

BRainerd DISPATCH



VIDEO
For video, see www.brainerddispatch.com

Doggone fun

Steve Kohls / Brainerd Dispatch

Maury Duval drives his team of dogs with Kaitlynn Valtakis and Brett O'Brien riding in the basket Thursday at the 42nd Annual Area 5 Special Olympics Winter Carnival at Confidence Learning Center in East Gull Lake. Duval gave rides along with another team, while participants rode tubes down a sliding hill, played hockey and broomball and took snowmobile rides from the Merrifield Marathons snowmobile club.

What is Pequot Lakes' 'Bobber Bocce on Ice'?

Everything you need to know about the upcoming tournament

By Frank Lee
Brainerd Dispatch

PEQUOT LAKES — It could be the coolest thing to do in the Brainerd lakes area, on almost certainly the coldest day this weekend.

The inaugural "Bobber Bocce on Ice" tournament Saturday, Feb. 12, on Sibley Lake in Pequot Lakes will be played outdoors with a daytime expected in the single digits.

"I did get this idea from Longville. They have ice bocce, and I've gotten to

that several years," Nichole Heinen said. "And we just enjoyed playing it so much that we decided when I became the chamber director, here, in Pequot that I wanted to bring that fun event to Pequot."

Bobber Bocce on Ice will take place on the frozen lake, but people can watch the competition heat up between the 27 co-ed teams of four that registered by last month's deadline.

BOCCE: Page 9

Former Mille Lacs County deputy faces charge of sexually assaulting a minor

By Tim Speier
Brainerd Dispatch

GARRISON — A former Mille Lacs County sheriff's deputy faces charges of sexually assaulting a girl when she was as young as 6 years old.

Russell James Bankey, a 73-year-old Garrison man, was charged Jan. 12 with first-degree criminal sexual conduct in connection to sexually assaulting the girl from about 2009 to 2015.

In August 2021, the victim recorded a call with Bankey, according to the criminal complaint. The charges state he apologized and said he assaulted her because "I guess I was lone-

some." He also allegedly said he'd be in a "lot of trouble" if it ever got out about what he did.

According to the complaint, the victim told the Benton County Sheriff's Office in August that Bankey sexually abused her as far back as she could remember.

Almost all the acts occurred at Bankey's residence in Garrison, the complaint stated — hundreds of times until she was 10 or 11 years old. Other times, the assaults happened in his camper during trips in the summer.

Mille Lacs County Sheriff Don Lorge said Thursday, Feb. 10, Bankey worked for the sheriff's office part time in

court security between Dec. 19, 2016, and Aug. 24, 2021. Lorge noted his hiring took place before Lorge's election to sheriff.

Lorge said he could not comment on the charges and added, "the case was conflicted out" when it was learned he worked for the department. Bankey had no disciplinary infractions during his employment, the sheriff said.

A spokesperson with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe confirmed Bankey also worked for the Mille Lacs Band Tribal Police Department but was unable to confirm when or what position he held as of Thursday afternoon.

A LinkedIn profile with a matching name and likeness states Bankey was the chief law enforcement officer for the Mille Lacs Band between June 1987 and October 1996.

The felony charge Bankey faces carries a penalty ranging from not less than 12 years or more than 30 years in prison, a \$40,000 fine or both.

Bankey will make his initial court appearance at 10 a.m. March 17 in a Stearns County courtroom via Zoom.

TIM SPEIER, staff writer, can be reached on Twitter @timmy2thyme, call 218-855-5859 or email tim.speier@brainerddispatch.com.

Report details senators' snowmobile crash

Account different, but no violations found

By Dave Orrick
St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL — A Minnesota state senator who was injured in a snowmobile crash last week was essentially run over by a fellow state senator who couldn't avoid him, according to Department of Natural Resources reports.

The reports, obtained Wednesday by the Pioneer Press, contain a more comprehensive — and different — account of the crash that left Sen. John Jasinski, R-Faribault,



Jasinski



Johnson

with numerous broken bones than reports previously released by the Morrison County sheriff's office. However, a new report released Wednesday by the sheriff's office appears to reconcile the discrepancies.

No wrongdoing is suggested in any of the reports on the incident, which all say involved Jasinski being thrown from his sled trying to navigate a sharp turn near the northern Minnesota community of Motley.

The most detailed DNR report, made by the agency top enforcement

official who witnessed the entire event, states that after Jasinski was thrown from his sled, he was struck by a snowmobile driven by Sen. Mark Johnson, R-East Grand Forks, who was riding behind Jasinski.

"His snowmobile struck Jasinski and stopped on top of him," according to a report penned by Col. Rodmen Smith, head of the DNR's Enforcement Division, who was riding immediately in front of Jasinski and interviewed both Jasinski and Johnson immediately after the Feb. 4 crash.

DNR official on ride

According to Smith's report:

Smith was assigned to ride with a group of VIP riders participating in the Minnesota United Snowmobile Association's win-

ter rendezvous. At 10 a.m., he led the group, which included Jasinski and Johnson, on a ride from Cragun's Resort on Gull Lake near Brainerd to The Castaway Club on Lake Alexander for a luncheon. About a half hour later, the group left and hit the trails again, with Smith in the lead, wearing a high-visibility jacket. They soon approached what Smith described as "a 90 degree" left turn.

Smith wrote: "The left turn was not marked with a trail marker indicating the turn ahead. As I slowed and started to make the turn, I felt an impact on the rear of my snowmobile." That impact, Jasinski later told Smith, was Jasinski's sled striking his, an event that didn't damage Smith's sled.

CRASH: Page 9



Contributed / Pequot Lakes Chamber of Commerce
A player gets down on the ice to launch the wooden curling rock during a game of ice bocce.

INSIDE TODAY

OPINION 6 CLASSIFIED 10 COMICS 4 SPORTS 11 DEAR ABBY 7



Super Bowl

11

Who could play a key role at the Super Bowl?



Unlock digital at brainerd dispatch.com/activate



The sad and sorry story of Dolly the diseased and doomed dinosaur

By Will Dunham
Reuters

WASHINGTON - In a warm and humid Jurassic Period landscape lush with plant and animal life in what is now southwest Montana, an adolescent long-necked dinosaur was miserably sick with flu and pneumonia-like symptoms - probably feverish and lethargic with labored breathing, coughing, sneezing and diarrhea.

Some 150 million years later, the skeletal remains of that unfortunate beast, nicknamed "Dolly," represent the first-known dinosaur with evidence of respiratory illness - abnormal growths resembling fossilized broccoli on three neck bones that formed in response to an infection in air sacs linked to its lungs.

Scientists said on Thursday the dinosaur appears to have suffered from a fungal infection similar to aspergillosis, a common respiratory illness often fatal to modern birds and reptiles that sometimes causes bone infections. The condition may have killed Dolly, they said.

Dinosaurs suffered from maladies just like any other animals, but evidence is scarce in the fossil record because soft tissue rarely is preserved in a fossilization process that favors hard stuff like bone, teeth and claws. Dinosaur fossils previously have shown pathologies such as broken and healed bones, tooth abscesses, blood-borne infections affecting bone, arthritis and even bone cancer.

