



Djokovic adds record eighth Australian Open championship with five-set win over Thiem. **B11**

REDSKINS

Tight end Davis calls it a career after 14 seasons

By MATTHEW PARAS
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

There are many different ways an athlete can announce their retirement. They can give an emotional press conference, for example, or post on social media that they're calling it a career. Vernon Davis, though, had a

different idea.

The Redskins tight end announced he was stepping away from football Sunday in a television sketch with Rob Gronkowski.

On Fox's Super Bowl pregame show, Gronkowski, who retired in 2019 from the New England Patriots, said in the video he had brought a "retirement crew"

DAVIS BY THE NUMBERS	
Seasons	14
Games	198
Starts	179
Receptions	583
Yards	7,562
Touchdowns	63



down to Miami, "the land of retirement," for Super Bowl LIV, first introducing retired linebacker James Harrison.

Then, Gronkowski introduced Davis and the camera panned to him.

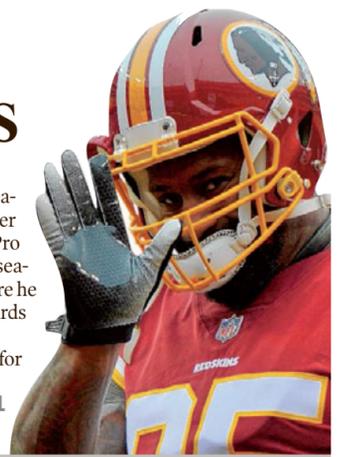
"That's right," Davis said. "I'm retired."

The 36-year-old was scheduled

to be a free agent this offseason, but decided to retire after 14 seasons. The two-time Pro Bowler spent the last four seasons with Washington, where he caught 122 passes for 1,721 yards for eight touchdowns.

Davis was best known for

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SUPER BOWL LIV | CHIEFS 31 - 49ERS 20

COMEBACK CHIEFS

MAHOMES LEADS 4TH-QUARTER RALLY TO GIVE KANSAS CITY TITLE

By BARRY WILNER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI GARDENS, FLA. | The never-say-die Chiefs did it again and are Super Bowl champions.

Patrick Mahomes threw for a pair of touchdowns in the game's final 6:13, helping the Kansas City Chiefs erase a 10-point deficit and beat the San Francisco 49ers 31-20 in Super Bowl 54.

The go-ahead score: A 5-yard touchdown pass to Damien Williams with 2:44 left. Williams is a former Miami Dolphins running back and returned to his former field — Hard Rock Stadium — to enjoy the most significant night of his career.

Williams finished off the title march with a touchdown run with 1:12 left, a 38-yarder around the left end to seal the outcome.

It's the first Super Bowl crown for Chiefs coach Andy Reid, who'll no longer wear the distinction of being the winningest coach in NFL history without a championship.

The Chiefs had a comeback flair throughout the playoffs, getting down 24-0 to Houston in the divisional round and then rallying from deficits of 10-0 and 17-7 to beat Tennessee in the AFC championship game.

They did it one more time, on football's biggest stage, and are Super Bowl champions for the second time. The Chiefs lost the first Super Bowl, then won Super Bowl 4 — some 50 years ago.

San Francisco fell just short of winning what would have been a record-tying sixth title. Only New England and Pittsburgh have six, and the 49ers were about six minutes away from joining their club.

Then they collapsed, giving up three touchdowns in about five minutes.

Mahomes finished 26 of 42 passing for 286 yards.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kansas City running back Damien Williams scores the game-winning touchdown in front of San Francisco cornerback Richard Sherman with 1:12 left in Super Bowl 54 on Sunday.

CAPITALS

Penguins edge Capitals in Super Bowl appetizer

By ADAM ZIELONKA
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The NHL knew what it was doing by scheduling one of its most popular rivalries to play on national TV the afternoon of the Super Bowl. For sports fans who tuned in while preparing their evening meals and snacks, the big game before the big game delivered some exciting hockey.

Both teams scored with less than three minutes to play, but the Pittsburgh Penguins held on for a 4-3 win over the Washington Capitals Sunday at Capital One Arena.

Clinging to a one-goal lead for much of the third period,

Pittsburgh made some breathing room when Brandon Tanev buried a wrister with 2:33 left to play. But Lars Eller came back just 15 seconds later to score and draw Washington within one again.

However, the Capitals didn't have enough left to tie it and force overtime, dropping the first meeting with their archrivals of the 2019-20 season.

Eller scored twice, Evgeny Kuznetsov added a goal and Ilya Samsonov made 29 saves for the Capitals (35-13-5, 75 points).

Samsonov had won his previous 11 decisions, but the streak was snapped Sunday with his first

» see **CAPITALS** | **B11**



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Capitals forward T.J. Oshie battles with Penguins defenseman Justin Schultz during the third period of Washington's 4-3 loss against division-rival Pittsburgh on Sunday.

Brain injuries take shine off NFL's week of glitter

Concussions in the National Football League were up 4% this past season.

The protector of the players, NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, called that increase "statistically insignificant" as he barely addressed the league's plague in his annual state-of-the-league remarks last week at the Super Bowl in Miami.

"Statistically insignificant" Sort of like what former Redskins coach Jay Gruden said about tight end Jordan Reed in August when Reid suffered his



THOM LOVERRO

seventh documented concussion.

"We're quite confident that Jordan will be fine," Gruden said.

Reed didn't see the field again in 2019. The "statistically insignificant" Redskins tight end will never be fine.

It seems like there is a hangover of sorts when it comes to thinking about brain damage in the league. It hurts to think about it because there still is no answer, no solution.

This was a week to celebrate

» see **LOVERRO** | **B11**

Djokovic 3 majors behind Federer after win in Australia

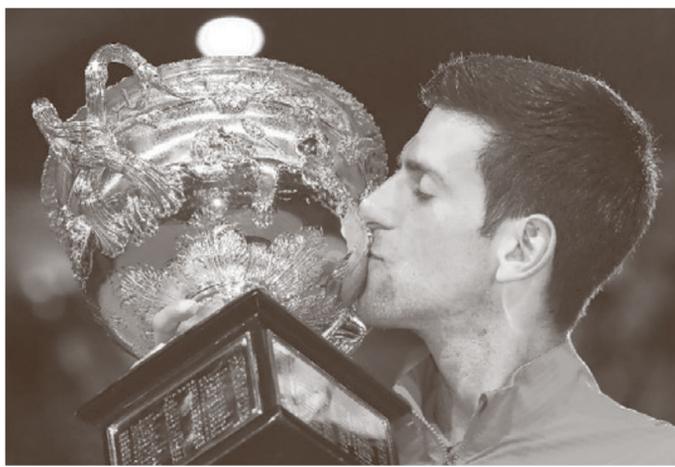
By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA As Novak Djokovic conducted yet another in a long string of interviews after earning his record eighth Australian Open championship, runner-up Dominic Thiem was sliding into the front passenger seat of a white tournament courtesy van.

Djokovic was toting his large silver winner's cup everywhere while explaining how he edged Thiem 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 for a 17th major title. Thiem, meanwhile, had just emerged from the locker room, his media obligations long finished.

Thiem was toting a much simpler runner-up tray in his left hand. Just another thing to lug home, along with his rackets, a mesh bag filled with shoes and plastic sleeve stuffed with sweaty clothes.

It is an all-too-familiar scene nowadays when a Grand Slam tournament wraps up: a member of the Big Three holding court and holding the



Novak Djokovic came back to edge Dominic Thiem, 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, on Sunday for his eighth Australian Open title and 17th Grand Slam championship.

Men's Grand Slam singles titles

Roger Federer, Switzerland.....	20
Rafael Nadal, Spain.....	19
Novak Djokovic, Serbia.....	17
Pete Sampras, United States.....	14
Roy Emerson, Australia.....	12
Bjorn Borg, Sweden.....	11
Rod Laver, Australia.....	11
Bill Tilden, United States.....	10

is Nole is gaining on them. Djokovic has won five of the past seven major tournaments, a run that dates to Wimbledon in 2018.

So as the tour departs from Australia, Federer leads the men's list with 20 Slam trophies, one ahead of Nadal and, rather suddenly, just three more than Djokovic.

"Obviously, at this stage of my career, Grand Slams are the ones I value the most. They are the ones I prioritize," said Djokovic, who defeated Federer in the final at Wimbledon last year and the semifinals at the Australian Open this week. He added: "There's a lot of history on the line."

Everyone can decide on their own what who the greatest in tennis history

is. Or not — and just appreciate all three of these successful athletes.

Consider this: Federer, Nadal and Djokovic have won the last 13 Grand Slam titles in a row. (Compare that with the women's game, where 11 women have divvied up that many majors in that same span; the most recent first-time champ was 21-year-old American Sofia Kenin in Melbourne.)

"These guys," said Thiem, who's now 0-3 in major finals, all against Djokovic or Nadal, "brought tennis to a complete new level."

Djokovic is the youngest member of the trio, still just 32, while Nadal is 33, Federer 38.

