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The Free Press, A7, Thursday, September 2, 2021

Hopefully fall athletes can have some normalcy

Remember the state of prep sports a year ago?

Virtual swim meets and dual crosscountry meets were a thing. The usual team-building activities that are always a highlight for the athletes weren't happening. State tournaments seemed highly unlikely. Heck, the football and

The Free Press

volleyball seasons were going to be played in the spring.

What is usually the most exciting time of the year for many prep athletes was anything but normal, and with that, some of the joy was lost.

Things still aren't normal. COVID-19 cases are on

the rise, and there's still a fear that the season could be interrupted or even ruined by that invisible opponent that just doesn't seem to quit.

However, things are in a much better place than they were 12 months ago, and because of that, at least a degree of normalcy has returned.

State tournaments are set to return for all sports, which is a massive deal for everyone involved.

The section tournaments last fall were certainly dramatic, but they just weren't the same, and some teams ended up not even getting to finish or compete in those because of the pandemic.

Talking to coaches and athletes in recent weeks, the importance of having a state tournament as a goal

comes up a lot. When you put in as much work as they do, it's very important to have an opportunity to prove yourself against the best in your sport.

While state tournaments are the ultimate goal for some, many more won't be able to make it that far.

For these athletes, the social aspect of the experience may be just as important as the actual

competition.

Not everyone feels comfortable in large groups at this point, but it seems pasta dinners, team sleepovers and hanging out after practice are making a comeback.

The relationships formed through participating in team sports can be way more important than

Please see DUDLEY, Page A9

BRIEFS

MSU women's hockey announces captains

MANKATO — Minnesota State women's hockey coach John Harrington has announced senior defenseman Anna Wilgren will be the team captain this season.

Senior forwards Brittyn Fleming and Claire Butorac and senior defenseman Jessica Kondas were named the alternate captains.

Wilgren will be the Mavericks' captain for the second season. She has 11 goals and 30 assists in 88 games, which ranks third among Minnesota State defense-

Minnesota State's season begins Sept. 24-25 when the Mavericks play Merrimack at North Andover, Maryland.

Waseca tennis sweeps Faribault

WASECA — Sarah Robbins rallied for a 4-6, 6-2, 10-7 victory at No. 2 singles, helping Waseca defeat Faribault 7-0 in a nonconference girls tennis match Wednesday.

CeCe Huttemier, Nicola DeJager and Takya Schoenrock each won a singles match in straight sets.

The No. 1 doubles team of Jaidence Medina and Miranda Breck won 2-6, 7-6 (4), 10-6. Addie Pfeifer and Mia Kanewischer won at No. 2 doubles, while Sarah Haley and Addie Bomsta were winners at No. 3 doubles.

Waseca (1-3) plays at Albert Lea on Tuesday.

The Free Press

Ronaldo breaks scoring record

Cristiano Ronaldo missed a penalty but still broke the men's international scoring record before adding a second goal as Portugal beat visiting Ireland 2-1 in World Cup qualifying on Wednes-

Ronaldo grabbed his 110th goal in the 89th minute to move ahead of former Iran striker Ali Daei.

Six minutes into stoppage time, Ronaldo made it 111 in 180 games to break Irish hearts after defender John Egan gave his nation the lead in the 45th.

But Ronaldo, who has returned to join Manchester United, is still 76 goals behind the game's most prolific international scorer. Christine Sinclair, who is 38 years old, scored her 187th goal for Canada last month at the Tokyo Olympics.

The Associated Press

SHARK WEEK

MSU's defensive rebuild begins with opener



File photo

Minnesota State cornerback Ty'Shonan Brooks (4) is one of four starters returning on the defense.

Only four starters return from '19 championship game

By Chad Courrier

ccourrier@mankatofreepress.com

uring the 20 months since he last played football, Ty'Shonan Brooks graduated with a degree in communications and started an apparel company with a friend.

But now, he's ready to get down to business: Minnesota State opens the season on Thursday night against Northern State to end the longest offseason ever.

"I'm feeling excitement that (the opener) is finally here," Brooks said. "Who would have ever thought after the national championship game (in 2019) that we wouldn't play another game for this long? I'm just ready to put everything out there on the field."

The nearly 20-month-break ends at 6 p.m. Thursday at Blakeslee Stadium. There will be plenty of veterans in the Minnesota State lineup, but there will also be new names and faces, especially on the defense, where only four starters are back.