Dolly belonged to a previously unknown species of sauropod dinosaur, a



(2022) and Corbin Rainbolt Images / Handout via Reuters

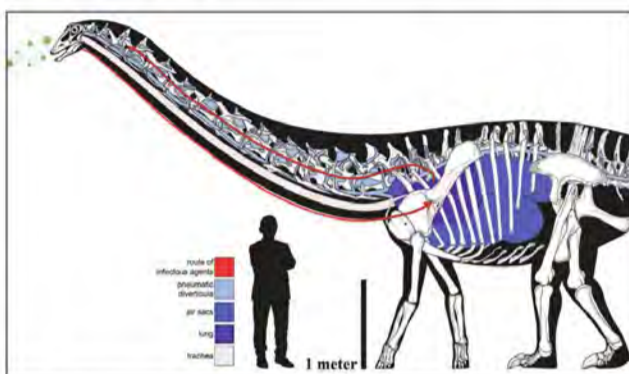
A handout illustration shows a sauropod dinosaur that lived in what is now Montana 150 million years ago during the Jurassic Period. Its fossils bear evidence of respiratory disease whose probable pneumonia-like symptoms may have included coughing, labored breathing, nasal discharge, fever and weight loss among others. Courtesy of Woodruff et al.

plant-eating group with long necks, long tails, small heads and four sturdy legs that included the largest land animals in Earth's history.

Dolly, about 60 feet (18 meters) long and weighing perhaps 4 to 5 tons, died at between 15 and 20 years of age, said Cary Woodruff, director of paleontology at the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum in Malta, Montana and lead author of the study published in the journal Scientific Reports.

Similar sauropods generally reached adulthood in their late 20s.

"Poor Dolly. She probably felt terrible with all the same signs and symptoms of a lower respiratory infection that we experience, such as fever, tightness in the chest, labored breathing, a productive cough - eew!" said anatomist and study co-author Lawrence Witmer of the



A handout illustration shows the elaborate and circuitous pulmonary complex of an individual sauropod dinosaur that lived 150 million years ago in what is now Montana, with the possible route of infection. Courtesy of Woodruff et al.

Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine.

"Was Dolly so sick that she couldn't keep up with the herd? Did she die from this disease? Did she die alone? We know that she was sick for a long time - it was a chronic disease - because she had it long enough for her bones to

respond with nasty reactive bone growth," Witmer said.

It is not uncommon for sick animals to die not directly from disease but by falling victim to predation or starvation due to its debilitating effects.

"Yes, as scientists we're excited and intrigued by Dolly's disease, but as humans who love dinosaurs and another animals, our hearts break when we think about how the last days of this young dinosaur were spent ill, groggy, maybe surrounded by ferocious predators like Allosaurus," Witmer added.

Allosaurus fossils have been found in the same area.

Dolly's remains were unearthed in 1990 and 2013-2015. The scientific name of Dolly's species will be revealed in a future study. The dinosaur appears closely related to the well-known Diplodocus.

The researchers do not know Dolly's gender, but said the dinosaur was nicknamed after a famous singer.

"After Dolly Parton, of course," Woodruff said.

Dolly's dilemma not only sheds light on medical conditions in deep time but provides insight into the anatomical structure of dinosaur lungs and air sacs.

Sauropods and meat-eating dinosaurs called theropods, a group that includes birds, possess respiratory tracts far more elaborate than in mammals including people. In addition to lungs, they have thin, balloon-like air sacs that invade the body cavity and many bones. In Dolly, abnormal bone growths were present at the connection between respiratory tissue and bone in three vertebrae, evidence that the infection had spread from the lungs.

Aspergillosis, caused by inhaling spores from a fungus, is the most common respiratory infection today in birds, which evolved from feathered Jurassic theropods and are classified as a branch of dinosaurs.

"I don't personally know of any fossil I've been able to sympathetically relate to more," Woodruff said.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



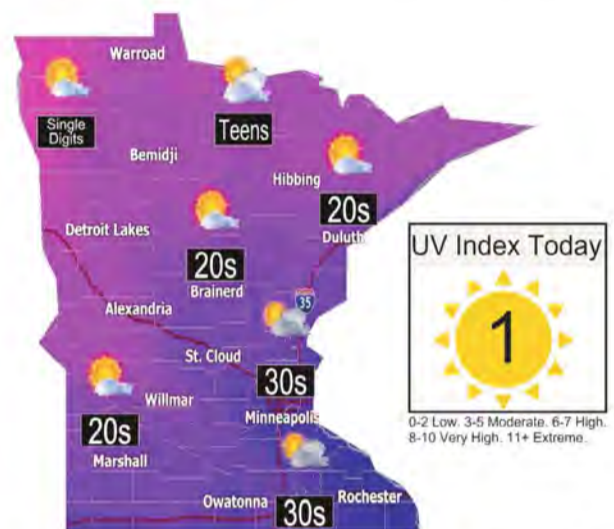
Jared Piepenburg Jesse Ritka Chief Meteorologist John Wheeler Lydia Blume Robert Poynter

StormTRACKER

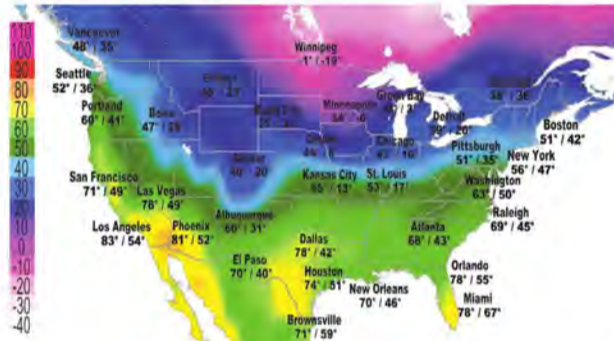
BRAINERD FORECAST

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
22/-16 Partly Cloudy/Wind Wind: NW 22 mph	5/-17 Mostly Cloudy Wind: W 6 mph	6/3 Mostly Cloudy Wind: SW 11 mph	16/2 Partly Cloudy Wind: NW 9 mph
Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
28/15 Cloudy Wind: SE 15 mph	22/1 Cloudy Wind: NW 13 mph	14/2 Partly Cloudy Wind: NW 11 mph	24/8 Partly Cloudy Wind: SW 14 mph

*Average wind speed for each day



Regional Weather	Today	Hi	Lo	Tomorrow	Hi	Lo	Regional Weather	Today	Hi	Lo	Tomorrow	Hi	Lo
Bemidji, MN	12	-21	2	-23	27	-5	Marshall, MN	27	-5	20	-6	7	-8
Duluth, MN	23	-15	4	-13	34	-6	St. Cloud, MN	37	-2	6	-5	6	-5
Eau Claire, WI	36	-5	8	-7	33	-1	St. Cloud, SD	33	-1	27	-1	27	-1
Fargo, ND	12	-12	6	-6	26	-13	International Falls, MN	10	-26	0	-29	6	-13



StormTRACKER Forecast

Colder today with cloudy skies. Highs in the low 20s.

Almanac Through 6 pm Thursday		
Temperature	High	Low
Thursday	22	5
Normal	25	2
Record	48 in 1976	-32 in 1979
Precipitation	In Inches	
Thursday	.04"	

Sunrise: 7:26 a.m. Sunset: 5:36 p.m.
Moonrise: 12:37 p.m. Moonset: 5:17 a.m. Feb. 12

Constantly updated forecasts online
www.brainerddispatch.com



Whipping up winter weather

Weather drawing by Isabel Hollingsworth of Mrs. Johnson's fourth grade class at St. Francis of the Lakes Catholic Church.