For all of their success — no one has won the French Open more than Nadal, with 12; no one has won Wimbledon more than Federer, with eight; no one has won the Australian Open more than Djokovic — here's one tidbit that's fascinating: Each man has one major site where he has been limited to one title.

For Nadal, it's Melbourne Park. For Federer and Djokovic, it's Roland Garros.

Guess what the next stop is on the Grand Slam calendar?

NBA
Harden snaps slump with 40 to lead Rockets over Pelicans

Houston coach Mike D'Antoni has been around James Harden long enough to know that he'd eventually snap out of his shooting slump.

But he admitted on Sunday that he was quite relieved to see it happen sooner rather than later.

"I can go home and go to bed now," D'Antoni said. "Before I wouldn't be sleeping much."

Harden had 40 points and came an assist shy of a triple-double to lead the Rockets to a 117-109 win at home over the New Orleans Pelicans.

Rookie sensation Zion Williamson had 21 points and 10 rebounds for the Pelicans, whose three-game winning streak was snapped.

Harden had his second straight game with 30 or more points after failing to score 30 in his previous four games as he worked through a shooting slump.

NCAA BASKETBALL
Hoyas rally from 17 down, top St. John's in final seconds

Omer Yurtseven's layup with 10.2 seconds completed a rally from a 17-point second-half deficit and Georgetown beat St. John's 73-72 in New York City on Sunday.

Yurtseven put in a short left-handed hook to get the Hoyas within a point with 50 seconds remaining before the Red Storm's Rasheem Dunn failed to hit the rim on a drive and tip, resulting in a shot-clock violation. After a timeout, Jagan Mosely got the ball inside to Yurtseven for the layup.

Dunn took the inbound and raced down the side but lost control of the ball and the Hoyas ran out the clock. Dunn's turnover was the 12th for the Red Storm after none in the first half.

Javon Blair made five 3-pointers and led Georgetown (13-9, 3-6 Big East) with a career-high 23 points.

From wire dispatches and staff reports.

PRO CALENDAR

HOME GAMES SHADED	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
	Golden State Warriors 7 p.m. NBCW AM 1500		
		Los Angeles Kings 7 p.m. NBCW FM 106.7	

LOVERRO

From page B12

football — highlights and talk of greatness, arguments and lists of the best the game has ever seen — the greatest Super Bowl moments; ranking all Super Bowl quarterbacks; the all-time Super Bowl team, the greatest Super Bowl commercials.

Why not an all-time brain-damaged Super Bowl team?

Tasteless? If Tony Dorsett is having a bad day — he suffers both short-term and long-term memory loss — he won't remember any highlights they might have shown last week on any broadcasts of his touchdown in Super Bowl 13.

Mean? Dave Herman paved the way at guard for fullback Matt Snell in the New York Jets 16-7 upset win over the Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl 3. He doesn't remember large chunks of the game.

biggest trophy; a younger man leaving the scene to plenty of praise but not the triumph he wanted. And, increasingly, the guy with the hardware that's the envy of all is Djokovic, more often

than it is either of his rivals, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Which, of course, is the point right now. Roger and Rafa need to watch out, because the guy whose nickname

WIZARDS

Wizards, 7-7 in last 14, suddenly in mix for No. 8 seed

By **MATTHEW PARAS**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

When the drama of the last few days had finally ebbed, Bradley Beal insisted he wasn't bitter. Beal, a two-time All-Star who is scoring at a career-high rate on a losing team, was left off the All-Star reserves announced last week.

Sure, he'd called the omission "disrespectful" in a postgame television interview the night he found out. But the Wizards star said he had moved on.

Being overlooked for an individual honor doesn't define him as a player, he said.

Nor did it fuel the 34 points he put up against the Charlotte Hornets Thursday, or the 34 points he posted in a 113-107 win Saturday over the Brooklyn Nets.

Still, he couldn't help throwing one last jab at the league Saturday.

"I just wish we would have had the same mindset three or four years ago when we were the fourth seed," Beal said, "and I got snubbed then."

"But you know, to each his own."

That "mindset," of course, is a reference to the thought that winning matters over personal stats, and that the league's coaches chose not to vote for Beal because his team was well below .500.

Over it or not, leaving Beal off the

team caused a stir. Teammate Isaiah Thomas blasted the "political" process. Beal's agent put out a scathing statement, while the guard's fiancée went on the Wizards' postgame radio show and derided the "popularity contest."

Speaking to reporters after the win over the Nets, Beal said he appreciated the support. He added he wasn't one to sulk.

"Everybody's been putting up crazy numbers lately," Beal said. "One thing I won't do is disrespect anybody that made it. Everybody that made it is more than deserving of it."

Across the league, those who felt they got a raw deal from the All-Star Game have responded with some of their best games of the season. A day before losing to Washington, Nets star Kyrie Irving hung 54 points on the Bulls. Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns scored 32 in a loss to the Clippers. Phoenix's Devin Booker shot 50% while scoring 27.

Then, there's Beal. Even before his perceived snub, he was on a tear. Saturday's win marked the sixth straight outing in which the 26-year-old scored at least 30 points. The most significant shift in Beal's game is that he is now consistently attacking the rim — and getting the foul calls that come with it. In 10 games this season, Beal has made

at least 10 free throws. Four of those have come in the last four games.

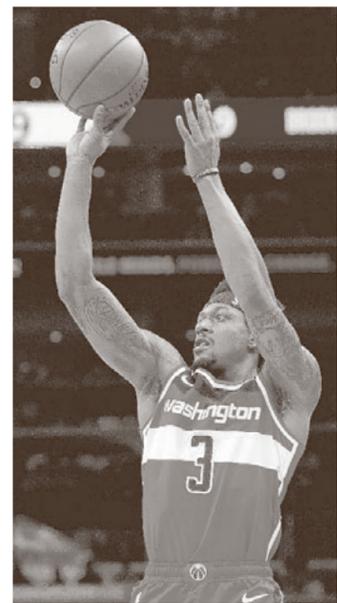
Coach Scott Brooks said the uptick has coincided with the return of injured players like Davis Bertans. Bertans is a deadly shooter from beyond the arc, forcing defenders outside the paint when the Wizards space the floor. Center Thomas Bryant's return, too, gives the Wizards a respectable roll man who draws the attention opposing defenses in the pick-and-roll.

Brooks credited Beal for better recognizing when to be aggressive.

"That's what he has to continue to do," Brooks said. "He's growing as a player as well. I think his ability to see things quicker and his ball-handling is much improved over the last four years. His decision making, his playmaking."

The Wizards are now 7-7 in 14 games. While they were blown out on the road last week, they responded with two quality wins — all while climbing in the standings. Somehow, even at 17-31, Washington is only 3½ games behind the eight-seed in the East.

"Once you're 40 plus games in, you know what coach wants and know how we want to play in our system and our roles and we're just getting better every day," Beal said. "We're just putting in the work and it's showing up on the floor."



"Everybody's been putting up crazy numbers lately," Wizards guard Bradley Beal said of not making the All-Star team. "One thing I won't do is disrespect anybody that made it. Everybody that made it is more than deserving of it."

REDSKINS

From page B12

his career with the San Francisco 49ers, the franchise who drafted him sixth overall in 2006. After spending eight-plus seasons with the 49ers, Davis was traded midseason in 2015 to the Denver Broncos and went on to win the Super Bowl. He joined the Redskins the following year, and played an important role alongside

Jordan Reed.

Last year, Davis appeared in only four games due to a concussion he suffered in September. It was the seven such injury in his career.

As a player, Davis helped transition an era in which the tight end became a featured receiver for offenses. With his dynamic athleticism, Davis would split out wide and help create mismatches. His career-high 13 touchdowns in 2009 led the league.

Now that he's retired, Davis will be able to pursue a long list of interests. Even when he was with the Redskins, the tight end invested in real estate and showed an interest in acting. He appeared in the 2019 movie "Hell on the Border," a film that depicts a slave-turned-U.S. Marshal west of the Mississippi in the late 1800s.

Davis' affection for acting could help explain why he chose to announce his retirement in a 45-second sketch on

television.

In the clip — dubbed "The Golden Gronks" — the trio is seen acting as if they're in an '80s sitcom, set to The Golden Girls' theme of "Thank you for being a friend."

Davis grew up in the District and played college ball at the University of Maryland. In the NFL, he finished sixth among tight ends all-time with 63 touchdowns. He had 583 catches (ninth all-time for his position) for 7,562 yards.

CAPITALS

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loss since Nov. 15.

The Penguins (33-14-5, 71 points) are now breathing down Washington's necks for the lead in the Metropolitan Division. They'll meet again in Washington in three weeks, then play twice in Pittsburgh during March.

Capitals coach Todd Reirden's postgame message was not one of panic. He

insisted there was plenty his team would learn from the matinee and improve going forward.

"I knew for sure we were going to take something from this afternoon's game and that'll be the case," Reirden said. "We'll review that as a staff and continue to get better. Now we've got a little bit of something to draw upon in terms of games that are at that type of level and heading into these last 30 games."

To that effect, Reirden said he thought Samsonov's first time facing Pittsburgh

went "fine" and would prepare him for similar situations in the future.