But every season, the roster faces a rebuild, and the defense, nicknamed the Sharks, still flourishes.

"(Defensive coordinator Jim

Glogowski) deserves a lot of credit," Minnesota State coach Todd Hoffner said. "He's going to get them in the right places, and then it's up to the players to make

the plays. In the last three seasons, while the Mavericks' offense was racking up yards and points to set several program records, the defense was ranked somewhere in the top 20 in

Division II. In 2019, the Mavericks ranked seventh in total defense, allowing just 268.1 yards per game, which included only 69.1 yards per game rushing. Minnesota State gave up only 15.1 points per game, which was sixth best in Division II.

The Mavericks ranked 18th in total defense in 2018 and ninth in 2016, with a run defense that was always inside the top 11.

"Our defense works as a team," said Brooks, a senior cornerback who will also begin the season as the primary punt returner. "We don't care who makes the tackle or who gets the pick. You just have to do your job and trust your teammates will do their jobs."

Hoffner said that the defensive players also comprise many of the special-teams units. In a game that might feature 200 snaps, the defensive players might be out there for 120, meaning that depth is critical.

"You have to keep those guys fresh," he said. "They need to be ready for Play 1 and make as many plays as they need to win a football game."

Brooks said that despite so few returning players on the defense, the chemistry has been good. Many of the transfers were here early in the summer, and the inexperienced backups have been waiting nearly two seasons to get a chance.

"It feels like everyone is buying in," Brooks said. "It's up to the leaders to get everyone to trust each other and trust the coaches. We might be from a lot of different schools, but if we all buy in, we can go a long ways."

Both Hoffner and Brooks said there is some uncertainty heading into the opener. Every season is different, but this one has created more intrigue with the long layoff and the roster turnover.

'We have standards, and that's to win a national championship. That hasn't changed," Brooks said. "There will be some butterflies (on

Please see MSU, Page A9

Ohio State, **Gophers** ready

By Dave Campbell The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Ohio State has a new quarterback this fall, just like several other national title contend-

For the fourth-ranked Buckeyes, this turnover - from NFL first-round draft pick Justin Fields to C.J. Stroud — could be as unsubtle as anywhere in the country. Stroud has yet to attempt a college pass, a scenario the program has not experienced since 1952.

His teammates, however, saw all they needed to see over the last month in practice from the 6-foot-3, 215-pound second-year freshman.

"We're just very excited for us to have him as our quarterback right now," left tackle Nicholas Petit-Frere said. "He's taken that job in full stride '

With a quality, experienced Big Ten opponent waiting in Minnesota for Thursday night's opener, not to mention 11th-ranked Oregon due for a visit on Sept. 11, Ohio State has no room to ease into the schedule.

Coach Rvan Day recognized that by ramping up the intensity of preseason camp, a grind toughened further on some days by driving rain or sweltering heat.

"There are certain guys that rise to the cream of the crop and come through in those big moments and kind of inspire the team to keep pushing forward even in hard moments," Petit-Frere said. "C.J. did that almost every single time."

Stroud, a consensus five-star recruit out of Southern California, wasn't the starter until his junior year at Rancho Cucamonga High School. He appeared in three games last season of late-game relief for Fields, who was the 11th pick this spring by the Chicago Bears after a stellar two-year stay with the Buckeyes.

Alabama, Clemson, Notre

Please see GOPHERS, Page A9



Walk-in orthopedic care.

Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato provides orthopedic and sports medicine walk-in care for fractures, breaks, sprains and dislocations. This same day care is a faster, more cost-effective alternative, compared to the emergency room, and is a great option for patients with orthopedic injuries or conditions that require immediate medical treatment, but are not life-threatening.

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. mayoclinichealthsystem.org

MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM

SCORECARD

NO 0 0 1 11	~ C C I LE CI II LE						
TV Today	Milwaukee	W 81					
Schedule subject to change and/or blackouts	Cincinnati	72					
Thursday, September 2	St. Louis	68					
AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL	Chicago	59					
4:30 a.m. (Friday)	Pittsburgh	48					
FS2 — AFL: Greater Western Sydney at Gee-	West Divisio	n					
long, Semifinal		W					
AUTO RACING	San Francisco	84					
4:25 a.m. (Friday)	Los Angeles	84					
ESPN2 — Formula 1: Practice 1, Circuit Zand-	San Diego	71					
voort, North Holland, Netherlands	Colorado	61					
COLLEGE FOOTBALL	Arizona	45					
5:30 p.m.							

