss almost certainly will.

"We have to defend better down the stretch," U.S. forward Draymond Green said. "And close the games out."

TIP-INS

France: Frank Ntilikina missed the game, with the French federation saying he continues to deal with "slight muscle discomfort." ... France took the game's first nine free throws. The U.S. didn't shoot one until JaVale McGee went to the line with 8:27 left in the second quarter. ... Yabusele left the game briefly with 1:30 left in the half after going knee-to-knee with Holiday.

USA: Durant had three fouls in the first half, something that's happened only 10 times in his last 544 NBA appearances. ... The U.S. used 11 of its players in the first half, with Jerami Grant the only one who didn't get into the game.

MOVING UP

Durant moved into outright possession of the No. 4 spot on the U.S. men's all-time Olympic appearances list. He's now played in 17 games, behind only Carmelo Anthony (31), LeBron James (24) and David Robinson (24). There are 15 players with 16 Olympic appearances.

UP NEXT

France: Face the Czech Republic on Wednesday.

USA: Face Iran on Wednesday.

Divine transformation: Ex-Alaska strip club becomes church

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A popular strip club that once beckoned customers off a busy highway leading into Anchorage is now a church offering salvation — instead of temptation — thanks to a daughter of a former exotic dancer.

Linda Dunegan believes divine intervention played a hand in transforming the building that housed Fantasies on 5th into the start-up Open Door Baptist Church, turning the show floor into a sanctuary and trading the dancer's pole with a pulpit.

"This church came about because I prayed for five years," said Dunegan, who tried to buy the building before but walked away — for good, she thought — when she and the owner couldn't come to terms. Then the owner gave a real estate agent a week to sell it and suggested the agent call Dunegan. This time, the deal went through.

"God has been very good to me," Dunegan said, "to give me a family, a wonderful husband, food on the table, a place to live."

The journey to savvy real estate investor with 19 properties in three states seems implausible for a girl barely surviving on a daily bowl of rice in her native Vietnam.

Dunegan grew up in a small village near the Cambodian border, where most homes were on stilts and the surrounding water was everyone's fishing grounds — and toilets.

Her mother and father had an arranged marriage that Dunegan said failed when her mother didn't produce a male heir and was sent back to her village with her two daughters. With no other skills, her mother took a job as a waitress in a bar, where she met an American who would become her husband and help the family flee the war-ravaged country in April 1975 on a military transport when Dunegan was 8.

The family struggled financially and moved around a lot, flitting from Los Angeles to Hawaii, Florida, Arizona and all over the East Coast.

In the early 1980s, her mother and stepfather divorced. Friends encouraged her mother to move to Anchorage, where they said there was good money to be made working as a waitress in the bars filled with oil industry workers.

Once in Alaska's largest city, her mother quickly found out that there was better money to be made dancing at different bars, though Dunegan wasn't sure if Fantasies on 5th was one of them. She and her mother had a falling out recently, and attempts by The Associated Press to contact her for comment were unsuccessful.

As a child, Dunegan said she escaped into literature, reading a book a day. She studied hard, made the National Honor Society and went to college, eventually earning a doctorate. She also had a nearly three decade military career with service in the Air Force and Navy reserves and the Alaska Air National Guard.

Along the way, she married Gerry Dunegan, a longshoreman, and together they built their real estate holdings.

Dunegan's path to devout Christian took root when she was a child in America and a woman at one of the churches they attended ostensibly for the free food decided to take her under her wing.

"I was dirty, unsightly, and she took me to Sears. She bought me three dresses," Dunegan said.

"I work to pay that back today," she said of the gesture that meant the world to her.

Pastor Kenny Menendez said God called him to start a new church in Anchorage; he just didn't know he and others would have to excavate through the detritus of a strip club to find it.

The electricity was off on his first visit, but cellphone flashlights exposed black and red carpeting, booth seating, private showrooms, poles, a catwalk, a stage, huge bar tables and chairs among the Halloween decorations still displayed after the club abruptly closed a few years ago.

"I looked at it as, 'Yeah, it could be a church,'" said Menendez, who gave up a career in purchasing at an aerospace industry manufacturing plant in his native Oregon for his first ministry. "It just needed a

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facelift," which included turning a private lap dance room into the youth ministry.

Seventy-six people showed up for the grand opening, some to see what a church inside a former strip club looks like. Now they average about 45 people every Sunday, a decent crowd given it's competing with about three dozen or so other Baptist churches in Anchorage.

He also believes the Almighty approves of the work they are doing.

"I would say God is pleased to have a change, a transformation in the building, a place that really ultimately points more people towards him instead of away," he said.

He has hopes that the church — which is situated between a marijuana retail store, a sex shop and downtrodden motels — will help improve the neighborhood.

"One would hope that, yes, this is the beginning of just putting some light right here," he said.

The church, which will have its first anniversary in October, isn't the only benefactor of the three-story building. Dunegan intends to use the second floor for fundraisers and as a reception rental location, and the third floor as a base for her Children's Benefit Foundation.

Here, she plans to bridge the gap for Anchorage youth, setting up cultural exchanges for them to visit Vietnam. She also intends to raise funds to help provide medical professionals in Vietnam with needed supplies, with a dream of possibly someday opening a hospital there.

She said in an Air National Guard magazine article that it was her mother who planted that seed in her over two decades ago.