Attention teachers: Don't forget to submit your students' weather drawings to the Brainerd Dispatch, P.O. Box 974, Brainerd, MN 56401

TRAVEL WITH US IN 2022!

BLUEBIRD GUIDED TOURS



ALASKA DISCOVERY TOUR
August 2-15

CANADIAN ROCKIES TRAIN
August 20-29 * | September 13-22

CALIFORNIA OREGON TRAIN
September 7-16

IRELAND & SCOTLAND
September 9-23

WASHINGTON D.C. & NYC
September 26 - October 3

NYC & NEW ENGLAND FALL FOLIAGE
October 6-14

* Trip Full / Waitlist Available

Free Virtual Travel Show

February 16, 2022
5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

For more info visit
BluebirdGuidedTours.com/call

Call or Email to RSVP or request our full 2022 schedule!

1.888.506.1276

info@bluebirdguidedtours.com
www.BluebirdGuidedTours.com

PROMO CODE: BRAINERD

New restoration project proposed in the Chippewa National Forest



Contributed / U.S. National Forest Service, USDA
The USDA Forest Service, with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe as a cooperating agency, is proposing to restore fire-dependent ecosystems and associated wildlife habitat and cultural resources and uses throughout a portion of the Chippewa National Forest.

Pioneer Staff Report
news@bemidjipioneer.com
CASS LAKE — The USDA Forest Service, with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe as a cooperating agency, is proposing to restore fire-dependent ecosystems and associated wildlife habitat and cultural resources and uses throughout a portion of the Chippewa National Forest.

This area is within the proclamation boundary of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation and within Beltrami, Cass and Itasca Counties, a release said.

Within this area, approximately 150,000 acres of National Forest System lands, classified as fire-dependent ecosystems, are the priority for treatment.

The proposed activities would occur throughout the project area and the specific locations of prescribed fire and mechanical treatments would be determined closer to implementation.

Restoration activities may include prescribed burning, fire control lines construction, mechanical or hand treatments, planting, seeding and canopy removal through harvest.

Conditions that have developed in these communities over a century of fire absence may not be restored by the short-term restoration of fire as an ecosystem process alone.

Complementary treatments of burning, thinning and/or seeding are needed to increase understory light levels and re-establish diverse native fire-dependent plant communities.

Additional benefits of maintaining or reestablishing fire-dependent land types include reducing the risk to communities from hazardous fuels, and benefits for ongoing vegetation management that will increase the health and resilience of forested areas, the release said.

The proposed project would authorize multiple restoration treatments across national forest system lands within the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Individual treatment units would typically range from 10-500 acres in size.

The aim of this project is to increase the acres restored each year over the next 15 years. The actual amount of restoration treatments would depend on budget, resources, capacity and availability of appropriate burn windows, the release said.

Send comments on the Fire-dependent Ecosystem Restoration Project by Feb. 22 to: karen.lessard@usda.gov; or mail to: Blackduck Ranger District, ATTN: Karen Lessard, 417 Forestry Drive, Blackduck, MN 56630.

The WonderTrek Children's Museum announces Prozinski as its new executive director



Prozinski

WonderTrek Children's Museum announced Maria Prozinski as its new executive director. Prozinski has 25 years of strategic planning, fundraising and grant application experience including leadership experience with United Way in Crow Wing County and most recently as development director for St. Francis of the Lakes Catholic School, Foundation and Parishes.

WonderTrek Children's Museum is a museum serving Region Five children, families and educators. Within the last 18 months the museum provided programming to nonprofits, schools and libraries through its "Playful Explorations" at the Franklin Arts Center and pop-up venues throughout the region.

More than 4,000 children so far have participated in the WonderTrek Children's Museum's mobile programs, funded by the Humanities Center committee for the Legacy Fund. The museum's stated mission is to bring together the region's children and families in shared experiences grounded locally and open to the wider world, with dynamic, material-rich environments, exhibits, events and programs to engage children in the joy of play and the wonder of learning.

"I am honored to be a part of the continued development of WonderTrek Children's Museum," stated Prozinski in a news release. "I look forward to supporting the foundational work put in place by some of our strongest community leaders and organizations. The museum is fortunate to have a board of directors who are deeply rooted in our region."

WonderTrek's board of directors includes Chuck Albrecht, Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union; Cheryal Hills, Region Five; Paul Drange, Sourcewell; Ellen Haglin, Lindar Corp.; Matt Kilian, Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce; Steve Northway, Construction Advocates; Melissa McKay, Essentia Health; Shannon Wheeler, Pequot Lakes Early Childhood Education; and Quinn Swanson, Happy Dancing Turtle.

WonderTrek is a recipient of a second Legacy grant to support the "Playful Connections" programs. The museum hopes to engage children and adults in play-based studio explorations to help design a signature climber experience reflecting regional art, culture and heritage and to engage families from a diversity of backgrounds and lived experiences as well as families experiencing participation barriers.

By bringing together diverse perspectives to share ideas in a studio learning process, "Playful Connections" empowers children to lead the way to a more connected region and state through the power of play, the release stated.

For further information, visit wondertrekmuseum.org or call 218-454-8990.

LOCAL BRIEFS

Ruud co-authors bill to temporarily modify substitute teaching licenses

ST. PAUL — State Sen. Carrie Ruud, R-Breezy Point, co-authored a bill allowing the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board to expand the pool of qualified candidates to receive teaching licenses.

Minnesota has seen a steady decrease in available substitute teachers, a problem further exacerbated by COVID-19.



Ruud

Prior to the pandemic, substitute teachers were in short supply as teacher retention numbers fell. Distance learning and the accompanying challenges have kept candidates from entering the pool of educators.

The bill would allow a person with an associate degree, professional certification or five years of relevant work experi-

ence along with a background check to fill in the teaching gaps in schools. This change would go into effect starting July 1 of this year, to allow schools to fill openings for the 2022-23 school year.

"Students across the state have had interrupted learning schedules for over two years, and now that they're back to in-person learning, we need to address the shortage of teachers," Ruud stated in a news release. "This bill expands the pool of candidates for substi-

tute teacher positions, ensuring kids once again have proper instruction and guidance in the classroom."

This shortage has hindered in-person learning and has caused schools to shuffle their staff and schedules. Proposed legislation focuses on recruiting candidates so Minnesota can get its education system back on track, the release stated, allowing schools and educators to focus on improving literacy and education with

proper personnel.

The bill was referred to the Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee.

Brainerd Public Schools equity community meeting postponed

BRainerd — The Brainerd Public Schools equity community meeting scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 10, was postponed due to weather.

The meeting will be rescheduled at a later date.

Westside Liquor

Offering the best selection of beers and craft beers, wines and liquors in the state. Over 18,000 items!

Due to brewery and distributor shortages, we cannot guarantee inventory of sale items. Rain checks CANNOT be given. We apologize for any issues.