6 p.m. ESPN — Boise St. at UCF ESPNU — East Carolina vs. Appalachian St., 7 p.m. FOX — Ohio St. at Minnesota GOLF

6:30 a.m. GOLF — EPGA Tour: The Italian Open, First Round, Marco Simone GC, Rome 9 a.m. GOLF — Korn Ferry Tour: The Korn Ferry Tour

Championship, First Round, Victoria National Golf Club, Newburgh, Ind.
Noon GOLF — PGA Tour: The TOUR Championship

First Round, East Lake Golf Course, Atlanta HORSE RACING

FS2 — NYRA: Saratoga Live MLB BASEBALL MLBN - Oakland at Detroit

BTN — Temple at Rutgers

6 p.m. MLBN — Boston at Tampa Bay OR Miami at

MLBN — Atlanta at Colorado OR Cleveland at Kansas City (Games Joined in Progress)
PARALYMPICS

NBCSN — 2020 Tokyo Paralympics: Swimming; Track & Field; Wheelchair Basketball; Road Cycling, Tokyo 7 p.m. NBCSN — 2020 Tokyo Paralympics: Track &

Field; Road Cycling; Wheelchair Tennis; Canoeing, Tokyo 2 a.m. (Friday)

NBCSN — 2020 Tokyo Paralympics: Goalball (Final); Swimming; Track & Field; Wheelchair Basketball, Tokyo RUGBY

4:30 a.m.

— NRL: Sydney at Canberra SOCCER (MEN'S) 9 p.m. CBSSN — FIFA World Cup Qualifying: El Salvador vs. U.S., San Salvador, El Salvador SWIMMING

1 p.m. CBSSN — ISI: Match 3 Nanles Italy TENNIS 11 a.m. - ATP/WTA: The U.S. Open, Second

Round, Flushing, N.Y. 5 p.m. ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The U.S. Open, Second

6 p.m. ESPN2 — ATP/WTA: The U.S. Open, Second

Round, Flushing, N.Y.
WNBA BASKETBALL 7 p.m. NBATV, BSN — Los Angeles at Minnesota

9 p.m. NBATV — Chicago at Las Vegas

Week in sports

THURSDAY Minnesota State football vs. Northern State, 6 p.m., Blakeslee Stadium Minnesota State volleyball vs. Northern Michigan, 6 p.m., Houghton, Mich. Mankato East/Loyola girls swimming vs. Red Wing, 6:30 p.m., East pool

Mankato East boys soccer at Austin, 7 p.m. Mankato East volleyball at Winona, 7:15 p.m. Mankato West boys cross country at North-field, 10:30 a.m., St. Olaf

Mankato West girls soccer vs. Northfield, 5 p.m., Dakota Meadows

Mankato West girls swimming vs. Rochester Century, 6:30 p.m., MSU pool Mankato West football vs. Rochester John Marshall, 7 p.m., Todnem Field Mankato West boys soccer at Northfield

7 p.m. Mankato West volleyball at Red Wing, 7:15 p.m.

Mankato Loyola boys, girls cross country at

Loyola meet, 4 p.m., Good Counsel Mankato Loyola/St. Clair/LCWM/Madelia boys soccer vs. Fairmont, 5 p.m., Loyola field Mankato Loyola/St. Clair/LCWM/Madelia girls

soccer at Fairmont, 6:45 p.m.

Mankato Loyola volleyball vs. Buffalo Lake-Hector, 7 p.m., Fitzgerald gym

American League

East Divisio	n		•	
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	84	49	.632	_
New York	77	56	.579	7
Boston	76	59	.563	9
Toronto	70	62	.530	131/2
Baltimore	41	91	.311	421/2
Central Divi	sion			
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	77	56	.579	_
Cleveland	65	64	.504	10
Detroit	63	71	.470	141/2
Kansas City	59	72	.450	17
Minnesota	58	75	.436	19
West Division	on			
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	78	55	.586	_
Oakland	73	60	.549	5
Seattle	72	62	.537	61/2
Los Angeles	66	68	.493	121/2
Texas	47	86	.353	31