"I think a couple bounces don't go his way so I'd probably like that back, but we'll learn something about him and how he can be a little bit more solid in his next opportunity of a game of this magnitude," he said. "That's what I felt about a lot of our players. We didn't have our full team playing at that level until the third period and it was a little too late."

The Capitals have talked about the need to stay out of the box, but they

continue to take piles of minor penalties, a category in which they've led the NHL for much of the year. Eight more Sunday brought them to 204 this season.

On the flip side, the Capitals are exposed to so many power plays that their penalty kill has remained razor-sharp. Washington killed all six of Pittsburgh's power plays and own the second-best PK percentage in the NHL.

The Capitals stay at home for three more games, starting Tuesday against the Los Angeles Kings.

Remembering the thrills of so many Super Bowls past is great fun. But how can we pretend, knowing what we now know, that those moments of glory come without cost?

Let's not forget those who have paid — and continue to pay — the game's unforgiving price. If the NFL and its fans are going to reminisce, take time to remember the all-time brain-damaged Super Bowl team:

Quarterback: The Snake, Hall of Famer Ken Stabler of the Oakland Raiders. Stabler led the Raiders to a 32-14 win in Super Bowl 11. After Stabler died of colon cancer in 2016, researchers studied his brain and found severe damage throughout.

Running back: Dorsett, who ran for 66 yards on 15 carries and a touchdown in the Cowboys' 27-10 victory over the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl 12. He said in 2013 he was diagnosed with CTE (chronic traumatic encephalopathy). Joined in the backfield by Jamal Anderson, who gained

96 yards on 18 carries in the Atlanta Falcons 34-19 loss to the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl 33. Anderson was one of the plaintiffs in the concussion lawsuit filed against the league. He has been arrested several times since retiring on drugs and DUI charges.

Wide receiver: Dwight Clark, who made "The Catch" in the 1981 NFC title game against the Dallas Cowboys that led the San Francisco 49ers to their first championship in Super Bowl 16, one of two Clark played in. He died of ALS in 2018 and said he believed football may have caused his disease. Mark Duper played for the Miami Dolphins in Super Bowl 19, a 38-16 loss to the 49ers. He said he suffered from memory loss and mood swings and was diagnosed with CTE in 2013.

Tight end: John Mackey, the Hall of Famer who caught a 75-yard touchdown pass to lead the Baltimore Colts to a 16-13 victory over the Cowboys in Super Bowl 5. He would suffer from

dementia after he retired and died in 2011 at the age of 69. A study of his brain showed he had CTE damage. Mackey's case led to the league and the NFL Players Association creating the "88" plan, providing money and nursing home care for former players.

The list goes on and on and on. Justin Strzelczyk was a tackle on the Pittsburgh Steelers 1995 AFC championship squad that lost 27-17 to the Cowboys in Super Bowl 30. He had numerous incidents involving police after his playing career and died in a car crash at the age of 34 in 2006. An autopsy revealed Strzelczyk had CTE.

John Wilbur was a guard on the Redskins offensive line that lost 14-7 to the Dolphins in Super Bowl 7. He died in 2013 and post-mortem research showed he had CTE.

Junior Seau was a 12-time Pro Bowl linebacker and Hall of Famer who was part of the San Diego Chargers team that lost 49-26 to the San Francisco

49ers in Super Bowl 29. He committed suicide with a gunshot to the chest. An examination of his brain showed he suffered from CTE.

Some of these players suffered their brain damage at a time when the NFL regular season was 14 games. Others played under the current 16-game schedule. Now there is talk of expanding the season to 17 games.

"Safety has been at the forefront and number one priority of our players," Goodell said last week in Miami. "We believe we have made the game safer, and we believe we can reconstruct the schedule that doesn't impact the future of the game."

And if there are a few more concussions? Statistically insignificant.

More candidates for future all-time, brain-damaged Super Bowl teams.

• *Hear Thom Loverro on 106.7 The Fan Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings and on the Kevin Sheehan podcast Tuesdays and Thursdays.*



CAPITALS

Ovechkin honored for 700-goal milestone; scores No. 701



By ADAM ZIELONKA
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Washington Capitals celebrated Alex Ovechkin reaching 700 career goals in a ceremony before Tuesday's game against the Winnipeg Jets, which included a video montage of Wayne Gretzky and the other living members of the 700 goals club congratulating the Russian.

Ovechkin was just the eighth player to score 700 NHL goals, and trails only Gretzky, Gordie Howe, Jaromir Jagr, Brett Hull,

Marcel Dionne, Phil Esposito and Mike Gartner. He hit the milestone Saturday with a goal on the road against the New Jersey Devils.

"Congratulations on joining the 700 club," Gretzky said. "You've had an outstanding career. You've scored 700 goals, you've won a Stanley Cup and you've meant a lot to the game of hockey not only in Washington but throughout North America and in Russia, of course. I'll be there saying the same thing when you get to 800. Good luck."

The first part of the video tribute played at Capital One Arena began with commentators calling Ovechkin the greatest goal scorer of all time, as replays were shown of his 100th goal, 200th and more.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly presented Ovechkin with a Tiffany crystal. Capitals majority owner Ted Leonsis and team president Dick Patrick gifted Ovechkin a commemorative Hublot watch with a Russian flag-colored wristband and the number 700 at the top of the clock face.

Ovechkin was joined on the ice by his wife Nastya Shubskaya and their 1-year-old son, Sergei. The captain held his son in his arms as he watched NHL legends, as well as Howe's son Mark, take turns congratulating him.

"If I would be Wayne Gretzky I would be shaking right now because I think you're gonna beat him," Jagr said.

Ovechkin got one step closer to doing so Tuesday. Almost two minutes into the game, he parked in front of Winnipeg's net and scored No. 701.

Capitals forward Alex Ovechkin and his son, Sergei, watch the video honoring him for scoring his 700th career goal during a pregame ceremony Tuesday. Full coverage, washingtontimes.com/sports.

Altuve's sin indefensible in church of public opinion

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA.

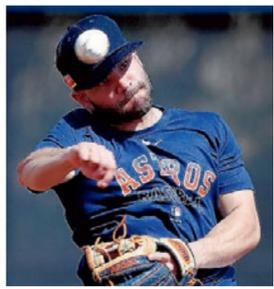
Jose Altuve's tattoo problem isn't the one he has on his neck of the name of his daughter, "Melanie." It's the one that he will carry with him for the rest of his playing career and beyond — the one that says "Astros Cheating Scandal."

Altuve may both be the saddest and sleaziest figure in his team's crime against baseball. He has been the face of the Houston club — its bright, shining hero who was once told to go home after, at the age of 16, he attended an Astros tryout camp in Venezuela because he was too small, only to return and be signed as a free agent for \$15,000.

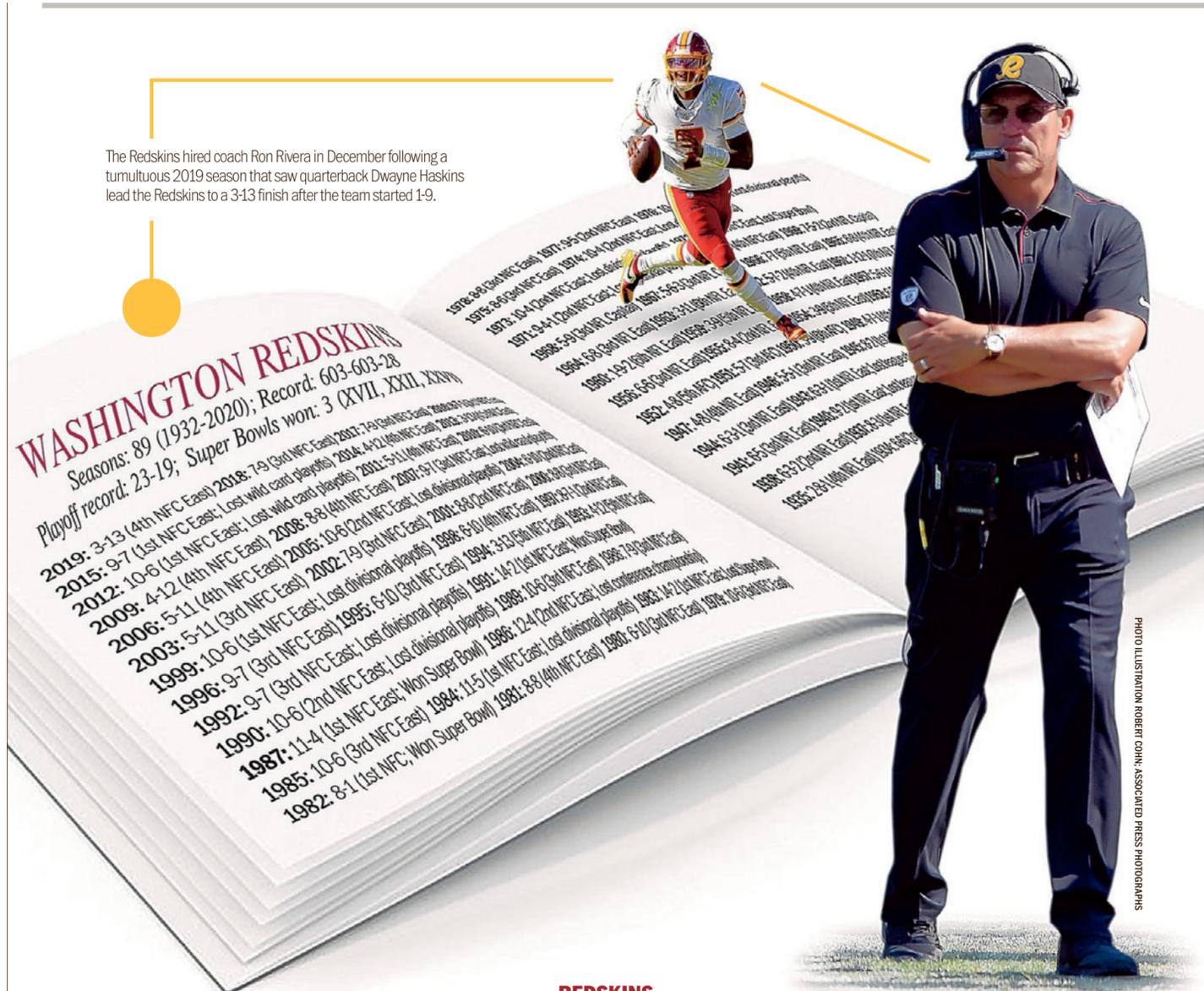
Since then, he has had a chip on his shoulder — not a tattoo — to prove everyone wrong. He moved through the Astros' minor league system over four years, making his major league debut in July 2011.