"We're starting out small," Dunegan said, "but our heart is big."

Russia marks Navy's 325th anniversary, Iranian ship joins in

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia marked the 325th anniversary of the founding of its navy with ship parades at major ports on Sunday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the main parade of more than 50 vessels in St. Petersburg, which included ships from the navies of Iran, Pakistan and India.

The Iranian frigate Sahand, which sailed down the Neva River in the parade, and the sea-based vessel Makran attracted attention from naval observers due to their unusually long voyages to Russia.

Parades also took place in the Russian naval bases of Severomorsk, Caspiisk, Baltiisk, Sevastopol, Vladivostok and at the Russian naval base in Tartus, Syria.

Typhoon In-fa hits China's east coast, canceling flights

BEIJING (AP) — Typhoon In-fa hit China's east coast south of Shanghai on Sunday after people living near the sea were evacuated, airline flights and trains were canceled and the public was ordered to stay indoors.

The typhoon made landfall in Zhoushan in Zhejiang province, state TV reported, citing the national weather agency. It forecast rainfall of 10-14 inches (250-350 millimeters).

"People should not willingly go outdoors," the bureau said.

The typhoon earlier dumped rain on Taiwan and knocked down tree branches, but no deaths or injuries were reported.

About 330,000 residents of Fengxian District on Shanghai's southern edge were evacuated after wind speeds off shore reached 60 mph (100 kph), the newspaper China Daily reported.

Hundreds of flights at Shanghai Pudong and Shanghai Hongqiao airports were canceled and more were expected to be canceled on Monday, state TV reported. Shanghai closed parks and the riverfront Bund district, a popular tourist area.

The international airport in Hangzhou, southwest of Shanghai, also canceled flights.

Train service to Ningbo, a port city south of Shanghai, was suspended, according to state TV. The Zhoushan Bridge that connects islands near Ningbo was closed, as were schools, markets and businesses in Zhejiang province.

On Saturday, large container ships were moved from Yangshan Port in Shanghai, one of the world's busi-

est shipping centers. State TV said a ship lock in Nantong, which abuts Shanghai to the north, stopped releasing vessels into the Yangtze River.

Sparked by pandemic fallout, homeschooling surges across US

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

Although the pandemic disrupted family life across the U.S. since taking hold in spring 2020, some parents are grateful for one consequence: They're now opting to homeschool their children, even as schools plan to resume in-person classes.

The specific reasons vary widely. Some families who spoke with The Associated Press have children with special educational needs; others seek a faith-based curriculum or say their local schools are flawed. The common denominator: They tried homeschooling on what they thought was a temporary basis and found it beneficial to their children.

"That's one of the silver linings of the pandemic – I don't think we would have chosen to homeschool otherwise," said Danielle King of Randolph, Vermont, whose 7-year-old daughter Zoë thrived with the flexible, one-on-one instruction. Her curriculum has included literature, anatomy, even archaeology, enlivened by outdoor excursions to search for fossils.

The surge has been confirmed by the U.S. Census Bureau, which reported in March that the rate of households homeschooling their children rose to 11% by September 2020, more than doubling from 5.4% just six months earlier.

Black households saw the largest jump; their homeschooling rate rose from 3.3% in the spring of 2020 to 16.1% in the fall.

The parents in one of those households, Arlena and Robert Brown of Austin, Texas, had three children in elementary school when the pandemic took hold. After experimenting with virtual learning, the couple opted to try homeschooling with a Catholic-oriented curriculum provided by Seton Home Study School, which serves about 16,000 students nationwide.

The Browns plan to continue homeschooling for the coming year, grateful that they can tailor the curriculum to fit their children's distinctive needs. Jacoby, 11, has been diagnosed with narcolepsy and sometimes needs naps during the day; Riley, 10, has tested as academically gifted; Felicity, 9, has a learning disability.

"I didn't want my kids to become a statistic and not meet their full potential," said Robert Brown, a former teacher who now does consulting. "And we wanted them to have very solid understanding of their faith."

Arlena Brown, who gave birth to a fourth child 10 months ago, worked as a preschool teacher before the pandemic. Homeschooling, she says, has been a rewarding adventure.

"In the beginning, the biggest challenge was to unschool ourselves and understand that homeschooling has so much freedom," she said. "We can go as quickly or slowly as we need to."

Race played a key role in the decision by another African American family to homeschool their 12-year-old son, Dorian.

Angela Valentine said Dorian was often the only Black student in his classes at a suburban Chicago public school, was sometimes treated unfairly by administrators, and was dismayed as other children stopped playing with him.

As the pandemic eased, the family decided to keep Dorian at home and teach him there, using a curriculum provided by National Black Home Educators that provides content for each academic subject pertaining to African American history and culture.

"I felt the burden of making the shift, making sure we're making the right choices," Valentine said. "But until we're really comfortable with his learning environment, we'll stay on this homeschool journey."

Charmaine Williams, who lives in the St. Louis suburb of Baldwin, also is using the National Black Home Educators curriculum as she homeschools her 10-year-old son, Justin, and 6-year-old daughter, Janel.

Williams said she and her husband tried two previous stints of homeschooling for Justin after school officials complained about his behavior. Now – with the new curriculum and an accompanying support network – they feel more confident about choosing it as a long-term option.

"At school, children have to follow a certain pattern, and there's bullying, belittling -- compared to being

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home where they're free to be themselves," Williams said.