<p>Michelob Golden Regular & Light 24 pk cans 12 oz \$18.95</p>	<p>Coors Light, Miller Lite 15 pk bt 16 oz alum \$16.95</p>	<p>Jack Pine 6 pk cans TIER 1 - \$8.95 TIER 2 - \$9.95</p>
<p>Black Velvet Canadian 1.75 L \$13.95</p>	<p>Korbel Brandy 1.75 L \$18.95</p>	<p>New Amsterdam Vodka (all varieties) 1.75 L \$14.95</p>

February Monthly Feature

<p>MN BUY LOCAL BEER OF THE MONTH</p> <p>Grain Belt 12 pk cans/ glass 12 oz Premium \$10.95 Northeast, Elite \$11.95</p> <p>BEER OF THE MONTH</p> <p>Alaskan 12 pk cans/ glass \$13.95</p> <p>SCOTCH OF THE MONTH</p> <p>Singleton 12 Yr Singlemalt 750 ml \$32.95</p>	<p>BOURBON OF THE MONTH</p> <p>Blackened American Whiskey 750 ml \$39.95</p> <p>WINE FEATURE</p> <p>Sterling Cab, Sauv, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Grigio, Meritage 750 ml \$8.99</p>
--	--

These prices good February 13th thru February 19th - 15807 Audubon Way, Baxter - 218-822-4190

www.westsideliquor.com

OPEN MONDAY-SATURDAY 8AM - 10 PM - SUNDAY 11 AM - 6 PM

ALBERTVILLE, BAXTER, LITTLE FALLS, RICE, SARTELL, SAUK CENTRE, ST CLOUD, WAITE PARK

DUSTIN

By Steve Kelly & Jeff Parker

IS DUSTIN HOME? HE JUST LEFT FOR WORK, HAYDEN. HE GOT A JOB. HE GOT A JOB? YES. NOW WE'LL SEE IF HE CAN HOLD ON TO IT. A REAL JOB? OKAY. I'LL COME BACK IN A COUPLE OF HOURS.

WIZARD OF ID

By Brant Parker

ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A SINGLES BAR? OBSERVE. VALENTINE'S DAY IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. BOO! I'M CONVINCED.

OVER THE HEDGE

By Michael Fry & T Lewis

AH! THE FIRST STAR OF THE NIGHT! THAT'S NO STAR, THAT'S THE PLANET VENUS. YOU CAN TELL IT'S NOT A STAR 'CAUSE IT DOESN'T TWINKLE. BUT IT DOES SHIMMY-SHIMMY-KOKO-BOP!

DILBERT

By Scott Adams

THIS WAS A GREAT IDEA TO COME UP ON THE ROOF TO LOOK AT THE VIEW. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE MAD THAT I FOUND A BUG IN OUR BILLING SOFTWARE BECAUSE IT MAKES YOUR LEADERSHIP SUCCESSES LOOK LIKE INCOMPETENCE OR THEFT. THE VIEW IS BETTER IF YOU STAND ON THE LEDGE. CAN I CALL YOU MY MENTOR?

BLONDIE

By Dean Young & John Marshall

I'LL SHOVEL YOUR SIDEWALK FOR TEN DOLLARS, MRS. B. YOU'RE TOO LATE... MR. B. JUST SHOVELED IT. HOW ABOUT IF I CHARGE YOU FIVE DOLLARS TO MAINTAIN IT?

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort, Greg & Brian Walker

SO, HOW DID YOU THINK MY MORNING ADDRESS WENT? IT WAS A LITTLE LONG. REALLY? IT'S AFTERNOON NOW.

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

By Dik Browne

I'M MAKING PUNCH FOR TONIGHT'S PARTY! NOW THE FRUIT. DO YOU HAVE TO SPOIL IT?

PEANUTS

By Charles Schulz

WHY DON'T YOU SURPRISE ME SOMETIME AND SEND ME SOME ROSES? WHY DON'T YOU SURPRISE ME SOMETIME, AND LEAVE ME ALONE? SOME SURPRISES ARE BETTER THAN OTHERS.

GARFIELD

By Jim Davis

I USED TO RUN IN HIGH SCHOOL. I TRIED OUT FOR THE TRACK TEAM. OH, HOW I WANTED TO BE A SCREAMING LEGHORN! HOW DID THEY RUN IN THOSE CHICKEN SUITS?

It's written in the stars

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19): This might be a good time to indulge your appetite for adventure. You are probably admired, and someone might view you through rose-colored glasses. Don't be fooled into thinking that their passing interest is a lasting connection.

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20): Your dance card might be filled up before the music even begins. Your popularity can make you someone who is in demand. You might indulge your fantasies, try something new, or pursue your goals fearlessly.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Whether it is business or pleasure, your best bet is to approach something new without making a permanent commitment. Someone may briefly seem completely dazzled by you, only to disappear at sunrise.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Enjoy getting out with your partner and/or with some friends in the early part of the evening. Then, you and your special someone could get together later this evening to fulfill each other's amorous fantasies.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't ignore an invitation that could help you form useful career connections. An item you consider worth buying could be unique but overpriced. You should feel some nice fulfillment if you are part of a romantic twosome.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Release concerns and worries and party like its 1999. Social outings could be at the top of your "to do" list as the weekend kicks off, or you might make the most of an opportunity to enjoy entertaining your crew.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You know where the buck stops. Don't pay too much attention to assurances that everything is completed when you know you should check it yourself. Arrange your social life so you meet the right people.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Things may not be quite what they seem. Seductive glances may set the stage for the evening ahead, so you might be astonished when you end up talking the night away. Share your way into someone's heart.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Intention is the beginning of accomplishment. Someone may show their appreciation of your dedication to a cause. It can be difficult to negotiate with a person who is not transparent about their agenda.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Once you choose your course of action, you usually stick to it. You may have limitless possibilities before you. Competitive activities could brighten your evening. Don't let daydreams and fantasies distract you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Stay home and make your romantic dreams turn into reality. Your idea of a perfect evening might involve friends gathered around the kitchen table. Someone you meet could become a lifelong friend.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar. 20): Playing make believe can make your moods mellow. Use your imagination to see things from someone else's point of view. Someone may pay you compliments or offer flattery but do not let this go to your head.

IF FEB. 11 IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Dwelling in romantic fantasies may seem to be the trend for you during the next six to eight weeks. A vacation might satisfy your need for inspiration, or you might work on your bucket list to use in the future. Once you have a dream, you may become determined to obtain the ingredients to make it a reality and work long, hard hours in late March and April. Late May is a time when Lady Luck might smile on just about everything you do, so that is a particularly good time to put your most cherished plans into motion to try to enjoy a happy outcome. Achieving your ambitions is a repeating theme in July, August and September, but do not initiate anything new or add obligations that may be difficult to fulfill.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
 39 Signing need
 1 View obscurers
 6 Soup servings
 11 Still alive in a paintball battle
 12 Look forward to
 13 River to Lyons
 14 Mouth setting
 15 Scoundrel
 16 Razor target
 18 Boxing great
 19 Melancholy
 20 Tick off
 21 Longings
 23 Where-withal
 25 Chiding sound
 27 Skill
 28 Break the rules
 30 Restaurant VIP
 33 Opponent
 34 A thou thou
 36 Running bird
 37 Mating time

DOWN
 1 Tennis star Andy
 2 Take a drag
 3 Wild guess
 4 Mint container
 5 Worries
 6 "I wouldn't do that..."

39 Signing need
 40 Be of use
 41 Tony, for one
 43 Start a set
 44 Smith's place
 45 Little kids
 46 Like oxen

7 Has debts
 8 Easy task
 9 Soda buys
 10 Un-adorned
 17 Deli choice
 22 Be litigious
 24 Pendulum path
 26 Mexican snacks
 28 Get across
 29 Director
 31 Come into Burton
 32 Backed view
 33 Banquet
 35 Like salad greens
 38 Hand over
 42 Court

Contract Bridge

Bidding quiz

You are South, and the bidding has gone:

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	1♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	?	?