Tuesday's Games Baltimore 4, Toronto 2 Oakland 9, Detroit 3 Tampa Bay 8, Boston 5 Cleveland 7, Kansas City 2 Chicago White Sox 4, Pittsburgh 2 Texas 4. Colorado 3 Chicago Cubs 3, Minnesota 1 L.A. Angels 6, N.Y. Yankees 4

Seattle 4. Houston 0 Wednesday's Games Colorado 9, Texas 5 Seattle 1 Houston 0 N.Y. Yankees 4, L.A. Angels 1 Toronto 5, Baltimore 4 Boston 3, Tampa Bay 2 Detroit 8 Oakland 6

Chicago Cubs 3, Minnesota 0 Cleveland at Kansas City Pittsburgh at Chicago White Sox
Thursday's Games
Oakland (Montas 10-9) at Detroit (Manning

3-5), 12:10 p.m.
Boston (Rodríguez 10-7) at Tampa Bay (Mc-Clanahan 9-4), 6:10 p.m. Cleveland (McKenzie 3-5) at Kansas City (Bubic 4-6), 7:10 p.m.

Twins box score
Chicago Minnesota
ab rhbi ab rhbi
Ortega cf 4 0 0 0 Buxton cf 4 0 0 0
Schwindel dh 4 1 1 3 Polanco 2b-ss 4 0 0 0
Happ If 4 0 1 0 Refsnyder rf 3 0 0 0
Wisdom 3b 4 0 0 0 Donaldson 3b 3 0 0 0
Heyward rf 3 0 1 0 Sanó dh 3 0 0 0
Au.Romine c30 0 0 Rooker If 2 0 2 0
Rivas 1b 2 1 0 0 Jeffers c 3 0 0 0
Alcántara ss3 0 0 0 Astudillo 1b 3 0 0 0
An.Romine 2b311 0 Simmons ss 2 0 0 0
Arraez ph-2b 1 0 0 0
Totals 30 3 4 3 Totals 28 0 2 0
Chicago 003 000 000 — 3
Minnesota 000 000 000 — 0
DP-Chicago 1, Minnesota 1. LOB-Chi-
cago 1, Minnesota 5. 2B—An.Romine (2). HR—
Schwindel (7). SB—Happ (3).
IP H R ER BB SO

Steele W,3-2 Alzolay S,1-1 Minnesota Ryan L,0-1 Gibaut

Chicago

Coulombe Minaya 1 (HBP—Steele (Rooker). Umpires-Home, Bruce Dreckman; First, Nick

Mahrley; Second, Ron Kulpa; Third, Joe West. T—2:28. A—21,784 (38,544).

National League

East Division	1		•	
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	70	61	.534	_
Philadelphia	68	64	.515	21/2
New York	65	67	.492	51/2
Washington	55	76	.420	15
Miami	55	78	.414	16
Central Divis	ion			

	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	81	52	.609	_
Cincinnati	72	63	.533	10
St. Louis	68	64	.515	121/2
Chicago	59	75	.440	221/2
Pittsburgh	48	84	.364	321/2
West Divisio	n			
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	84	48	.636	_
Los Angeles	84	49	.632	1/2
San Diego	71	63	.530	14
Colorado	61	72	450	231/6

Tuesday's Games N.Y. Mets 6, Miami 5, 1st game N.Y. Mets 3, Miami 1, 7 innings, 2nd game Philadelphia 12, Washington 6 Chicago White Sox 4, Pittsburgh 2 Texas 4. Colorado 3 Chicago Cubs 3, Minnesota 1 San Diego 3, Arizona 0 Milwaukee 6, San Francisco 2 L.A. Dodgers 3, Atlanta 2 St. Louis at Cincinnati, ppd.

Wednesday's Games St. Louis 5, Cincinnati 4, 7 innings, 1st game Colorado 9, Texas 5 Arizona 8, San Diego 3 Cincinnati 12, St. Louis 2, 7 innings, 2nd game Chicago Cubs 3, Minnesota 0 Pittsburgh at Chicago White Sox Milwaukee at San Francisco Atlanta at L.A. Dodgers Philadelphia at Washington, ppd.

Thursday's Games Philadelphia (Nola 7-7) at Washington (Espino 4-4), 12:05 p.m. Milwaukee (Lauer 4-5) at San Francisco (Webb 8-3), 2:45 p.m.