"There's no turning back for us now," she added. "The pandemic has been a blessing --an opportunity to take ownership of our children's education."

Joyce Burges, co-founder and program director of National Black Home Educators, said the 21-year-old organization had about 5,000 members before the pandemic and now has more than 35,000.

Many of the new families experienced difficulties, including lack of internet access, that limited their children's ability to benefit from virtual learning during the pandemic, Burges said.

"It got so they didn't trust anything but their own homes, and their children being with them," she said. "Now they're seeing the future -- seeing what their children can do."

For some families, the switch to homeschooling was influenced by their children's special needs. That's the case for Jennifer Osgood of Fairfax, Vermont, whose 7-year-old daughter Lily has Down syndrome.

Having observed Lily's progress with reading and arithmetic while at home during the pandemic, Osgood is convinced homeschooling is the best option for her going forward.

She has made the same decision for her 12-year-old son Noah, who didn't like the remote classes offered by his public school in the spring of 2020, and did homeschooling throughout the 2020-21 school year. It went so well that they want to continue for at least a few more years.

"He told me he was learning so much more at home than he ever did in school," Osgood recalled. "He said, 'School is just so chaotic -- we don't get very much done in any particular class. Here, I sit down, you tell me what to do, and minutes later I'm done.'"

Heather Pray of Phoenix, Maryland, says homeschooling has been a major success for her 7-year-old son, Jackson, who has autism. The family made the switch because Jackson was struggling with the virtual learning that his school provided during the pandemic.

"My son did great (with homeschooling), even with just two hours of schoolwork a day," Pray said. "I got him into piano lessons, taught him to read."

Pray is also homeschooling her daughter, Hayley, who's going into 7th grade and had been attending a Christian school.

"I had no idea how this was going to go -- I just dove in headfirst," said Pray. "I felt God was holding my hand."

The Gonzalez family from Appomattox, Virginia -- who are devout Catholics -- opted to homeschool their three sons, ages 9, 13 and 15, after their Catholic school in Lynchburg closed in 2020 due to falling enrollment.

They're using the Catholic-focused curriculum from Seton Home Study School, which Jennifer Gonzalez, the boys' mom, described as rigorous but well-organized.

"My kids have just excelled," she said. "We're able to be home and be together."

Spaniards put faith in COVID-19 vaccines even as cases surge

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Like many of Spain's 20-somethings, Sergio Rosado has seen the new, more contagious coronavirus strain strike those too eager to cut loose when authorities rolled back health restrictions with vaccinations picking up pace.

But the 22-year-old student shares the country's widespread public trust in the vaccines, and Rosado plans to get his shots as soon as his turn comes.

"I have friends that have caught COVID-19 at big parties. Lots of people I know have caught it," Rosado said. "I did go out too, but to places without many people and in controlled spaces, and with face masks."

Spain, like its fellow European Union members, got off to a slow start in administering shots compared to Britain and the United States after regulators approved the first vaccines. But once deliveries by drug-makers started flowing to meet demand, the country quickly made up ground.

After only fully vaccinating 10% of its adults from January until the end of April, now nearly 54% of its adults, around 25 million people, have received two vaccine jabs, making Spain one of the inoculation

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leaders in the 27-nation European Union.

The program is built on Spain's efficient public health care system, a well-ordered vaccination plan that stuck strictly to age groups, and a populace confident in the safety of childhood immunizations and therefore largely resistant to skepticism about COVID-19 jabs.

"Vaccination forms part of our genome," Amós García, president of the Spanish Association of Vaccinology, told The Associated Press. "Our professionals have always believed strongly in the benefits of vaccines. We have always strongly encouraged children from a very young age to get their vaccines."

He said general vaccination rates for children in Spain were over 95%.

Spain's public health care system, which has suffered budget cuts in the past decade, buckled last year under the first wave of the virus, which has claimed at least 81,000 lives in the country.

But fears that the health system wouldn't be up to the job of managing a massive vaccine rollout proved unfounded. Eligibility information was widely disseminated, and people didn't hesitate to sign up when it was their age group's turn. Vaccination lines generally moved swiftly, and unlike France, there was no paperwork to get in the way when people went to their local clinics or mass vaccination points.

It also helped that no politician, not even on the fringes of the right or left, sowed doubts about the vaccines. The only political issue regarding the vaccines was when they weren't arriving fast enough, and regional health authorities in charge of administering them demanded more quicker.

"This is not a question of progressives or of conservatives. It is a public health question," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez told MSNBC while on a visit last week to the United States.

Unlike Germany or France, Spain doesn't have a big anti-vaccine movement. More than 90% of Spain's public health workers have been vaccinated, compared with 42% of public health workers in France.

So while France and Greece have had to pressure skeptics and procrastinators into getting their shots by making vaccines mandatory for people working certain jobs, such as paramedics and nursing home workers, Spaniards have so far needed very little prodding.

In methodically working its way from the most elderly downward, Spain achieved its first goal: stopping the most vulnerable from dying. But the emphasis on vaccines as the salvation could also have contributed to Spain's young letting down their guards as curfews and face mask requirements were lifted, just as the delta variant arrived.

The result is that, despite its smooth vaccine rollout, Spain is currently one of Europe's hot spots for new infections. Spain is reporting more than 25,000 new cases a day now compared with 3,400 a day a month ago, according to Our World in Data.