What would you bid now with each of the following four hands?

- ♠ Q8742 ♥ K95 ♦ J73 ♣ 94
- ♠ AJ63 ♥ 102 ♦ Q52 ♣ KJ63
- ♠ AKJ76 ♥ 742 ♦ K973 ♣ 8
- ♠ AK95 ♥ 63 ♦ J84 ♣ AJ43

1. **Pass.** Although partner's three-club bid urges you to bid again, it is not forcing. It merely invites a further bid if you have more than the six or seven points you might have for a suit response on the one-level. Here, with no values beyond those already shown, the best thing to do is pass.

2. **Five clubs.** You are not exceptionally strong in high cards, but what you have should prove very useful to partner. Not only do you have excellent trump support, but you also have first-round spade control, a doubleton heart and the queen of diamonds for good measure.

All these features add up to much more than a simple raise to four clubs, which you would make if you had, say, the queen of spades instead of the ace.

3. **Three diamonds.** There is surely a game somewhere, but the best contract is uncertain at the moment. The three-diamond bid may be all that partner needs to undertake three notrump, and, furthermore, it leaves him room to show three-card spade support.

4. **Six clubs.** Here you should take the bull by the horns and bid six. Partner has jumped in clubs with a far-from-solid suit (you're looking at the A-J), and, since he has at most five points in clubs and neither the ace or king of spades, he's bound to have substantial high-card strength in both red suits.

There's no way of knowing precisely where the 12 tricks will come from, but that shouldn't stop you from bidding the slam. The only real criterion in these situations is whether you think partner can make 12 tricks — and it would be unduly pessimistic to think he can't. A typical hand for partner would be ♠ 7 ♥ KQ4 ♦ AK5 ♣ KQ10852, which, opposite yours, would make slam a virtual lay-down.

Tomorrow: A recommended procedure.
 ©2022 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Find Friday's

Sudoku answers in Sunday's TV Week

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane

"You hafta leave the Band-Aid on or the shot will leak out."

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

9		1	8	3				
		9	2				1	4
			6		2			9
			3		6	9		
	6		9		7			
	2	8		5				
8		9		7				
3	6			4	1			
		1	6	8				7

© 2022 King Features Syndicate Inc.

THE LOCKHORNS

By Bunny Hoest & John Reiner

"HE SPENT SO MUCH TIME DECORATING IT, NOW MY COFFEE'S COLD."

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

2	8	5	1	7	9	4	3	6
1	4	6	2	5	3	7	8	9
9	7	3	6	4	8	2	5	1
4	2	9	3	6	1	5	7	8
3	6	7	9	8	5	1	2	4
8	5	1	4	2	7	9	6	3
6	3	4	7	1	2	8	9	5
5	9	2	8	3	4	6	1	7
7	1	8	5	9	6	3	4	2

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

OTHER OPINION

New study bolsters case for wakeboat regulations

Wakesurfing is growing in popularity on Minnesota lakes, and it has increased frustration for lakeshore owners, visitors and people who care about the health of our lakes.

While there has been a growing debate over regulating or banning wakesurfing, there hasn't been a lot of study on the potential damage the sport causes.

A new study from the University of Minnesota suggests that wakesurfing boats need to stay farther from shore than traditional boats to reduce potential damage from their larger waves.

The study, released last week, has been highly anticipated by advocates of stronger regulations and should push lawmakers to address the issue this session.

For those who haven't seen them, wakeboats have powerful engines and specially designed hulls that produce huge, curled wakes. People are pulled on wakesurf boards behind the boats, going back and forth over the wakes.

Researchers from the university analyzed and measured the size and power of waves created by wakesurfing boats compared to more traditional recreational boats. The also calculated the energy of the waves and how they changed as they moved toward shore.

The study found the waves are two to three times larger than those created by a non-wakesurf power boat.

While some legislation has previously been introduced requiring the boats to stay 200 feet from shore, the study found that waves from the boats need to travel more than 500 feet before they decrease to the same height and energy as waves from traditional boats.

The university next wants to study how the deep, powerful propellers affect lake bottoms and aquatic vegetation.

While bills have been proposed the past two sessions, they failed to pass. Some bills limited how close to shore the boats could operate while others would have banned them on small lakes. The new study should give lawmakers the information they need to approve legislation this year.

And the study should spur education campaigns for wakeboat operators and perhaps create a certification program that would give operators the knowledge they need to do less damage.

(c)2022 The Free Press (Mankato, Minn.). Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

THIS WAS BRAINERD

FEBRUARY 11 20 years ago (2002)

Take away the first quarter and Little Falls hung with the Warrior girls' basketball team. But what a first quarter. A minute into the second quarter the score stood at 26-3, and Brainerd went on to a blow-out 68-47 win. Amy Kittelson scored 16 points, followed by Brooke Rollins 15, Joan Ebnet 14 and Megan Arns 12.

30 years ago (1992)

Staples native Del Cerney proved himself one of the greatest swimmers ever to come out of the lakes area. The U of M senior was named All-Big Ten as he won the 50 free with a school and pool record 19.76 seconds. He finished 2nd in the 100 fly, 3rd in the 100 free and swam on four relays that finished 1st, 1st, 2nd and 3rd at the Big Ten swim meet.

40 years ago (1982)

Judge James Preece has denied convicted firebomber John Rieck's petition for resentencing under the new state guidelines. Rieck, 25, is serving 15-30 years for the 1977 fire-bombing of a rural Brainerd home. The new guidelines call for 24 years, but the judge ruled the nature of Rieck's crime would have drawn an upward departure.

60 years ago (1962)

Thieves who again confined their efforts to three nearby businesses last weekend got \$600 in cash, \$500 in one stop at General Supply Co. on Washington St. The other spots hit were Brainerd Glass for \$35 and Coca Cola Bottling for \$60. The pattern is the same as other recent break-ins.

80 years ago (1942)

Pvt. Kenneth Davis, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. L.H. Davis of 9th Ave., has been seriously wounded in the Philippines according to a telegram received from Washington, DC. Davis, who has been in the 31st Infantry for a year, is the second Brainerd man injured in the Philippines, the first being Walt Straka, of Co. A, 194th Tank Battalion.

100 years ago (1922)

The special meeting called by the Water and Light board to discuss improvements for 1922 brought out 200 people despite the bad weather. Running water mains to West Brainerd will cost \$15,000 and to the Mill district will cost \$12,000. Replacing leaky mains elsewhere will bring the total bond issue needed to \$50,000.

-Compiled by Terry McCollough-

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

- PETE MOHS - Publisher
- TERRY MCCOLLOUGH - Former Publisher
- MATT ERICKSON - Editor
- RENEE RICHARDSON - Managing Editor
- NANCY VOGT - Echo Journal Editor



GUEST OPINION

Legislation would give news publishers bargaining power against Big Tech. Biden should urge its passage

By Douglas E. Schoen
Chicago Tribune

In today's politically charged climate, it is infrequent that an issue or piece of legislation garners bipartisan support.