The 5-foot-6 second baseman has been named to six All-Star teams. He won the 2017

» see **LOVERRO** | **B13**



The Astros' Jose Altuve is a six-time All-Star and was an AL MVP, but the cheating scandal has damaged his reputation.



The Redskins hired coach Ron Rivera in December following a tumultuous 2019 season that saw quarterback Dwayne Haskins lead the Redskins to a 3-13 finish after the team started 1-9.

WASHINGTON REDSKINS
Seasons: 89 (1932-2020); Record: 603-603-28
Playoff record: 23-19; Super Bowls won: 3 (XVII, XXII, XXVII)

2019: 3-13 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2018: 7-9 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2017: 7-9 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2016: 4-12 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2015: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2014: 4-12 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2013: 5-11 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2012: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2011: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2010: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2009: 4-12 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2008: 8-8 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2007: 7-9 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2006: 5-11 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2005: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2004: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2003: 5-11 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2002: 7-9 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2001: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
2000: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1999: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1998: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1997: 9-7 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1996: 9-7 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1995: 6-10 (3rd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1994: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1993: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1992: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1991: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1990: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1989: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1988: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1987: 11-4 (1st NFC East); Won Super Bowl
1986: 12-4 (2nd NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1985: 10-6 (1st NFC East); Won Super Bowl
1984: 11-5 (1st NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1983: 8-8 (4th NFC East); Lost wild card playoff
1982: 8-1 (1st NFC East); Won Super Bowl

REDSKINS

'SAME PAGE'

Redskins personnel chief says front office, coaching staff unified under Rivera

By MATTHEW PARAS
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

INDIANAPOLIS | Kyle Smith did not know Ron Rivera before the coach took the Redskins job. Sure, Rivera worked for Smith's dad, A.J. Smith, in San Diego, when Rivera was the defensive coordinator and A.J. Smith was

the general manager. But Smith wasn't in the NFL yet.

So when the two met at Dan Snyder's house last month, shortly after Rivera was hired, they bonded over football.

Smith learned about Rivera's process of building a team and the direction the coach envisioned Washington taking. Rivera listened

as Smith detailed how the Redskins had gone about the last few drafts, breaking down the types of players they had been looking for.

Since then, Smith was promoted from director of college scouting to vice president of player personnel, and he and Rivera have been closely attached. Speaking to reporters Tuesday

at the NFL scouting combine, Smith said the Redskins have identified their core players and needs for the coming months ahead. And while light on specifics at times, the 35-year-old stressed Washington would be on "the same page."

» see **REDSKINS** | **B13**

OLYMPICS

IOC official: Tokyo Games' cancellation possible due to viral outbreak

By STEPHEN WADE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO | A senior member of the International Olympic Committee said Tuesday that if it proves too dangerous to hold the Olympics in Tokyo this summer because of the coronavirus outbreak, organizers are more likely to cancel it altogether than to postpone or move it.

Dick Pound, a former Canadian swimming champion who has been on the IOC since 1978, making him its longest-serving member, estimated there is a three-month window — perhaps a two-month one — to decide the fate of the Tokyo Olympics, meaning a decision could be put off until late May.

"In and around that time, I'd say folks are going to have to ask:



Olympics official Dick Pound said there's a three-month window to decide the fate of the summer Tokyo Games amid the viral outbreak.

"Is this under sufficient control that we can be confident about going to Tokyo or not?" he said in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press.

As the games draw near, he said, "a lot of things have to start happening. You've got to start ramping up your security, your food, the Olympic Village, the hotels. The media folks will be in there building their studios."

If the IOC decides the games cannot go forward as scheduled in Tokyo, "you're probably looking at a cancellation," he said.

The viral outbreak that began in China two months ago has infected more than 80,000 people globally and killed over 2,700, the vast majority of them in China. But the virus has gained a

» see **OLYMPICS** | **B13**

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Verlander makes spring debut Thursday against Scherzer

WEST PALM BEACH, FLA. | Houston ace Justin Verlander is slated to make his 2020 spring training debut on Thursday, when former teammate Max Scherzer is scheduled to be on the mound for World Series champion Washington.

The pair were teammates on the Detroit Tigers from 2010-14 and have combined for five Cy Young Awards.



"It wasn't done intentionally. That is a pretty good match-up, though," new Astros manager Dusty Baker said. "I'm sure you guys will hype it up."

Verlander won his second Cy Young last season, going 21-6 with a 2.52 ERA. His 225 wins are the most among active players. Zack Greinke, second among active pitchers with 205 wins, is to make his first spring training appearances the following day.

Scherzer, a three-time Cy Young winner, won the World Series opener last October and did not get a decision in Game 7. Verlander lost Games 2 and 6. Scherzer opened spring training with two scoreless innings against Houston on Saturday.

Yankees pitcher Severino needs elbow surgery, out for year

DUNEDIN, FLA. | New York Yankees pitcher Luis Severino needs reconstructive elbow surgery and will miss the 2020 season, general manager Brian Cashman said Tuesday.

The two-time All-Star righty, who turned 26 last week, was sidelined until the final weeks of the regular season last year. Yankees manager Aaron Boone said last week that Severino has been feeling on and off discomfort since October.

Severino went 19-8 with a 3.39 ERA in 2018, signed a \$40 million, four-year contract and was scratched from his first scheduled spring training appearance on March 5 because of rotator cuff inflammation in his right shoulder.

The Yankees said April 9 he had strained his latissimus dorsi muscle. He did not make a minor league injury rehabilitation appearance until Sept. 1 and did not make his first appearance for the Yankees until Sept. 17.

Severino was 1-1 with a 1.50 ERA over 12 innings in three regular-season starts for New York, then was 0-1 with a 2.16 ERA over 8 1/3 innings in a pair of postseason outings.

REDSKINS

From page B14

"We're going to have the meetings, let the process unfold," Smith said. "We believe in our process. We're going to talk through everything."

Of course, open communication is a problem that has dogged the Redskins in the past. Former team president Bruce Allen often preached how collaborative Washington was in his rare meetings with reporters, but former coach Jay Gruden noted after the 2018 season how there was a disconnect between the front office and coaching staff. "There's probably a lot of things that need to change," Gruden said.

Who knows if Smith's comments were just lip service. For example, the executive's comments on Dwayne Haskins differed from the messages Rivera and executive Doug Williams had delivered in recent weeks.

Smith said the Redskins were "all excited about Dwayne," a departure from Williams' observation that the new coaching staff wasn't "married" to Haskins.

Asked about Haskins' work ethic, Smith again backed the quarterback.

"He's ready to do everything that he possibly can," Smith said. "The other day, he's telling me he's bringing the guys down to Florida to throw with him and do the things that he can do. He's doing all the extra stuff that we expect of him, and he's got a bright future."

Smith, though, didn't dismiss the possibility of the Redskins drafting a quarterback with the No. 2 pick — only saying Washington was still in the "evaluation process" of every prospect. The Redskins will reportedly meet with Alabama quarterback Tua Tagovailoa this week for an interview.

Meeting with Tagovailoa could be a matter of due diligence, especially if Washington looks to trade the pick to a quarterback-needy team. Smith's remark can also be viewed as the executive not wanting to tip Washington's plans, no matter how wild the scenario.

Any decision made, Smith said, will be a group effort. As the team's vice president of player personnel, Smith holds similar duties to a general manager — the main difference being the 35-year-old doesn't navigate the salary cap in the ways other general managers do.