"A month ago, when we let go of the most of the restrictions, we didn't call it 'Freedom Day' like England, but basically it was a fairly big move toward more freedom," Rafael Bengoa, former Director for Health Systems at WHO and one of Spain's leading public health experts, told the AP.

That is one of the reasons that we have the present epidemiological situation."

"If you want to control the pandemic in this situation, you have to be doing both the traditional public health restrictions plus the vaccinations," Bengoa explained.

In response, some regions have put new restrictions back into place, such as a nightly curfew in the region that includes Barcelona.

Spain is counting on its vaccine program to make quick inroads with people under age 40 and it seems that the desire to get vaccinated hasn't fallen victim to a generation gap. Spain's government polling bureau said last week that nearly 90% of respondents under 35 said they wanted to get vaccinated.

Still, Bengoa thinks virus restrictions will remain in place for a while.

"We have to explain to the population that this is here to stay," he said. "We will control it. But ... you're going to have to live with a virus that is more dangerous than the flu."

Olympics Latest: Rashitov wins taekwondo gold at Tokyo Games

The Latest on the Tokyo Olympics, which are taking place under heavy restrictions after a year's delay because of the coronavirus pandemic:

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MEDAL ALERT

Ulugbek Rashitov won Uzbekistan's first Olympic taekwondo gold medal in dramatic fashion by beating Bradly Sinden of Britain.

The 19-year-old Rashitov landed a four-point turning body kick inside the final 15 seconds to turn a two-point deficit into a two-point lead and the featherweight hung on for a 34-29 victory to claim Uzbekistan's first-ever medal in taekwondo.

Rashitov is relatively inexperienced on the world stage but his success echoes Uzbekistan's major strides in combat sports, including the Uzbek boxing team's breakthrough performance in Rio de Janeiro.

Sinden fell agonizingly short of becoming Britain's first male Olympic gold medalist in taekwondo, a popular domestic sport with an impressive list of international women's champions. Two-time Olympic champion Jade Jones failed in her bid for a third straight gold earlier Sunday with a shocking loss to the Refugee Olympic Team's Kimia Alizadeh.

MEDAL ALERT

Chen Lijun kept China's perfect record in weightlifting intact with victory in the men's 67-kilogram class at the Tokyo Olympics.

Chen lifted 187 kilograms in the clean and jerk for a total 332 kilograms to beat Luis Javier Mosquera of Colombia by one kilogram. Chen was in the position of either winning gold or finishing off the podium after increasing weight to beat Mosquera.

China has won all three weightlifting gold medals so far in Tokyo. Chen's victory comes five years after cramps forced him out of the competition at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Mirko Zanni of Italy lifted 322kg for the bronze medal.

MEDAL ALERT

Romain Cannone won France's first gold medal of the Tokyo Games by beating Gergely Siklosi of Hungary 15-10 in the men's epee final.

Cannone led 14-9 after two periods in the first-to-15 match and ended it quickly in the third. The 24-year-old Cannone was born in France but grew up in the United States and attended Sacred Heart University. He returned to France in 2016 to boost his chances of qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics.

Igor Reizlin of Ukraine won the bronze with a 15-12 victory over Andrea Santarelli of Italy.

MEDAL ALERT

Anastasija Zolotic won the United States' first gold medal in women's taekwondo by beating Russian athlete Tatiana Minina 25-17 to claim the featherweight division title.

The 18-year-old Zolotic lets out a primal scream as she pulls on her helmet before each round. The Largo, Florida, native has been telling friends and family since early childhood that she would be an Olympic champion and she needed only one trip to the Games to make it happen.

Zolotic and Minina had a high-scoring first round and a tactical second but Zolotic picked apart her Russian opponent in the third with two-point body kicks after nursing a one-point lead into the final round.

Zolotic was only the fourth American to reach an Olympic taekwondo final and only the second woman. Steven Lopez won the U.S. team's only two previous Olympic golds in taekwondo.

MEDAL ALERT

Lee Kiefer has earned the third gold medal for the United States at the Tokyo Olympics by beating defending champion Inna Deriglazova of Russia 15-13 in the women's foil final.

Kiefer is a four-time NCAA champion at Notre Dame. She ripped off her mask after the final point and shouted "Oh my God!" She placed fifth at the 2012 London Games and was 10th at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

It's the third Olympic gold for the U.S. fencing team. Mariel Zagunis won in saber at the 2004 and 2008

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Games.

Kiefer is also a medical student at the University of Kentucky.

Olympic medalists can now remove their masks — briefly — on the podium after the International Olympic Committee relaxed its health rules.

Recognizing athletes want to smile and show emotion, the IOC is now letting them have 30 seconds of maskless time for photographs.

The IOC says this acknowledges “a unique moment in their sporting career.”

Health protocols agreed to ahead of the Tokyo Olympics to control COVID-19 infections had required all medalists to keep masks on for the whole ceremony.

The new maskless moments require athletes to stay on their own podium steps. Masks must be back on for group photos on the top step.

Hifumi Abe has won Japan’s third judo gold medal at its home Olympics with an ippon victory over Georgia’s Vazha Margvelashvili. He joins his younger sister among Japan’s gold medalists in the country’s beloved homegrown martial art.

Hifumi Abe triumphed in men’s 66 kilograms shortly after Uta Abe claimed her own first gold medal in the women’s 52-kilogram division at the Budokan.