Last year, in a rare display of bipartisanship, an essential and long-overdue reform designed to modernize America's infrastructure was signed into law by President Joe Biden, having received the support of dozens of congressional Republicans and nearly all Democrats.

This year, Biden and Democrats in Congress have another unique opportunity to pass an important piece of legislation on a bipartisan basis: the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act, or JCPA.

The JCPA, which initially was circulated in 2018, was reintroduced last year by Sens. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., and John Kennedy, R-La. The Senate Judiciary antitrust subcommittee recently held a hearing on the legislation, which is designed to curb Big Tech's monopoly over news and information.

If passed, the JCPA would allow news publishers to collectively negotiate — under the authority of a federal arbiter — with social media companies, namely Meta (Facebook) and Alphabet (Google), over how news is distributed online. This would make the news industry stronger and more equitable by ensuring that the smaller media entities that own local news outlets receive adequate compensation for their content so that they can continue to operate.

As things currently are, Big Tech is able to disseminate the intellectual property of media outlets without offering any compensation or benefit to these local newspapers and content providers. This is not only blatantly unfair — as it represents an expropriation of outlets' work products without any economic benefit — but it is also one of the major reasons why local newspapers across the country are facing unprecedented challenges in remaining both economically viable and as the lifeblood of their communities.

For both practical and political

reasons, Biden and congressional Democrats should devote considerable attention, energy and political capital to ensuring JCPA's passage.

The necessity of implementing the reforms contained in JCPA is clear from a practical perspective. The world of news and information has changed dramatically over the last two decades, yet antitrust and antimonopoly laws haven't changed with it.

As a result, local newspapers have been on life support throughout much of the 21st century. Google News, Facebook News and similar news aggregator sites drive traffic to their sites by presenting a constant flow of links to articles from thousands of smaller publishers. Parent companies like Alphabet and Meta are then able to monetize their own advertising and related products — but they do so without fairly compensating smaller publishers for their material.

Indeed, the current copyright and antitrust laws in the U.S. do not mandate compensation to publishers, nor do they provide any legal basis for news publishers to be able to collectively negotiate with these online platforms.

Given that companies such as Alphabet and Meta have not taken the initiative to self-regulate by making meaningful changes to their practices, it is now the job of the federal government to step to make news and information a freer and fairer industry.

It is noteworthy that the JCPA is part of a global trend in which governments have been cracking down on social media monopolies by strengthening their antitrust laws. The Canadian government is working on a proposal similar to the JCPA, and last year, Australia became the first government to pass actual legislation to that effect.

In the U.S. alone, over the last several months, there have been numerous antitrust hearings in Congress in which the CEOs of Big Tech social media companies were questioned about their approach of essentially bullying competitors into either accepting buyouts or face being destroyed.

Though JCPA has bipartisan support in the House and Senate, it does face opposition from some members of both parties.

Some critics — mainly on the left — are claiming that the JCPA would enable large news outlets to make special deals with Big Tech companies, thus worsening the problem of monopolization in the news industry. However, this is inaccurate, as the bill does not allow big companies to negotiate alone or to broker side agreements under the threat of harsh penalties.

Those on the political right have taken issue with the bill for different reasons, arguing that it would actually give Big Tech more power to discriminate against smaller conservative publications for the purposes of demonetizing the outlet. Yet, the JCPA is written to prevent Big Tech from engaging in this kind of behavior.

Though there are provisions and language in the current bill that need to be carefully studied and debated over the next several months, it's clear that the time has come for the U.S. to rein in Big Tech.

Politically, with Democrats facing a stalled legislative agenda and Biden facing record-low approval numbers, the Democratic Party needs to show voters that it can deliver on important bipartisan reforms.

Biden can begin increasing the visibility of the issue by addressing the JCPA in his State of the Union speech next month and urging its passage. At the same time, congressional Democrats should publicly promote and sell the bill to Americans in a way that voters can understand, engage with and give Democrats credit for.

Ultimately, if America is to have a news and information industry that is truly free and fair, we must stop allowing Big Tech companies to engage in market manipulation without consequence. We can start by passing the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act into law.

Douglas E. Schoen is a Democratic campaign consultant and author of several books including "The Power of the Vote: Electing Presidents."
©2022 Chicago Tribune. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL LEGISLATORS

- Rep. John Poston (District 9A, R) Lake Shore**
517 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4293
Email: rep.john.poston@house.mn
- Rep. Ron Kresha (District 9B, R) Little Falls**
531 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4247
Email: rep.ron.kresha@house.mn

- Rep. Josh Heintzeman (District 10A, R) Nisswa**
353 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4333
Email: rep.josh.heintzeman@house.mn
- Rep. Dale Lueck (District 10B, R) Aitkin**
423 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2365
Email: rep.dale.lueck@house.mn

- Sen. Carrie Ruud (District 10, R) Breezy Point**
95 University Ave. W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3233
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4913
Email: sen.carrie.ruud@senate.mn
- Majority Leader Sen. Paul Gazelka (District 09, R) Fairview Township**
95 University Ave. W.
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3113
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-4875
Email: Go to <https://bit.ly/2XOzWvh> to access email form.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Write us a letter or send us an email

The Brainerd Dispatch welcomes letters on recent articles and current issues. Letters should include the writer's full name, city and a phone number (for verification only). Letters are limited to 300 words. Only one letter per person per week.

Letters airing a personal complaint with a private enterprise will not be considered. Letters containing personal attacks will not be considered. Letters endorsing candidates will be limited to 150 words. Send letters to Reader Opinion, Brainerd Dispatch, P.O. Box 974 Brainerd, Minn., 56401 or email them to readeropinion@brainerddispatch.com.

Art buyer looking for gift after helping to boost sales

DEAR ABBY: A year ago I discovered that I have a talent for creating a unique type of art which is marketable. At a holiday market in which I participated, a customer commissioned me to make two pieces for her. She also advised me on how I should market my art. I listened patiently but had no intention of following her advice.

When she came to my home to pick up the pieces, she brought three of her friends along and began advising me again. This time, she mentioned that when a person brings a group of purchasing customers (as these ladies were ... they bought nearly everything I have), I should ALWAYS offer a little "gift" to the person bringing the customers (i.e. one of my pieces as a token of gratitude).

Abby, I consider what I do to be my business now. I'm not selling cosmetics or kitchenware for another company. I don't think I have ever gone to any market with friends and asked the seller to give me a token for bringing friends who bought something. Is this what I should do? Please enlighten me. - BUDDING ARTIST DOWN SOUTH

DEAR ARTIST: Someone who helps you to increase your business should be thanked for



JEANNE PHILLIPS
Dear Abby

their effort - as long as it is you and not the other person who is deciding on what is appropriate. Whether this comes in the form of a verbal expression of gratitude or something tangible is up to you.

While on one hand I think it was nery of the woman to spring this on you, on the other I can't help thinking that business is business - and this is a way of promoting it. Consider offering the woman a future discount.

DEAR ABBY: My fiance and I were having dinner at a nice restaurant when a woman came up to him. It turned out she was a former girlfriend of his. When she looked at me questioningly, he introduced me as his "friend"! I REintroduced myself to her as his fiancee. She then looked back at him and said, "Oh. Congratulations," and walked away. For the first time, I'm seriously considering not marrying this guy. What do you think? - MORE THAN A FRIEND IN TEXAS

DEAR MORE: What happened is a red flag. I think your fiance has a lot of explaining to do. Start the discussion with, "I am not your 'friend,' I am your fiancee!" I wouldn't blame you for making this a loooong engagement. It seems you need to get to know him better.