In his new role, Smith now holds more influence in the pro personnel department. Smith said he oversaw meetings with his staff about the team's free agents, asking questions about the value of each player.

But Smith remains involved heavily

Receiver prospect welcomes Haskins reunion

By MATTHEW PARAS

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

INDIANAPOLIS | Even more than a month later, K.J. Hill still grinned over Dwayne Haskins' tweet. When Hill was a standout at the Senior Bowl last month, the Redskins quarterback shared a clip of his former college teammate's stunning one-handed catch on Twitter with the message, "need em."

Hill appreciated the gesture. "At least I know somebody wants me in the draft," Hill said with a laugh.

Haskins likely isn't alone in that thought. In a deep wide receiver class, Hill's speed and versatility make him one of the more intriguing prospects in this year's draft. After his strong performance at the Senior Bowl, Hill now has a chance to further impress teams at the league's scouting combine.

The Redskins, too, are doing their homework.

Hill said he has met with Washington twice already — once last month and most recently at the combine. The 22-year-old met with wide receivers coach Jim Holster and assistant wide receivers coach Drew Terrell, discussing Xs and Os and past teammates like Haskins and wideout Terry McLaurin.

Hill said a reunion with Haskins would "be a great thing."

"Dwayne is one of my best friends," Hill said. "We did some things together on the field that we could live on forever, that we remember. But definitely playing with Dwayne again would be a great thing."

"The things we did, the records we broke, I feel like we can do the same thing, just at a different level."

At Ohio State, Haskins and Hill developed a solid connection. The receiver



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Receiver K.J. Hill says playing again with former Ohio State teammate and Redskins quarterback Dwayne Haskins "would be a great thing."

had a career-high 885 yards on 70 catches in 2018 when Haskins was at quarterback. The next year, Hill's touchdown total jumped from six to 10, but his overall receiving yardage (636) fell. The Buckeyes lined up Hill primarily in the slot, though split him out wide on occasion.

Hill has been projected as a Day 2 prospect, which could help the Redskins if they are interested in drafting him. Washington lacks a second-round pick after moving up in last year's draft to take Montez Sweat in the first round. The Redskins, though, do have the 66th overall pick early in the third, a range in which Hill has been slated.

Last year, the Redskins found their most productive rookie in the third round in another Ohio State receiver, McLaurin. The 24-year-old finished the year with 919 yards, just eight yards short of breaking Washington's all-time rookie receiving record set by Gary Clark.

McLaurin emerged as a clear-cut

starter, but wasn't seen as such when he was at the combine. The NFL Network's draft profile for McLaurin projected him as a "good backup who could become a starter."

Hill said he has been leaning on McLaurin for advice. The two chatted often during McLaurin's rookie season, with McLaurin sharing his experiences during his rookie season. Hill and McLaurin also talked Monday as the latter shared tips on what Hill can expect at the combine, Hill said.

Like McLaurin, Hill's scouting profile pegs him as a "good backup who could become a starter." Hill said he's motivated by McLaurin's success, as well as other former Ohio State stars like Parris Campbell and Michael Thomas.

Hill is one of three Ohio State wideouts at this year's combine.

"It's just our turn to step in," Hill said, "and put on for our school."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vice president of player personnel Kyle Smith said the Redskins were "excited" about Dwayne Haskins, but haven't dismissed drafting Tua Tagovailoa with the second pick.

in the draft. On Tuesday, he was asked about Chase Young — the consensus player to be taken second overall — and the possibility of trading back.

Both scenarios, Smith said, would be discussed, so that on draft night, Washington will be prepared.

"I've seen him live, I've seen him in person, watched his tape, talked to the coaches, all the deal," Smith said of Young. "I've done the whole background stuff and have heard great things about him. They talk highly of him there. But he is obviously one of a lot of players that are — it's a good draft now."

"There's a lot of really good players that will be in consideration."

LOVERRO

From page B14

American League Most Valuable Player Award and was named MVP of the 2019 American League Championship Series. He was voted Sports Illustrated's Co-Person of the Year, along with fellow Houston icon J.J. Watt, in part for their work to help relief efforts after the city was hit hard by Hurricane Harvey. He was named Associated Press Player of the Year and Sporting News Player of the Year in 2017.

He capped off his 2017 season by winning the prestigious Hank Aaron award for the American League's best hitter. The award is presented every World Series by the greatest living ballplayer, Aaron himself.

"I wouldn't pay to go see many guys play," Aaron said when he stood with Altuve to give him the award. "But I would pay to go see him."

Now Aaron wants him banned from baseball. When asked on a "Today" show interview recently if Aaron thought the punishments handed down by commissioner Rob Manfred in the cheating scandal — none against the players who were granted immunity by Manfred for their cooperation in the investigation — were enough, he replied, "No, I don't. I think whoever did that should be out of baseball for the rest of their life."

Boom. It has all come crashing down for the Astros hero. The greatest living player whose name is on an award given to Altuve, which presumably hangs in his home somewhere, wants him banned

from baseball.

Perhaps the same trophy display holds the MVP award Altuve won in 2017.

"I mean, these guys were cheating for three years," Dodgers star and 2019 National League MVP Cody Bellinger told reporters. "I think what people don't realize is that Altuve stole the MVP from (Yankees outfielder Aaron) Judge in 2017. Everyone knows they stole the ring from us."

Boom. The NL MVP called Altuve a fraud and a thief.

Altuve, 29, has been the focus of attention of much of the post-investigation furor. There was the weak statement he read the first day of spring training in West Palm Beach at the Astros' disastrous public relations attempt to repair the damage. It was like a hostage statement when Altuve stood before cameras and told reporters, "I want to say that the whole Astros organization and the team feels bad about what happened in 2017. We especially feel remorse for the impact on the fans and the game of baseball. And our team is determined to move forward."

It was both sad and sleazy — hardly sincere.

There is no moving forward for Altuve. He may go on to have a great career. But he is not A-Rod. He has none of the slickness and style to manufacture a redemption story.

Altuve's story may be irreparable because of how he presented himself as a man of God. The hypocrisy may be an unpardonable sin in the church of public opinion — even in today's world where no sin seems unforgivable.

The rules may still be different for saints. In Texas, the Astros have sold Jesus as much as any team in baseball, and Altuve has been the leading apostle.

In a 2017 Houston Chronicle interview, Altuve said, "To achieve success wasn't to get into the major leagues or have the best season in the world. The best success is to live your life the way God wants you to."

"If you can do that, if you can be good with God, then I think you will have success in your life," Altuve said.

It's hard to imagine Jose Altuve is good with God these days. He has been deeply implicated by rumor and innuendo in the Astros cheating scandal, with charges that he wore a "buzzer" under his jersey to alert him to pitches. The evidence being held up is Altuve's refusal to let teammates pull off his jersey in celebration of his 2019 ALCS game-winning home run against the Yankees.

Altuve credited his faith in God in a postgame interview that day with Fox Sports. "First I want to thank God and all the fans for the beautiful game, for the beautiful playoffs," he said. "Running around the bases, the only thing I was thinking was thanking God and just thinking we're going to the World Series once again."

Obviously, that wasn't the only thing Jose Altuve was thinking.

His teammates have defended his behavior, with conflicting statements — Altuve was shy to have his jersey removed (past shirtless photos would refute that) or that he was not happy with his unfinished tattoo of his daughter's name.

Altuve has maintained he didn't use a

buzzer system. Teammate Carlos Correa went so far as to claim Altuve didn't take part in the cheating. "Nobody wants to talk about this, but I'm going to talk about this — Jose Altuve was the one guy that didn't use the trash can," he told The Athletic. "The few times that the trash can was banged was without his consent, and he would go inside the clubhouse and inside the dugout to whoever was banging the trash can and he would get pissed. ... He played the game clean." At this point, it really doesn't matter if Altuve cheated or how much he did. The man who professed he lives his life the way God wanted him to either cheated or benefited from others cheating and helped conceal it.

I reached out to Kevin Edelbrock, identified as one of the Astros' team chaplains, to ask these questions — how will the faith of Altuve and the rest of his Christian teammates help them through this crisis, and then how did the faith of Altuve and the rest of his Christian teammates allow this cheating to take place?

"My role with the team is as a volunteer and our organization isn't allowed to do interviews," he responded in a Facebook message. "I'm really sorry. We prefer that the stories are about the players."

There won't be any problem with that. The stories will be about the players. Any tales of Jose Altuve and God, though, will ring hollow — like the Astros' apology, sad and sleazy.

• *Hear Thom Loverro on 106.7 The Fan Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings and on the Kevin Sheehan podcast Tuesdays and Thursdays.*

NBA

76ers' Simmons out at least 2 more weeks with back injury

PHILADELPHIA | Philadelphia 76ers guard Ben Simmons will miss at least two more weeks with nerve issues in his lower back.

The All-Star played just a few minutes in Saturday's loss to Milwaukee before leaving with the back injury. He will undergo daily treatment for his nerve impingement and be evaluated in two weeks.

The Sixers are 36-22 as they head down the stretch without one of their best players. They are 27-2 but just 9-20 at home — and leave this week for a four-game West Coast trip that starts Sunday.