Hifumi is a two-time world champion who had to win a grueling, 24-minute bout against teammate Joshiro Maruyama last December simply for the right to represent Japan at these Olympics. He won four straight bouts Sunday, including three by ippon.

Uta beat France’s Amandine Buchard to win her own first Olympic gold.

Brazil’s Daniel Cargnin and South Korea’s An Baul won bronze at men’s 66kg.

Pope Francis has offered his blessing for the Tokyo Olympic Games from Vatican City.

Francis told the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the traditional papal blessing that “in this period of pandemic, these Games are a sign of hope, a sign of universal brotherhood and of a healthy competitive spirit.”

He offered his blessing “to the organizers, the athletes and all those who are collaborating for this great celebration of sport.”

MORE ON THE TOKYO GAMES:

- Powerhouse U.S. swim team shines with 6 medals
- U.S. women’s gymnastics team off to a rocky start
- Japanese skateboarder wins gold and surfers ride modest waves as new sports debut
- Iranian refugee fails in gold medal taekwondo bid, could still win bronze

MEDAL ALERT

Uta Abe has won Japan’s second judo gold medal at its home Olympics, beating France’s Amandine Buchard by ippon in the women’s 52-kilogram final at the Budokan.

Abe’s gold-medal victory follows Naohisa Takato’s on Saturday. She also hopes to be joined by her older brother, Hifumi, who fights for gold in the men’s 66-kilogram division later Sunday night.

The 21-year-old Uta Abe is one of the biggest stars in Japan’s homegrown martial art, and this Olympic victory will only increase her stature in the sport. She has won two world championships, including the 2019 title at the Budokan.

Uta qualified for the Tokyo Games over a year ago, while Hifumi had to get through a punishing winner-take-all qualifier against Japanese teammate Joshiro Maruyama last December.

Italy’s Odette Giuffrida and Britain’s Chelsie Giles won the bronze medals at women’s 52 kg.

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Costa Rican gymnast Luciana Alvarado ended her floor routine in Olympic qualifying on one knee, her head back and her right fist thrust straight into the air.

The 18-year-old said the closing of her routine was choreographed in homage to the Black Lives Matter movement that spread around the world after George Floyd was killed by police in Minneapolis last summer. Alvarado said Friday after she performed the same move at training that she hoped to highlight the importance of equal rights on a global stage, and champion treating all with respect and dignity.

"Because we're all the same," she said, "and we're all beautiful and amazing."

The International Olympic Committee has implemented rules to try to limit protest actions by athletes. But Alvarado's gesture, incorporated into her artistic routine, is unlikely to trigger repercussions.

Sunday's routine will be her only turn on the Olympic stage: Alvarado scored a 12.166 on the floor and will not qualify to move forward to finals.

Johnny Hooper has returned to his mother's homeland for his Olympic debut and had one of the biggest U.S. goals in a 15-13 victory over Japan.

The win came on the first day of the men's water polo tournament at the Tokyo Games.

Hooper scored from deep with the U.S. clinging to a one-goal lead in the final minute to help close out the win.

Hooper's mother was born in Kumakura and his grandmother lives in Japan. But they weren't able to watch the game in person because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Defending gold medalist China has lost its opening match of the women's volleyball tournament for the second straight Olympics.

Turkey jumped out quickly and won the match in Pool B 25-21, 25-14, 25-14.

The Turkish women are appearing in the Olympics for the second time ever, having failed to make it out of pool play in their other appearance in London in 2012. They sprinted out to celebrate as a team after completing the upset.

The Chinese are once again led by 2016 MVP Zhu Ting and coach Lang Ping. They are following a similar pattern to five years ago when they lost their opening match to the Netherlands and two others in pool play before finding a groove in the knockout round.

MEDAL ALERT

Li Fabin of China has added Olympic gold to his world title in the men's 61-kilogram weightlifting category. Li lifted a total 313 kilograms and was assured of victory when Eko Yuli Irawan of Indonesia failed twice on what would have been a world record 177kg clean and jerk. Li missed his own record shot at 178kg.

He earlier added a quirky touch by standing on one leg during his 166kg clean and jerk in a rarely-seen style known as the flamingo stance.

Irawan won the silver with a total 302kg. Igor Son of Kazakhstan lifted a total 294kg for bronze.

MEDAL ALERT

Cyclist Anna Kiesenhofer of Austria pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the history of the Olympic road race, making an early breakaway stick as the powerhouse Dutch team gave chase to win the gold at the Tokyo Games on Sunday.

The heavily favored Dutch team, featuring the past two Olympic champions, nearly brought back Kiesenhofer on the final circuits at Fuji International Speedway. But the time difference proved too much and they were left racing for silver and bronze.

Annemiek van Vleuten bounced back from an early crash to escape a reduced pack in the closing kilometers to salvage a silver for the Netherlands. Elisa Longo Borghini of Italy won a sprint for the bronze medal.

The U.S. women's gymnastics team's bid for a third straight Olympic title is off to a rocky start.

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The four-woman group led by Olympic champion Simone Biles finished second to Russia during qualifying. That's the first time the Americans have failed to lead at the end of any major event in more than a decade.

Biles topped the all-round with a total of 57.731 points but lacked her usual precision. The 24-year-old made significant mistakes on three events. Russia's team score of 171.629 was more than a full point ahead of the U.S., though both teams will start from scratch in the finals.