DEAR ABBY: After I told my cousin I was gay about 20 years ago, he stopped speaking to me, so I wrote him off. My life has been happy because I have strong relationships and no jealousy. Well, my aunt died recently. I assume this cousin will be at the memorial service. I still resent how everything went all those years ago. Should I ask him if he has anything to say to me? Should I confront him or just leave well enough alone? - STILL PEEVED IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR STILL PEEVED: I see nothing positive to be gained by confronting your cousin at the memorial. Bring a close friend or your partner with you if you need emotional support. You didn't mention whether the rest of the family is as homophobic as this cousin, but at an emotional time like this, my advice is to let sleeping dogs lie.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069

Minnesota Senate to consider \$1M pro-police marketing campaign

By Dana Ferguson
Brainerd Dispatch

ST. PAUL — A Minnesota committee on Thursday, Feb. 10, advanced a \$1 million proposal to launch a pro-police marketing campaign around the state, teeing up a vote on the plan in the Minnesota Senate.

Republican senators proposed the campaign as part of a larger package of proposals aimed at recruiting and retaining law enforcement officers around the state. They said amid a surge of violent crime in Minnesota, lawmakers needed to more to keep police on the job. And a public appreciation campaign could do that, GOP lawmakers said. The bill was also amended to include a \$1 million appropriation to a program to help recruit people of color into law enforcement positions.

"You talk to your police officers in your community and this is what they're going to tell you, 'We need more officers on the street.' The only way we're going to reduce crime in Minnesota is to get more police officers out there," Sen. Karin Housley, R-Stillwater, said. "So this ad campaign will do that."

The six Republicans on the Senate Finance Committee voted to advance the bill, while the four Democrats on it said it was inappropriate coming a week after Minneapolis police shot and killed Amir Locke while

executing a no-knock warrant in a homicide investigation. Locke was not a suspect in the homicide.

"I think that the timing is highly insensitive," Sen. John Marty, DFL-Roseville, said. "Saying that we're going to run an advertising campaign a week after that and saying we're going to put \$1 million into saying, 'Police are great' ... there are lots of wonderful police officers but let's try to address the problems."

Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller, R-Winona, on Thursday said he expected the Senate would vote on the proposal on Monday, Feb. 14.

Another Senate panel on Thursday took up two other bills that would spend \$20 million on scholarships for Minnesotans hoping to obtain an associate's degree in law enforcement and another \$20 million in grants for students already studying to enter the field.

Locke's family and advocates for eliminating no-knock search warrants gathered at the state Capitol on Thursday to urge lawmakers to rewrite policing laws. Democrats in the Minnesota House of Representatives have put forward a plan to limit when the unannounced searches can be used to allow them only when a life is at risk.

Follow Dana Ferguson on Twitter @bydanaferguson, call 651-290-0707 or email dferguson@forumcomm.com.

House Democrats push \$1B essential worker pay proposal

By Alex Derosier
Brainerd Dispatch

ST. PAUL — Democratic-Farmer-Labor representatives in the Minnesota House of Representatives are advancing a billion-dollar bonus pay proposal for workers who were on the front lines in the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The House Workforce and Business Development Committee voted 9-4 on Wednesday, Feb. 9, to move forward a proposal to give essential workers \$1 billion — four times the initial \$250 million lawmakers agreed on last year. The eight Democrats were joined by St. Paul Park Republican Rep. Keith Franke in passing the bill along to the next committee for further discussion.

In a news conference Wednesday before the committee hearing, bonus pay bill author Rep. Cedrick Frazier, DFL-New Hope, said Minnesota emerged from the tough early days of the pandemic with an estimated \$7.7 billion budget surplus in no small part thanks to service workers and others who kept the economy moving while many got to stay home.

"Without our workers, without the work they put in day in and day out, putting themselves

in harm's way and their families in harm's way, we do not have the surplus we have now, and we have to honor and recognize that," Frazier said.

The new proposal is four times the size of the initial "hero" pay plan and would make eligible workers eligible for a payment of up to \$1,500. About 667,000 workers would be eligible under the DFL-backed plan, according to an analysis from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The \$250 million plan applies to fewer workers and would provide checks of up to \$1,200.

Democrats are pushing for bigger bonus checks as the Legislature also works to replenish the state's unemployment insurance trust fund, which the state owes \$1.2 billion to the federal government for after the pandemic drove jobless claims to record highs. Lawmakers face a March 15 deadline to approve a plan and have it signed by the governor or else Minnesota business owners will see an increase in their payroll tax rates due in April.

Democratic House leadership supports replenishing the unemployment fund but wants

to pass that bill along with hero pay legislation. Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller, R-Winona, said Republicans aren't interested in the DFL's push to expand frontline worker bonuses, but the DFL-controlled house can place pressure on the Senate using a looming unemployment fund deadline.

The House Workforce and Business Development Committee was expected to approve its own bill late Wednesday to pay back \$1.2 billion in unemployment fund debt. The Senate Finance Committee on Wednesday voted unanimously to advance the proposal to the Senate floor for a vote and the bill's sponsors encouraged quick passage to avoid paying additional interest on the fund. Without intervention, Department of Employment and Economic Development leaders said the debt could take a decade to repay.

"I think we need to get this moved quickly to make sure that Minnesota workers are protected in the event they face an unplanned, unexpected loss of employment to make sure that our Minnesota families are strong and sustainable at a time when they most need it," Sen. Eric Pratt, R-Prior

Lake, said.

A spokeswoman for the Senate Republicans on Wednesday said that chamber would take the bill up for a vote next week.

Follow Alex Derosier on Twitter @xaderosier or email aderosier@forumcomm.com. Dana Ferguson contributed to this report.

Hasbro swings past estimates

Spider-Man movie fuels toy demand

By Uday Sampath Kumar
Reuters

Hasbro Inc trounced analysts' estimates for quarterly revenue and profit on Monday, bolstered by demand for toys based on the latest Spider-Man movie and a rebound in its television production business.

Still, shares reversed from premarket to trade down 2% as the company warned it expects surging freight and raw material costs to pinch profit margins for most of this year, despite another round of price increases planned for the second quarter.

The December release of "Spider-Man: No Way Home," which has grossed more than \$1.1

billion worldwide, came after Hasbro had struggled with a dearth of major Marvel blockbusters.

Toys based on the web slinger powered a 13% increase in the Partner Brands segment, interim Chief Executive Officer Richard Stoddart told analysts on a call.

"Spider-Man helped rebound from some of those earlier Marvel movies like 'Eternals,' which underperformed," said James Zahn, deputy editor at trade magazine "The Toy Book."

"Toys for 'Shang-Chi' and 'Black Widow' also did not come out in sync with the theatrical releases, but now that's finally catching up with Spider-Man," he added.

Hasbro's fourth-quarter net revenue rose 17% to \$2.01 billion, beating

analysts' estimates of \$1.87 billion. The jump came despite the company falling short on its target for holiday season inventory due to global supply-chain disruptions.

To get around the bottlenecks set off by the pandemic, the company had expanded its shipping operations and advanced sourcing of products.

On an adjusted basis, the company earned \$1.21 per share, topping estimates of 88 cents, according to Refinitiv IBES estimates, on price increases that helped offset a surge in costs.