Miami at N.Y. Mets, ppd.

Miami (Thompson 2-6) at N.Y. Mets (Carrasco 0-2), 6:10 p.m.

Pittsburgh (Keller 4-10) at Chicago Cubs (Thompson 3-3), 7:05 p.m. Atlanta (Toussaint 3-2) at Colorado (González

WNBA EASTERN CONFERENCE

Chicago	14	13	.519	7					
New York	11	17	.393	101/2					
Washington	10	16	.385	101/2					
Atlanta	6	19	.240	14					
Indiana	na 6 19 .2								
WESTERN CON	FERENCE								
	W	L	Pct	GB					
x-Las Vegas	19	7	.731	_					
x-Seattle	18	10	.643	2					
Minnesota	16	9	.640	21/2					
x-Phoenix	16	10	.615	3					
Dallas	11	15	.423	8					
Los Angeles	10	17	.370	91/2					
x-clinched playoff spot									

Thursday's Games Atlanta at Dallas, 7 p.m. Los Angeles at Minnesota, 7 p.m. Chicago at Las Vegas, 9 p.m. New York at Seattle, 9 p.m.

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Miami	0	0	0	.000	0	0
N.Y. Jets	0	0	0	.000	0	0
New England	0	0	0	.000	0	0
-		Sou	ıth			
	W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA
Houston	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Indianapolis	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Jacksonville	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Tennessee	0	0	0	.000	0	0
		No	rth			
	W	L	Τ	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Cincinnati	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Cleveland	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Pittsburgh	0	0	0	.000	0	0
		We	est			
	W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Kansas City	0	0	0	.000	0	0
L.A. Chargers	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Las Vegas	0	0	0	.000	0	0
N.A	NOITA	AL C	ONFE	RENCE		
		Ea	st			
	W	L	Τ	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	0	0	0	.000	0	0
N.Y. Giants	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Phila.	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Washington	0	0	0	.000	0	0

Phila.	U	U	U	.000	U	U
Washington	0	0	0	.000	0	0
	South					
	W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Carolina	0	0	0	.000	0	0
New Orleans	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Tampa Bay	0	0	0	.000	0	0
		No	rth			
	W	L	Т	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Detroit	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Green Bay	0	0	0	.000	0	0
Minnesota	0	0	0	.000	0	0
		W	est			
	W	L	. Т	Pct	PF	PA

0 0 .000 .000

Thursday, Sept. 9 Dallas at Tampa Bay, 7:20 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 12 Arizona at Tennessee, noon Jacksonville at Houston, noon L.A. Chargers at Washington, noon Minnesota at Cincinnati, noon N.Y. Jets at Carolina, noon Phila. at Atlanta, noon
Pittsburgh at Buffalo, noon San Francisco at Detroit, noon Seattle at Indianapolis, noon Cleveland at Kansas City, 3:25 p.m. Denver at N.Y. Giants, 3:25 p.m Green Bay at New Orleans, 3:25 p.m

Miami at New England, 3:25 p.m

Arizona

L.A. Rams

San Francisco Seattle

Chicago at L.A. Rams, 7:20 p.m. Monday, Sept. 13 Baltimore at Las Vegas, 7:15 p.m. MLS

Eastern Comere	IICE							
	W	L		Τ		Pts	GF	G
New England	15	4		4		49	44	2
Orlando City	9	4		8		35	30	2
Nashville	8	2	1	11		35	34	2
New York City FC	10	6		4		34	36	1
Philadelphia	8	6		8		32	28	2
CF Montréal	8	7		7		31	30	2
D.C. United	9	10		3		30	35	3
Columbus	7	9		6		27	25	2
Atlanta	6	7		9		27	25	2
Chicago	6	11		5		23	24	3
Inter Miami CF	6	9		5		23	21	3
New York	6	10		4		22	23	2
Cincinnati	3	9		8		17	21	3
Toronto FC	3	13		6		15	26	4
Western Confere	ence	,						
		W	L		Т	Pts	GF	G
Seattle		12	4		6	42	35	1
Coarting Vancos C	+	44			7	40	0.7	0