MEDAL ALERT

A contingent led by An San has captured South Korea's ninth straight women's archery team gold medal at the Tokyo Games.

The country hasn't lost since the women's team event was added to the Olympic program at the 1988 Seoul Games.

An is fresh off a win in the Olympic debut of the mixed team competition. She combined with Kang Chae Young and Jang Minhee to beat the Russian Olympic Committee by a final score of 6-0 in tricky wind conditions at Yumenoshima Park Archery Field.

Jang secured the win with a "9" on her final arrow. The Russian Olympic Committee was represented by Svetlana Gomboeva, Elena Osipova and Ksenia Perova. Gomboeva suffered a scare in the ranking round Friday, when she collapsed due to the extreme heat.

The bronze medal went to Germany after a 5-1 win over Belarus.

Iranian refugee Kimia Alizadeh has fallen short in her bid for a historic taekwondo gold medal, losing in the semifinals after three consecutive stirring victories in the women's 57-kilogram division.

Alizadeh lost 10-3 to Russian Tatiana Minina, endangering Alizadeh's bid to win the Refugee Olympic Team's first-ever medal. Alizadeh still could win bronze in the evening session at the Makuhari Messe convention center.

Alizadeh also won bronze as a teenager in Rio de Janeiro, claiming the first Olympic medal for an Iranian woman. She defected from Iran to Germany early last year, citing institutional sexism and disappointment at being used as a propaganda tool.

Alizadeh seemed to be on a charmed run in Tokyo: She beat fellow Iranian Nahid Kiyani Chandeh in her opening bout before shocking Britain's two-time Olympic champion, Jade Jones. Alizadeh knocked off China's Zhou Lijun to reach her first Olympic semifinal, but she fought tentatively and struggled to score on Minina, a three-time European champion.

Spanish golfer Jon Rahm has tested positive for COVID-19 for the second time in two months and been knocked out of the Olympics only a few hours after American golfer Bryson DeChambeau met the same fate.

The back-to-back coronavirus shockers came on the second full day of action in Tokyo and put a damper on the golf tournament. The sport is scheduled to begin Thursday and will be without the last two U.S. Open champions.

DeChambeau won in 2020 at Winged Foot. Rahm took the title last month at Torrey Pines in a comeback of sorts. He was only two weeks removed from building a six-shot lead after the third round of the Memorial only to be told he had tested positive for COVID-19 and had to withdraw.

A volunteer has collapsed during the medal ceremony at Asaka Shooting Range at the Tokyo Olympics. The woman went down shortly after the Star Spangled Banner played for 10-meter air rifle gold medalist William Shaner. He and the other medalists were posing for pictures.

The Olympic music kept playing as staff and medical personnel raced to the woman's side. One volunteer waved papers to cool her off and she was placed on a stretcher after a few minutes.

Paramedics arrived at the venue's medical center with a stretcher, but left after a few minutes as work-

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ers inside turned the woman on her side and talked to her.

Intense heat and humidity have taken a toll already during the Tokyo Olympics, particularly at outside venues. The Asaka Shooting Range is air conditioned, but still muggy inside.

With tropical weather forecast to approach Tokyo within days, Olympics organizers say they're talking with individual sports about changing event programs.

Tokyo Olympics sports director Mikako Kotani says they're "closely discussing" issues around the severe weather forecast.

Rowing already cleared its schedule for Monday and Tuesday, moving some events forward to the weekend and others back to Wednesday.

Kotani says in translated comments if other sports governing bodies "propose to us that we should change the schedule in advance then we will consider that option."

Kotani says organizers are getting minute-by-minute updates from their weather information center.

Athletes in some sports are currently dealing with high temperatures and humidity.

Tokyo Olympic organizers say there have been early transport problems getting athletes to their venues on time.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams acknowledged: "There are always teething problems and this is a very serious (one)."

Officials from the IOC and Tokyo's local organizing committee were asked Sunday about athletes taking a taxi to their training site because of a late bus.

Tokyo spokesman Masa Takaya they are "aware that transport is experiencing some issues including delays" and that buses should always be on standby to meet demand.

Takaya says: "We are trying to do everything we can."

MEDAL ALERT

William Shaner has won gold men's 10-meter air rifle, adding to the United States' second-day haul at the Tokyo Olympics.

The Americans were shut out on the first day, but won six medals in swimming on Day 2.

The 20-year-old Shaner qualified third and was steady in the finals at his first Olympics, finishing with an Olympic-record 251.6 points. Sheng Lihao, a Chinese 16-year-old with little international experience, took silver and countryman Yang Haoran earned bronze.

Shaner was one of the top youth shooters in the country and has already had a decorated career at the University of Kentucky, finishing second at the NCAA individual championships and team gold in consecutive seasons. He also was a first-team All-American as a freshman.

MEDAL ALERT

China has captured the first diving gold medal of the Tokyo Olympics.

Shi Tingmao and Wang Han romped to victory in the women's 3-meter synchronized springboard event with 326.40 points, starting what is expected to be another dominating performance by Chinese divers at these games. They have won 37 of 48 gold medals at the last seven Olympics.

Jennifer Abel and Melissa Citrini-Beaulieu of Canada took the silver at 300.78. The bronze went to Germany's Lena Hentschel and Tina Punzel with 284.97.