The 23-year-old Simmons averaged 16.7 points, 7.8 rebounds and 8.2 assists in 54 games.

Shake Milton started at point guard for Simmons in Monday's victory over Atlanta. Shooting guard Josh Richardson also played the point and both players will be needed again when the Sixers play Wednesday at Cleveland.

From wire dispatches and staff reports.

PRO CALENDAR			
HOME GAMES SHADED	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Brooklyn Nets 7 p.m. NBCSN AM 1500		Utah Jazz 9 p.m. NBCSN AM 1500
		Winnipeg Jets 8 p.m. NBCSN FM 106.7	

OLYMPICS

From page B14

foothold in South Korea, the Middle East and Europe, raising fears of a pandemic. Japan itself has reported four deaths.

Pound encouraged athletes to keep training. About 11,000 are expected for the Olympics, which open July 24, and 4,400 are bound for the Paralympics, which open Aug. 25.

"As far as we all know, you're going to be in Tokyo," Pound said. "All indications are at this stage that it will be business as usual. So keep focused on your sport and be sure that the IOC is not going to send you into a pandemic situation."

The modern Olympics, which date

to 1896, have been canceled only during wartime. The Olympics in 1940 were supposed to be in Tokyo but were called off because of Japan's war with China and World War II. The Rio Games in Brazil went on as scheduled in 2016 despite the outbreak of the Zika virus.

Pound repeated the IOC's stance — that it is relying on consultations with the World Health Organization, a United Nations body, to make any move.

As for the possibility of postponement, he said: "You just don't postpone something on the size and scale of the Olympics. There's so many moving parts, so many countries and different seasons, and competitive seasons, and television seasons. You can't just say, 'We'll do it in October.'"

Pound said moving to another city also seems unlikely "because there are few places in the world that could think of gearing up facilities in that short time to put something on."

London mayoral candidate Shaun Bailey has suggested the British capital as an alternative. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike suggested the offer was an attempt to use the virus for political purposes.

Pound said he would not favor a scattering of Olympic events to other places around the world because that wouldn't "constitute an Olympic Games. You'd end up with a series of world championships." He also said it would be extremely difficult to spread around the various sports over a 17-day period with only a few months' notice.

Holding the Olympics in Tokyo but postponing them by a few months would be unlikely to satisfy North American broadcasters, whose schedules are full in the fall with American pro football, college football, European soccer, basketball, baseball and ice hockey. Other world broadcasters also have jammed schedules.

"It would be tough to get the kind of blanket coverage that people expect around the Olympic Games," Pound said.

He also cast doubt on the possibility of a one-year delay. Japan is officially spending \$12.6 billion to organize the Olympics, although a national audit board says the country is spending twice that much.

"You have to ask if you can hold the

bubble together for an extra year," Pound said. "Then, of course, you have to fit all of this into the entire international sports schedule."

Pound said the IOC has been building up an emergency fund, reported to be about \$1 billion, for unforeseen circumstances to help the IOC and the international sports federations that depend on income from the IOC. About 73% of the IOC's \$5.7 billion income in a four-year Olympic cycle comes from broadcast rights.

"It's not an insurable risk, and it's not one that can be attributed to one or the other of the parties," he said. "So everybody takes their lumps. There would be a lack of revenue on the Olympic movement side."



Disease that plagues D.C. streets took boxing legend's son

District boxing legend Mark Johnson lost his son this month to the virus.

Not the bug that has up-ended all our lives and consumed every minute of nearly every newscast and nearly every byte of every computer screen and nearly every inch of every newspaper.

The disease that claimed the life of 24-year-old Markiese Johnson has no special name — no coronavirus or COVID-19 or

such. And while life will hopefully return to normal soon for most of us, with vaccines and treatments for the new superflu, there is no miracle cure for the pandemic of gun violence that claims 15,000 American lives a year and hits disproportionately among young black men like Markiese.

Study after study shows that black youths in the United States are twice as likely as white males to be killed by guns.

In Southeast D.C., where Markiese died, it's a frightening way of life.

Markiese was shot and killed on Monday night, March 9, in the 2200 block of Savannah Terrace, according to police. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds and was pronounced dead at a local hospital. Police are investigating the case as a homicide and are offering a



THOM LOVERRO

\$25,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the case.

"I found out with a phone call from my ex-wife, his mother," said the elder Johnson, a 47-year-old District native and the former flyweight and junior bantamweight champion of the world.

"She said someone called her and told her we need to

hurry over there because Markiese had been shot. We got there and they had taken him to the hospital. Detectives talked to me, asking us about him. They rushed him to the hospital. He had some life left in him, but they didn't know what the ride to the hospital would do to him.

"I really don't know what happened," said the retired boxer known as "Too Sharp" in his heyday.

Like many parents, Johnson

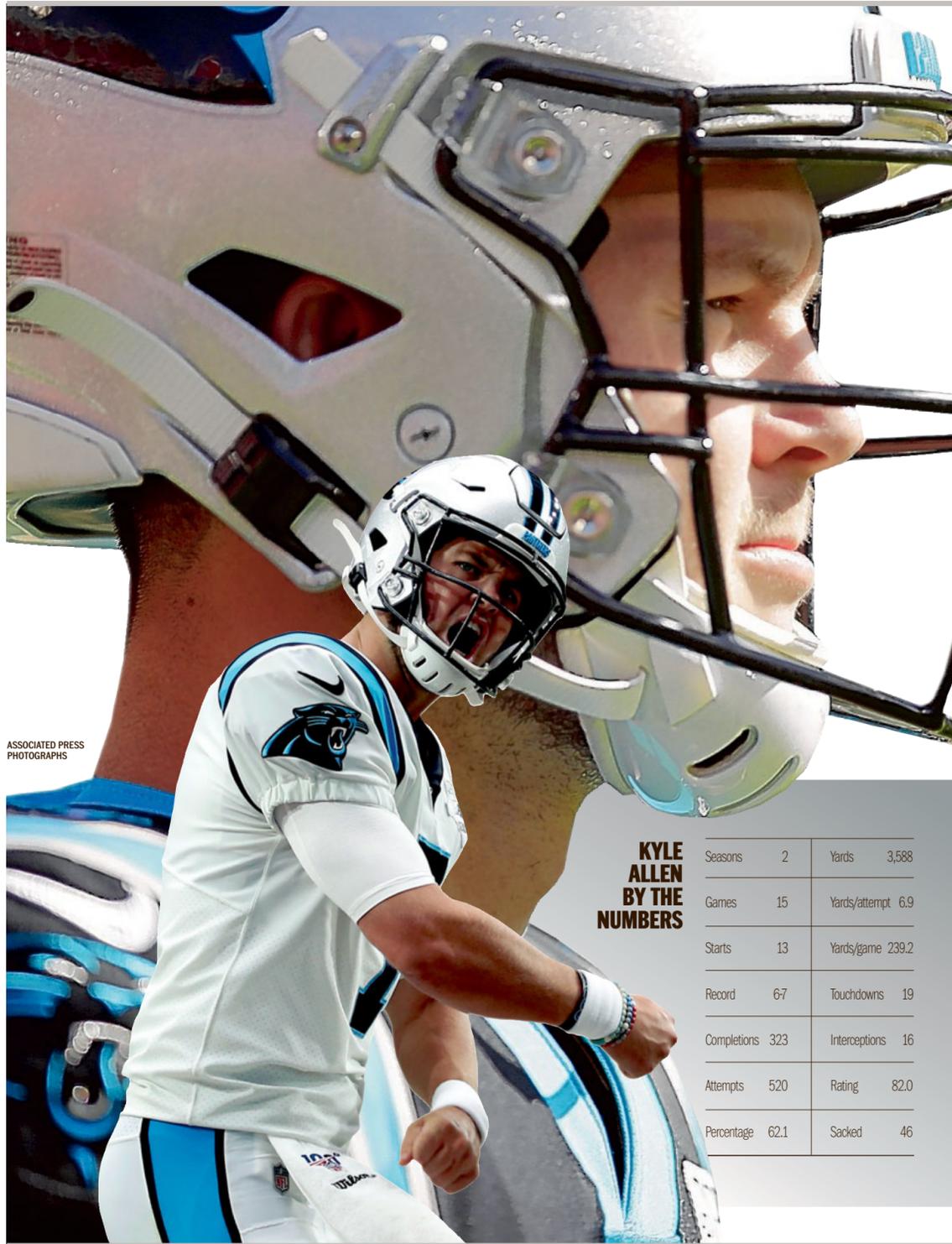
envisioned something more for his son when Markiese was born 24 years ago.

"Once they are grown, they are adults and life takes people on different paths," he said.

The father knows about the paths that lives can take.

Johnson was a celebrated world champion who made some wrong turns and wound up doing a year in federal prison near the end of his

» see **LOVERRO** | **B9**



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

KYLE ALLEN BY THE NUMBERS

Seasons	2	Yards	3,588
Games	15	Yards/attempt	6.9
Starts	13	Yards/game	239.2
Record	6-7	Touchdowns	19
Completions	323	Interceptions	16
Attempts	520	Rating	82.0
Percentage	62.1	Sacked	46

REDSKINS

AT THE STARTING GATE

ALLEN EMBRACES QUARTERBACK COMPETITION WITH HASKINS

By **MATTHEW PARAS**
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Lately, Kyle Allen's workouts have moved from a gym to the inside of an Orange County garage.