	٧V	L	- 1	PLS	GГ	GA
Seattle	12	4	6	42	35	19
Sporting Kansas City	11	4	7	40	37	22
Colorado	11	4	5	38	30	20
LA Galaxy	11	8	3	36	35	35
Minnesota United	8	6	7	31	24	24
Portland	8	10	3	27	29	39
Real Salt Lake	7	8	6	27	31	27
Vancouver	6	7	8	26	27	31
San Jose	6	7	8	26	24	29
FC Dallas	6	9	7	25	30	33
Los Angeles FC	6	9	6	24	28	31
Austin FC	5	12	4	19	20	29
Houston	3	9	10	19	24	34
NOTE: Three points	for	vict	orv.	one	point	for

Friday, September 3 New York City FC at Nashville, 6:30 p.m. New England at Philadelphia, 6:30 p.m. Portland at Houston, 7 p.m. Sporting Kansas City at Los Angeles FC, 9 p.m.

Transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball

Major League Baseball
American League
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Recalled RHP Dusten Knight and LHP Alexander Wells from Norfolk
(Triple-A East),
BOSTON RED SOX — Placed SS Xander Bo-

gaerts and INF/OF Yairo Munoz on the COVID-19 IL. Selected the contracts of INF Jack Lopez and RHP John Schreiber from Worcester (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on major league contracts. Reinstated RHP Ryan Brasier from the 60-day IL. Reinstated INF/OF Danny Santana from

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Placed SS Tim Anderson on the 10-day IL, retroactive to August 29. Recalled RHP Matt Foster and INF/OF Gavin Sheets from Charlotte (Triple-A East). Reinstated OF Billy Hamilton from the 10-day IL. Designated INF/OF Jake Lamb for assignment. Selected the contract of INF Romy Gonzalez from Charlotte and agreed to terms on a major league contract.

Stephens overpowers Gauff at Open

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Three years ago, a reporter asked Sloane Stephens to point out a younger tennis player most fans might not have heard of yet, someone she

household name some day. Stephens paused to ponder, but not for long, before responding: Coco Gauff, then 14.

thought could become a

Stephens had first met Gauff several years earlier and clearly knew what she was talking about. The world would quickly discover Gauff, too.

The pair of friends met in an official match for the first time Wednesday night at the U.S. Open, and it was Stephens, the 2017

champion now ranked 66th, who pulled away for a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Gauff, now 17 and seeded 21st.

S P O R T S

Afterward, the pair met at the net for a warm hug, before Stephens praised the player — and person — Gauff has become.

"I love Coco. I think evervone knows I love Coco. At the end of the match, I said, 'I love you.' She's such a great player and I feel so lucky to have seen her grow up and play since she was 8," Stephens told the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd.

"I know," Stephens added, "there's going to be great things ahead for her."

With the Ashe roof shut during a heavy downpour — a tornado warning was in effect in the region the thump-thump of the rain created a bass beat that drowned out the usual sounds of a tennis match. It was so loud Stephens could barely hear the questions during her on-court interview.

Only one other court at Flushing Meadows can be covered during bad weather, but even that was an issue Wednesday evening, because wind helped push rain through the space between the concourse and the retractable cover at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

So the match between two-time major finalist Kevin Anderson and Diego Schwartzman was delayed for nearly a half-hour at 5-all in the first set while

workers used air blowers to dry the playing surface.

Scheduled for later in Armstrong was three-time Slam champ Angelique Kerber against Anhelina Kalinina, with the winner taking on Stephens. And last in Ashe was French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas against Adrian Mannarino, looking to join other men who moved on such as No. 2 Daniil Medvedev and No. 5 Andrey Rublev.

The conditions didn't matter at all to defending champion Naomi Osaka, who advanced earlier in the day when her second-round opponent, Olga Danilovic, pulled out because of what she said was a viral illness — but not COVID-19.

Cubs spoil Ryan's debut with Twins

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Frank Schwindel hit a three-run homer and a pair of Chicago Cubs pitchers combined on a two-hitter in a 3-0 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Wednesday night.

Justin Steele (3-2) won for the first time since joining the Cubs' rotation on Aug. 10. The rookie left-hander gave up one hit, walked three and struck out three over five innings, lowering his ERA to 3.48.

Adbert Alzolay worked the final four innings to earn his first career save. He allowed one hit and struck out five.

Schwindel's drive in the third was all the Cubs mustered against U.S. Olympic pitcher Joe Ryan (0-1), making his major league

debut for the Twins.