The Chinese women have not lost an Olympic diving event since 2004. This is their fifth straight victory in the synchronized springboard, their only loss coming when the event debuted at the 2000 Sydney Games.

Shi won her second straight gold in the synchro. She teamed with Wu Minxia to capture gold in Rio de Janeiro five years ago.

The United States duo of Alison Gibson and Krysta Palmer finished last in the eight-team field.

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The IOC is urging Olympic medalists to curb their hugs and keep masks on while on the podium. Medalists in some swimming events Sunday morning were hugging, sharing the podium top step for photographs and taking their masks off for a time.

Those are potential breaches of rules protecting the Olympics from COVID-19 infections.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams says "we feel for the athletes (but) there are things that unfortunately we have had to make stricter."

Adams adds "we would urge and ask everyone to obey the rules."

Tokyo organizers have reported 127 games-related COVID-19 cases, including 14 athletes, in Japan this month.

Olympic rowing faces more delays and schedule changes as weather forecasts predict high winds and strong gusts at the Sea Forest Waterway.

Officials say the expected weather could create unrowable conditions and have rescheduled several events to Wednesday or later. A similar forecast for Monday had forced the Games to move that day's events to Sunday.

Delayed events include the finals for the men's and women's four. They will now race on Wednesday. The semifinals for men's and women's single sculls have been moved from Wednesday to Thursday.

Naomi Osaka made quick work of her first match in nearly two months.

The Japanese superstar who lit the Olympic cauldron eased past 52nd-ranked Zheng Saisai of China 6-1, 6-4 in the first round of the tennis tournament at the Tokyo Games.

It was Osaka's first match since she withdrew from the French Open and sat out Wimbledon to take a mental health break while revealing she has dealt with depression.

Osaka's match was originally scheduled to open the tournament on Saturday but then was moved to Sunday before her starring role in Friday's opening ceremony.

MEDAL ALERT

Japan's Yuto Horigome has won the first-ever skateboarding competition at the Olympic Games, taking gold in men's street in the city where he learned to skate as a kid and where his sport is often frowned upon.

The first ever skateboarding silver went to Brazilian Kelvin Hoefler, who used to sleep with his board when he fell in love with skating as a kid.

American skater Jagger Eaton took bronze, the Arizonan adapting best among the Americans to the heat at the Ariake Urban Sports Park in Tokyo.

One of skateboarding's biggest stars, Nyjah Huston from the U.S., fell repeatedly trying to land tricks and placed 7th in the eight-man final.

Flying start: American swimmers do just fine without Phelps

By PAUL NEWBERRY AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Michael Phelps was up in his broadcast seat, a mere observer rather than the driving force of U.S. swimming.

No need to fret about what he left behind.

The Americans are off to a flying start at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre.

Displaying their trademark depth, the U.S. earned six of 12 medals Sunday on the first morning of finals, showing no signs of slipping even without the most decorated athlete in Olympic history.

From Chase Kalisz's gold in the 400-meter individual medley to Kieran Smith pulling out a bronze in his first major international competition, there was plenty of red, white and blue on the medal podium in the largely empty arena.

"We were in the warmup pool seeing people get a gold medal, get second, get second and third. It was

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crazy," said Abbey Weitzeil, who was part of the 4x100-meter freestyle relay team that claimed a bronze in the final event of the session. "It just fired us up and got us really excited."

Kalisz got things rolling with his victory in the grueling medley, making up for a second-place showing at the 2016 Rio Games. Jay Litherland rallied on the final leg to give the Americans a 1-2 finish that set the tone for the rest of the morning.

"I really kind of do feel like I let the U.S. down in '16 even though I swam a lot faster than here," Kalisz said. "The USA has a proud legacy of the 400 IM — (Tom) Dolan, Phelps, (Ryan) Lochte. This was my redemption story."

At 27, he knew it might be his last chance to win the race that includes all four strokes, especially after being forced to wait an extra year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It was tough last year with the Olympics kind of getting pulled out from under us and really having so much uncertainty whether it was going to happen," Kalisz said. "Five years of preparation for this one moment, and it's not like I was getting any younger."

Kalisz and Litherland caught a huge break when home-country favorite Daiya Seto shockingly failed to advance from the preliminaries, making a huge strategic error by attempting to conserve his energy for the final.

The Americans took advantage. Kalisz pulled away on the breaststroke, his best leg, and Litherland rallied on the closing freestyle to claim the second spot.

Turns out, the Americans were just getting started.

Smith, who emerged from obscurity with a breakthrough performance at the U.S. trials last month, proved he was no fluke by finishing third in the 400 free behind Tunisia's Ahmed Hafnaoui and Australia's Jack McLoughlin.

"I sprinted my butt off the last 50 like it was a 50 free," Smith said. "It was a really fun race."

Japan's Yui Ohashi took gold in the women's 400 IM — making up a bit for Seto's flop — but two Americans were right on her heels.

Olympic rookie Emma Weyant grabbed the silver, while 27-year-old Hali Flickinger took bronze for her first career medal.

"After we saw (Kalisz and Litherland win medals), we kind of looked at each other and said, 'It's our turn,'" Weyant said. "I think that really got our team going."

They weren't done, either.

While no one had any chance of beating the mighty Aussies in the 4x100 free relay — indeed, they set the first swimming world record of these games — a quartet anchored by Simone Manuel managed to hang on for third.