Training in California with New York Jets quarterback Sam Darnold and Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen, the trio have also had a tougher time finding a place outdoors to throw. And when they do toss the football, the crew maintains their space apart.

It's all part of the adjustment Allen and his friends have had to make over the past month due to the coronavirus outbreak.

But those aren't the only changes for Allen of late.

Last week, the Washington Redskins acquired Allen in a trade with the Carolina Panthers — reuniting the 24-year-old with coach Ron Rivera and offensive coordinator Scott Turner. The deal, Allen recalled Tuesday, took the quarterback by surprise, given he had just signed a new contract with Carolina weeks earlier.

Allen, though, said that after

talking with Rivera, he understands what the coaches want from him.

"The expectation is to come in and compete for the job," Allen said. "And I think that's an awesome opportunity."

Speaking to reporters for the first time since the deal, Allen said he has no idea when he'll be able to practice as the NFL has closed team facilities amid the pandemic. But when he and his new teammates return — whenever that is — Allen will begin a competition with starter Dwayne Haskins.

For now, the Redskins see Haskins as their starter. Rivera said as much last week, when in a radio interview, the coach confirmed the team will enter camp "believing" the 22-year-old is still atop the depth chart.

Allen, though, carries an advantage for the time being: He already knows the offense.

"The continuity with the system is huge for me, and I think it's going to be big for the team too," said Allen, who spent two years

» see **REDSKINS** | **B9**

NFL

NFL expands playoffs by two wild-card teams

By **BARRY WILNER**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The NFL is gearing up for a normal season and playoffs — with two additional wild-card teams in the Super Bowl chase.

NFL team owners voted Tuesday to expand the playoffs by one team in each conference for a total of 14 next season as they continue to plan for the 2020 season to begin on time.

During a conference call to discuss league business after the annual meetings were canceled due to the new coronavirus, the owners also awarded one of those extra games to CBS and one to NBC. Three-fourths of the 32 owners needed to approve the change, and the vote was unanimous, football operations chief Troy Vincent said.

As for opening the season on Sept. 10 as scheduled, NFL lead counsel Jeff Pash said: "All of our focus has been on a normal traditional season, starting on time, playing before fans in our regular stadiums and going through our full 16-game regular season and a full playoffs."

That would include the two stadiums still under construction in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, plus international games in England and Mexico.

"I expect that international games will be part of our schedule for this year," Pash added. "We're optimistic just as we expect conditions in the United States to permit playing a full season that that will be the case for our

» see **NFL** | **B9**

Rescheduled Olympics a challenge for U.S. roster

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Knowing when the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics will be solves one problem for USA Basketball.

And it creates a few others. Let's assume that the 2020-21

On basketball

NBA season is over by next July, a premise that also assumes some sort of normalcy returns to the sports world and that the global coronavirus pandemic slows to the point where games can be played again. That would also mean that NBA players and coaches would be available, schedule-wise, to participate in the Tokyo Olympics next summer as planned.

That's good news. That is,

until free agency is added to the equation.

The NBA summer of 2021 is supposed to be another free agent extravaganza, one where plenty of the league's biggest names and top USA Basketball candidates like LeBron James, Kawhi Leonard, Chris Paul, Bam Adebayo, Kyle Lowry and more could be on the market.

This summer would have been so much easier for USA Basketball from that standpoint, with Anthony Davis one of the few big-name stars who could become free agents when this season ends.

U.S. coach Gregg Popovich and managing director Jerry Colangelo would have had probably anyone they wanted this summer.

Next summer, that might

» see **NBA** | **B9**



Kawhi Leonard (left) and LeBron James
ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

AUTO RACING

NASCAR engineers produce face shields for health care field

By JENNA FRYER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHARLOTTE, N.C. | The five 3D printers at NASCAR's Research & Technology Center — two delivered in February and installed less than two weeks ago — are typically focused on composite parts and working on an updated stock car.

But when racing came to a stop March 13 amid the coronavirus pandemic, a handful of NASCAR engineers wondered if the printers could be used to address the shortage of personal protective equipment for health care workers. They contacted suppliers and came up with designs for face shields the printers could make. They met with Novant Health, which serves medical facilities in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

Now the printers are running 18 hours a day with approximately

eight engineers volunteering their time to oversee production from approximately 7 a.m. until midnight every day. The newest printer, about the size of an outdoor shed, can print three face shields every 2½ hours.

"That's the one we try to keep running almost nonstop," Eric Jacuzzi, senior director of NASCAR's aerodynamics and vehicle performance, told The Associated Press. "We have people that are actually having their teenage children help with cutting the clear facial part as part of their volunteer work at home, six of us running the machines, and more people reaching out to help."

NASCAR is donating the face shields as part of the charitable community acts the series does every year. The sanctioning body has followed Ford, Chevrolet and Toyota — NASCAR's three manufacturers — as companies from the automotive industry that have



NASCAR VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

NASCAR engineers are using their idled equipment and technology to produce safety splash shields and other needed items for health care workers battling the new coronavirus.

pivoted production to PPE during the global crisis.

Ford this week said beginning in April it will work with GE Healthcare to build air-pressured ventilators, with a target of manufacturing 50,000 units in the next 100 days from a Michigan components plant. Ford is also providing engineers and facilities to assist

3M's production of air-purifying respirators.

General Motors partnered with Ventec Life Systems to build ventilators and has vowed to produce more than 50,000 face masks per day. Ventec and GM said the FDA-cleared ventilators are scheduled to ship "as soon as" April, they can raise production

to 10,000 critical care ventilators per month and have the capability to increase output. GM also said it was donating resources at cost.

Toyota is building face shields and collaborating with medical device companies to speed the manufacturing of ventilators.

Others across motorsports have also stepped up.

Brad Keselowski last year started Keselowski Advanced Manufacturing, which is equipped with a combination of 3D printers and CNC machining. Keselowski said he has "joined forces with groups endeavoring to meet the face shield production needs of those in health care."

Joey Logano, Keselowski's teammate at Team Penske, has established a \$1 million Response and Recovery Fund through his foundation.

"Right now, the world is experiencing a situation like we've

never seen before," Logano said, noting the foundation "will help provide funding and necessary supplies for organizations in need during this scary time."

Technique, which supplies chassis kits for NASCAR teams, retooled its Michigan factory to double its production to 20,000 face shields by the end of this week.

Jacuzzi said NASCAR quickly realized it had the equipment to help.

"Having that capability and just letting it sit seemed like not the right thing," said Jacuzzi, who is producing 200 face shields for Novant and another 40 for a pediatric center in Georgia.

"When you get a chance to breathe, you are sitting around watching the news and you think, 'We just put this big, beautiful new machine in, let's see what we can do and use it for something good,'" Jacuzzi said.

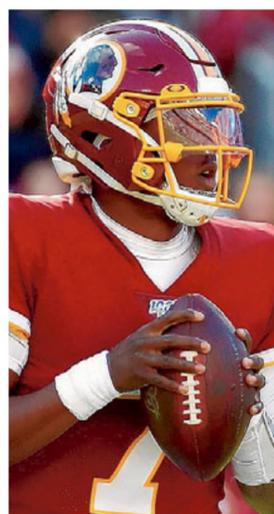
REDSKINS

From page B10

in Carolina. "If we don't have a lot of OTAs or don't have OTAs at all, it gives at least someone on the team a chance with experience in the system to be able to teach it to the other guys and the offense, and relay what the coaches are saying, and just kind of teach the offense to everyone and teach the language."

Under Turner, the Redskins will run the Air Coryell offense — an attack that features a variety of formations, pre-snap motions and a heavy dose of deep shots down the field. When he was with the Panthers, Allen said it took him a month to a month-and-a-half to fully learn it. "It's tough to grasp it at first, but once you grasp it, it's really fluid," he said. "You can add a lot of things into it."

When he got his opportunity, Allen demonstrated his command of the system. In 13 games last season, 12 of which were starts, the 24-year-old threw for 3322 yards, 17 touchdowns and 16



Competing with Dwayne Haskins (left) for the starting quarterback job for the Redskins does not faze newly-acquired Kyle Allen. They don't know each other well, but met when the two teams played last season.



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

interceptions while completing 62% of his passes.

Rivera, too, said Allen's

familiarity with the system was a large reason he was brought in. "He understands what I'm

looking for," Rivera told a Charlotte radio station.

As for Haskins, Allen didn't sound fazed about competition for the starter's job.

He and Haskins don't know each other well, but the two men have exchanged texts since the trade and met last year when the Redskins beat the Panthers in December.

Allen added he's competed his whole life. Before the Panthers, Allen was a journeyman quarterback in college, spending time at Texas A&M before transferring to Houston. At each stop, Allen was a backup and a starter.