Ryan was acquired from Tampa Bay as part of the Nelson Cruz trade on July 22. He was in Tokyo at the time, competing for Team USA in the Olympic Games.

Ryan allowed two earned runs over 10 1/3 innings in two Olympic starts, helping the United States to a silver medal. When he returned home, Ryan was assigned to Triple-A St. Paul, where he made two starts, striking out 17 and walking two in nine innings.

Ryan retired the first six batters he faced, but ran into trouble in the third. After issuing a leadoff walk to Alfonso Rivas, Ryan fanned Sergio Alcántara before Andrew Romine doubled to put runners on second and third. Rafael Ortega

flied to short center for the second out, but Schwindel launched a three-run homer to left field.

Ryan retired the Cubs in order in each of his other four innings. He allowed three hits, walked one and struck out five in five innings.

A trio of Twins relievers blanked the Cubs the rest of the way.

Trainer's room

Cubs INF Matt Duffy was scratched from the starting lineup due to right neck stiffness. ... Alzolay and RHP Dillon Maples were activated from the 10day injured list. Maples had been out since July 29 with a blister on his right middle finger. Alzolay went on the injured list Aug. 14 with a left hamstring strain.

Twins RHP Kenta Maeda had Tommy John surgery in Dallas.

Up next

Cubs RHP Keegan Thompson (3-3, 3.09 ERA) will be on the mound Thursday at Wrigley Field as the Cubs begin a four-game series with the Pirates. Thompson entered the rotation on Aug. 21 but has pitched just six innings over two starts.

Twins RHP Randy Dobnak (1-6, 7.83 ERA) returns to the rotation as the Twins start a threegame set at Tampa Bay on Friday.

Dobnak will be making his first appearance for Minnesota since June 19. He missed the past two months with a right middle finger strain.

Maeda surgery

Tommy John surgery for Twins righty

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS - Minnesota Twins right-hander Kenta Maeda had seasonending Tommy John surgery Wednesday in Dallas,

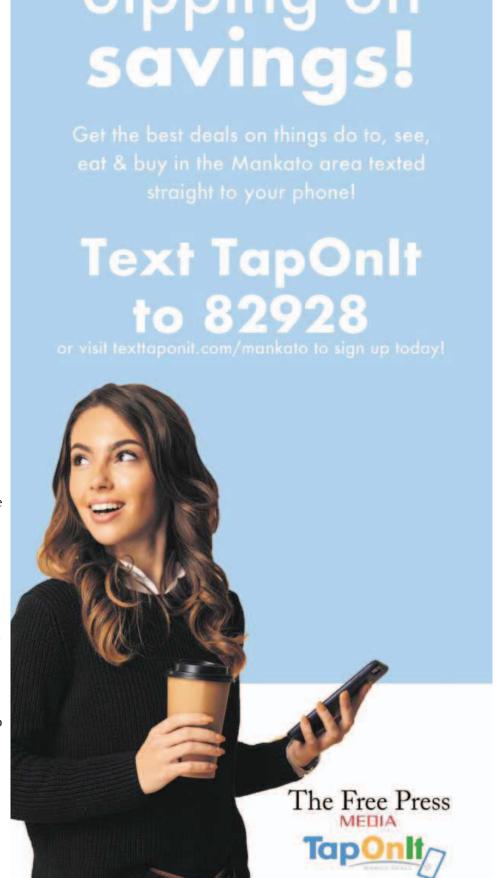
the team said. The 33-year-old righthander from Japan was placed on the 10-day injured list Aug. 24 with right forearm tightness. Texas Rangers orthopedic surgeon Keith Meister

performed the surgery. Meister added an internal brace to the arm, a recent development in the Tommy John technique that could help speed the rate of recovery, which is traditionally at least a year. The Twins hope Maeda could return in 9-12 months.

"There are never any guarantees, but we are pretty good on the medical side with rehabbing this kind of injury and getting guys back to full health," Twins manager Rocco Baldelli said.

Maeda was the runner-up in the AL Cy Young Award voting last season, when he went 6-1 with a 2.70 ERA in 11 starts. In 21 starts this season, Maeda was 6-5 with a 4.66 ERA. Baldelli noted that the

surgery addressed other issues in Maeda's arm that had been bothering the pitcher throughout his sixyear MLB career, which began with a four-year stint with the Dodgers.



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