Katie Ledecky was among those pumped up by the American performance.

Before she swam for the first time in the evening preliminaries of the 400 free, Ledecky's Olympic Village roommates — Manuel, Flickinger and relay swimmers Allison Schmitt and Natalie Hinds — had already set quite a high bar.

"I can definitely feel the energy," said Ledecky, a five-time gold medalist and expected to be one of the biggest U.S. stars in Tokyo. "Our whole apartment has something like four medals already. We're just really excited and really enjoying the experience with each other."

For Manuel, one of the biggest stars at the 2016 Rio Games, it was an especially poignant medal after her struggle just to make the team. She was diagnosed with overtraining syndrome and forced to take an extended break not long before the trials.

Manuel only qualified in one individual event — the 50 free — but the American coaches decided to use her in the final spot of the relay.

It paid off with another medal.

"I'm always excited and pumped for relays," Manuel said. "It's an experience that is amazing. I don't take it lightly."

During Phelps' record-breaking career, which encompassed five Olympics, the Americans never won

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more than five medals on the first day of finals.

Without him, they did one better.

It looks like the team is still in good hands.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, July 26, the 207th day of 2021. There are 158 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 26, 1775, the Continental Congress established a Post Office and appointed Benjamin Franklin its Postmaster-General.

On this date:

In 1788, New York became the 11th state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1847, the western African country of Liberia, founded by freed American slaves, declared its independence.

In 1908, U.S. Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte ordered creation of a force of special agents that was a forerunner of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In 1945, the Potsdam Declaration warned Imperial Japan to unconditionally surrender, or face "prompt and utter destruction." Winston Churchill resigned as Britain's prime minister after his Conservatives were soundly defeated by the Labour Party; Clement Attlee succeeded him.

In 1953, Fidel Castro began his revolt against Fulgencio Batista (fool-HEN'-see-oh bah-TEES'-tah) with an unsuccessful attack on an army barracks in eastern Cuba. (Castro ousted Batista in 1959.)

In 1956, the Italian liner Andrea Doria sank off New England, some 11 hours after colliding with the Swedish liner Stockholm; at least 51 people died, from both vessels.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In 2002, the Republican-led House voted, 295-132, to create an enormous Homeland Security Department in the biggest government reorganization in decades.

In 2006, in a dramatic turnaround from her first murder trial, Andrea Yates was found not guilty by reason of insanity by a Houston jury in the bathtub drownings of her five children; she was committed to a state mental hospital.

In 2013, Ariel Castro, the man who'd imprisoned three women in his Cleveland home, subjecting them to a decade of rapes and beatings, pleaded guilty to 937 counts in a deal to avoid the death penalty. (Castro later committed suicide in prison.)

In 2016, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to be nominated for president by a major political party at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

In 2017, President Donald Trump announced on Twitter that he would not "accept or allow" transgender people to serve in the U.S. military. (After a legal battle, the Defense Department approved a new policy requiring most individuals to serve in their birth gender.)

Ten years ago: The White House threatened to veto emergency House legislation that aimed to avert a threatened national default. Democratic Rep. David Wu of Oregon announced he would resign amid the political fallout from an 18-year-old woman's allegations of an unwanted sexual encounter with him, charges that Wu denied.

Five years ago: A former employee stabbed 19 disabled people to death and injured two dozen others at a residential care facility in Japan. (Satoshi Uematsu, who said he was trying to help the world by killing people he thought were burdens, was sentenced to death.)

One year ago: A processional with the casket of the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Alabama, where Lewis and other civil rights marchers were beaten 55 years earlier. Authorities declared a riot in Portland, Oregon, after protesters breached a fence surrounding the city's federal courthouse; thousands had gathered for another night of protests over the killing of George Floyd and

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the presence of federal agents. Florida surpassed New York as the state with the second-most confirmed coronavirus cases in the U.S., behind only California. A day after roaring ashore as a hurricane, Hanna lashed the Texas Gulf Coast with high winds and drenching rains. Oscar winner Olivia de Havilland, best known as the kindly Melanie in "Gone With the Wind," died at her home in Paris at the age of 104.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Colbert is 90. Actor-singer Darlene Love is 80. Singer Brenton Wood is 80. Rock star Mick Jagger is 78. Movie director Peter Hyams is 78. Actor Helen Mirren is 76. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Queen) is 72. Actor Susan George is 71. Olympic gold medal figure skater Dorothy Hamill is 65. Actor Nana Visitor is 64. Actor Kevin Spacey is 62. Rock singer Gary Cherone is 60. Actor Sandra Bullock is 57. Actor-comedian Danny Woodburn is 57. Rock singer Jim Lindberg (Pennywise) is 56. Actor Jeremy Piven is 56. Rapper-reggae singer Wayne Wonder is 55. Actor Jason Statham (STAY'-thum) is 54. Actor Cress Williams is 51. TV host Chris Harrison is 50. Actor Kate Beckinsale is 48. Actor Gary Owen is 48. Rock musician Dan Konopka (OK Go) is 47. Gospel/Contemporary Christian singer Rebecca St. James is 44. Actor Eve Myles is 43. Actor Juliet Rylance is 42. Actor Monica Raymund is 35. Actor Caitlin Gerard is 33. Actor Francia Raisa is 33. Actor Bianca Santos is 31. Actor-singer Taylor Momsen is 28. Actor Elizabeth Gillies is 28.