After he went undrafted in 2018, Allen signed with Carolina and began his career fourth on the depth chart. But he eventually became Cam Newton's backup, taking over once the former MVP was injured.

"You spend a lot of time with these people, you might as well have great relationships," Allen said. "So hopefully, it's the same for me and Dwayne and Alex (Smith)."

NFL

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international partners as well. Obviously, that's something that we'll have to work closely with the authorities, public health and other government authorities in those other countries to make sure it's entirely safe."

As for the first expansion of the postseason field since 1990, when the NFL went from 10 qualifiers to 12, only the teams with the best record in the AFC and NFC will get a bye under the new format; the top two teams in each conference skipped wild-card weekend in the past. The seventh seed will play No. 2, the sixth will visit No. 3 and the fifth will be at the fourth seed for wild-card games. Three games are set for

Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 9-10 — pending the NFL schedule going forward as planned; that schedule likely will be released on May 9, according to Brian Rolapp, the league's chief media and business officer, to give the NFL "flexibility."

CBS will broadcast one of the new games on Jan. 10 at approximately 4:40 p.m. The game will also be available via live stream on CBS All Access. A separately produced telecast of the game tailored for a younger audience will air on Nickelodeon.

NBC, its new streaming service Peacock and Spanish-language Telemundo will broadcast the other new game on Jan. 10 at approximately 8:15 p.m.

"It's definitely going to be different," Washington Redskins linebacker Thomas Davis said.

"It's going to be weird. Essentially, the second team (in each conference) is being penalized for being a good football team.

"It just makes it more competitive, it adds more teams in and it allows teams that are hot late in the season like the Titans to be able to make a run — a team that might not normally be in the playoffs are getting that opportunity. I like it, though."

Team presidents and owners were advised of current plans for conducting the draft on April 23-25.

Peter O'Reilly, who oversees organization of major events such as the Super Bowl and draft, said all of the NFL's preparations have been designed to "ensure the selection process is sound." That means equitable arrangements for every team; "celebrating

and welcoming" draftees to the league; fan involvement "providing an escape for our fans and perhaps allowing virtual fan access"; and as a fundraiser for people and communities affected by the pandemic. O'Reilly stressed that social distancing will be maintained, with no more than 10 people together, remaining at least six feet apart. Anyone who is ill will be kept away.

Commissioner Roger Goodell will make the first-round selection announcements from a central hub, and the telecasts will have connectivity at some players' or fans' homes.

O'Reilly said Las Vegas, scheduled to host the draft this year, will get consideration for 2022. The 2021 draft will be held in Cleveland.

LOVERRO

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career for a parole violation and other charges. But the International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee has since tried to walk the right path and help young kids in the city find their footing.

Too many times for young black men in the District, the path is pain and hopelessness.

Johnson's son had more chances than most to avoid those pitfalls.

Markiese's father was a

heralded champion fighter, a southpaw with a 44-5-1 record and 28 knockouts, considered one of the best fighters in history in the flyweight classes.

He made a name for himself by leaving the District and fighting some of the best Latin fighters that dominated those weights in Los Angeles at The Forum.

He returned to the District as a champion and fought numerous times before hometown crowds at the D.C. Armory and the then-MCI Center, including winning the vacant International Boxing Federation World Junior Bantamweight Championship in 1999.

As he fought his way to the top of his sport, Markiese was at his side.

"He went to all my fights," Johnson said. "When I fought at the Forum, he was there as a young kid ... He loved the fights."

Markiese wanted to be like his father.

"He was a small guy like me but had one of the biggest

hearts," Johnson said. "He played Pop Warner football and high school football (Potomac High School) and he was always the smallest guy on the field. He was a good athlete. He played all sports."

He went to Allegany College in Cumberland, Maryland, "but he got homesick and wanted to come back," Johnson said.

Markiese tried to follow in his father's footsteps in boxing.

"He loved boxing," Johnson said. "I told myself I would never let my kids box, but he wanted to do it. He started doing it on his own, coming to the gym working with me. But he never had any fights. He was more of a gym rat."

Johnson works with young kids in the District for the Department of Recreation. He has a gym at the Ferebee Hope Recreation Center in Ward 8 in Southeast.

Markiese helped, Johnson said.

Last week, he talked to some of the young people from his gym at a candlelight vigil for his son about the contagious, dangerous life they must each navigate.

"One of the things I've told the kids and the young adults at the vigil is that he was shot in Southeast, where the most shootings happen," he said.

"There is no trauma center over there, which makes no sense. If there had been a trauma center there, maybe he would still be alive and others as well. I told the people this is what you voted the mayor in for. This is what you have council members there for. Southeast needs a trauma center."

That would be to treat those struck by the virus of violence, a way of life for young black men in the city — even when things get back to normal.

● *Hear Thom Loverro on 106.7 The Fan and on the Kevin Sheehan podcast.*

NBA

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be more of a challenge. The Olympics are now set to start July 23, 2021. That means training camp, in theory, would start around July 3 or 4, right around what could be the peak of the free-agent shopping period.

This has been an issue before. Deron Williams couldn't participate in contact portions of practice with the 2012 U.S. Olympic team during its training camp in Las Vegas until he signed his new contract with

the Brooklyn Nets. Training camp started before the moratorium on player signings ended that summer, so the Americans and Williams were in a delicate situation. He signed the deal on an iPad at the first possible moment, got on the court the next day and everything was fine.

But expect lots of that next summer: Players who are about to sign new huge-money deals won't risk going all-out in practice with the Olympic team before those contracts are finalized. Once they sign, sure. Beforehand, not happening.

That won't be ideal, and will

add to the challenge.

Among the lessons that needed to be learned from last summer's Basketball World Cup in China, where the Americans finished seventh, include: The world is no longer afraid of the Americans, and that players are no longer afraid to say no to USA Basketball. Colangelo and the U.S. staff needed to cycle through about 50 names before getting to a 12-man roster for the tournament in China, with most players backing out for a variety of reasons along the way. The Americans cut only two; a few got hurt, and

everybody else made the decision for themselves.

Popovich left China saying that gold medals were no longer guaranteed for the U.S. Kobe Bryant, who was an ambassador for that World Cup, was in Beijing for the final games last August and said the same thing.

"It's not a matter of the rest of the world catching up to the U.S. It's that the rest of the world has been caught up for quite some time," Bryant, who died in a January helicopter crash, said in China last summer. "It's to the point now where the U.S., we're going to win some and we're going to lose some."

That's just how it goes."

The one-year delay is going to cause issues for some other nations as well.

If Greece qualifies for the Olympics — the tournaments that will decide the last four spots are going to be rescheduled at some point, with Greece one of the 24 nations still in that mix — then reigning NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo will have a massive decision to make. And he'll have to make it probably around the same time that he signs a new NBA contract worth something around \$200 million. Rudy Gobert can be free in the summer of

2021 as well, which could impact France. Marc Gasol will be a year older, which might weigh on his decision to play for Spain or not.

But for the Americans, next summer could be particularly problematic. And again, that's if next season in the NBA is even over by July. Until USA Basketball knows what will happen there, it remains stuck in limbo and unable to resume the process of building the next Olympic roster.

All that is clear so far is the road to another gold medal for the red, white and blue won't be easy.

NFL

Scherff signs franchise tag with Redskins

Redskins guard Brandon Scherff signed his franchise tag Tuesday, a one-year deal worth \$15 million.

That move was largely expected after the Redskins placed the tag on their Pro Bowl guard just before the start of free agency earlier this month. Washington and Scherff can still negotiate a long-term contract, but now, Scherff signing

SPORTS BRIEFS

the agreement guarantees he'll be under contract for at least one more year.

Scherff, too, will have to report to training camp. In the past, some players have held off on signing the tag to avoid offseason workouts, practice and even games. The Redskins now can't rescind the contract either, though there were no indications they had planned to do so.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

MLB extends support to minor leaguers

NEW YORK | Major League Baseball is extending its financial support to minor league players through May while suspending their contracts because of the new coronavirus pandemic.

MLB announced March 19 that it was giving minor leaguers \$400 weekly allowances through April 8, the day before the minor league

season was scheduled to start. The commissioner's office said Tuesday that minor leaguers will continue to receive those allowances and health benefits through May 31 or the minor league opening day, whichever comes first.

Minor league contracts have a provision allowing them to be suspended "during any national emergency." MLB said Tuesday it had told the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the minor league governing body, that it

was unable to supply players to minor league affiliates because of the emergency.

NBA

Durant, Young highlight players' NBA 2K tourney

NEW YORK | Kevin Durant and Trae Young will lead a 16-player field of NBA players in an NBA 2K20 tournament airing on ESPN.

The NBA, the players' association and 2K announced the NBA 2K Players Tournament

on Tuesday. Play begins Friday, and the winner of the week-long competition will receive a \$100,000 donation to a coronavirus-related relief effort of their choice.

Player have been seeded according to their NBA 2K player rating — from Durant's 96 down to Derrick Jones Jr.'s 78 — and tenure. Durant will face Jones in the first game Friday night. Other matches will air on ESPN2. The championship is set for April 11.

From wire dispatches and staff reports.