Hasbro, which last month named the head of its digital gaming division, Chris Cocks, as its new boss, said it expects 2022 revenue to rise at a low single-digit rate.



BRAINERD DISPATCH

SIGN UP FOR



EZ PAY

Get a **FREE MONTH** added to your subscription & be entered to win a \$200 gas gift card!

Already use EZ Pay? You're already entered to win!



Enroll in EZ Pay today!

Call us: 218-855-5897

Online: brainerddispatch.news/ezpay

Please mail to:

Brainerd Dispatch, PO Box 974, Brainerd, MN 56401

YES! I authorize Brainerd Dispatch to initiate EZ Pay and I have selected the automatic payment option I would like to use.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

EZ Pay from Credit Card

I would like to pay with my credit card every:

month 3 months 6 months year

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: ____/____ Visa MasterCard Discover

Signature: _____

Name on card: _____
(please print)

EZ Pay from Bank Account *Must include a voided check*

Debited from account on the 5th of every month

Debited from account on the 20th of every month

Financial Institution: _____

City: _____ State: _____

9-digit routing number: _____

Checking account number: _____

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



BRAINERD DISPATCH

Schools' mask mandates ease as states see an 'inflection point'

By Elise Young and Nic Querolo
Bloomberg News

Some U.S. governors are taking broad steps to discontinue school masking, saying the pandemic precaution is outweighed by widespread vaccination, lower transmission and the need for unimpeded instruction.

Governor Ned Lamont late Monday recommended that Connecticut end its mask mandate for schools and daycares on Feb. 28. New Jersey, where more than 1-in-9 residents is a public-school student, will end its order next month for 1.3 million in kindergarten through high school. Similar moves may come soon in New York and California.

"We're not going to manage COVID to zero," New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy said Monday. "We have to learn how to live with COVID as we move from a pandemic to the endemic phase of this virus. We are finally nearing this inflection point."

Masks in schools have been among the most politically charged COVID policy issues as officials attempt to balance public health with growing cries for normalcy. Parents, teachers and politicians have debated whether masks cause more harm than good for children and whether mandates overstep government authority.

New Jersey's school-mask mandate will lift March 7. In Connecticut, mayors and school superintendents will be able to make decisions on masks themselves to reflect local conditions, Lamont said in a news conference. "We're in a very different place than we were six months ago," said Lamont, a Democrat.

Delaware Governor John Carney Jr., another Democrat, will end an indoor mask mandate on Friday and one in schools at the end of March.

In California, which is easing COVID rules as omicron tapers, officials will consider revising broad school mask rules in the coming week, the Department of Public Health said late Monday.

"Vaccines for children under 5 are around the corner, and access to COVID-19 treatments is improving," Tomás J. Aragón, the state public health officer, said in a news release. "With things moving in the right direction, we are making responsible modifications."

Challenges from mask foes are spawning legal rulings that have some districts puzzling over how to conduct lessons. In Virginia, the state's highest court on Monday backed Republican Governor Glenn Youngkin's order to allow parents to ignore classroom mask mandates.

In Illinois, a Feb. 4 ruling by a Sangamon County judge bolstered anti-masking parents and led Governor J.B. Pritzker to criticize what he called a confusing order.

The "ruling is out of step with the vast majority of legal analyses in Illinois and across the nation," Pritzker said at a Monday news conference, where he outlined steps to appeal. Districts such as Chicago with masking as part of labor agreements should continue the practice, he said.

With the pandemic in its second year in the U.S., masking children strikes nerves like few other measures. School-board meetings have erupted with parents arguing that masks infringe upon First Amendment rights, quash communication, stunt social development and otherwise interfere with lessons.

Mask backers, meanwhile, point to risk among young children who aren't yet eligible for shots and data showing that masks reduce transmission. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Jose M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune / TNS

Students arrive wearing masks to Kozminski Community Academy in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood on Feb. 7.

recommends universal indoor masking for all students ages 2 and up and all staff, teachers and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that the White House continued to advise school districts to abide by federal health guidelines, even as the Democratic governors changed their policies.

"We recommend masking in schools," Psaki said.

Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, told CBS's "Face the Nation" just two weeks ago that it was too soon to lift school mandates. This past weekend, his message had changed.

"A lot of kids haven't known a normal school day for two years," Gottlieb said. "We need to try to lean forward aggressively to try to restore that."

As of Feb. 2, COVID cases in the U.S. were down 53% from their peak on Jan. 15, according to the CDC. In the week ended Feb. 5, new hospital admissions for COVID were 40% below their record high.

Fifteen states, including California, New York and Illinois, have broad school mask mandates, while eight, including Republican-led

Texas and Florida, forbid them, according to the National Academy for State Health Policy, a Washington-based nonpartisan policy group. As the nation's overall transmission rate wanes, even health experts remain divided on whether it's time to trash masks in schools.

"Scientifically speaking, without question, transmission is still high right now," said Anna Bershteyn, an assistant professor of population health at New York University's Grossman School of Medicine.

Less than a third of children 5-11 are vaccinated with at least one dose, according to data from the Mayo Clinic. "For virtually anywhere right now, this moment is not a time to relax those layers," Bershteyn said.

In recent weeks, some places have tightened mask restrictions or recommitted to them. Los Angeles, with 600,000 students enrolled in the largest U.S. district, last month banned cloth masks in favor of those with a nose wire, even outdoors, and medical-grade coverings for teachers. Seattle Public Schools, with 56,000 students, are still requiring masks for all students, staff and visitors.

More than 11.4 million

child COVID cases have been reported cumulatively. January saw the highest level of infection among children throughout the pandemic, according to a report from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Some health experts say it's time to ease masks in schools. In Massachusetts, where face-covering rules are in place through Feb. 28, three Boston doctors were criticized after they wrote a Washington Post opinion piece on leaving masks behind.

Ed Lifshitz, a physician and medical director of the New Jersey health department, said it was "a reasonable assumption that cases will continue to decline, at least for the near future," but cautioned about continued risk.

"The virus will not have disappeared," Lifshitz said in Trenton. "It will still be around. People still need to take reasonable protections."

Still, New Jersey State Senator Michael Testa, a Republican from Atlantic County, said he wanted scientific evidence to support the March 7 maskless date.

"Why isn't the school mask mandate ending today?" Testa said.

©2022 Bloomberg L.P. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Tesla is subpoenaed over 2018 settlement

Securities regulator issued subpoena after CEO Musk triggered stock selloff

By Subrat Patnaik and Akash Sriram
Reuters

Tesla Inc. said on Monday it received a subpoena from the U.S. securities regulator related to a settlement that required Chief Executive Elon Musk's tweets on material information about the company to be vetted.

The subpoena by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission was issued on Nov. 16, some 10 days after Musk asked his Twitter followers if he should sell 10% of his stake in the company, triggering a stock selloff.

As of last close, the electric-car maker's shares had fallen by nearly a quarter since the tweet. The shares were down 1.4% at \$909.98 on Monday morning.

The SEC's latest action, which was disclosed in a securities filing by the automaker, adds to pressure on Tesla from federal auto safety regulators regarding vehicle recalls and investigations related to its driver-assistance software. The SEC declined to comment.

In 2018, Musk settled a lawsuit by the SEC over his tweet on taking the company private, agreeing to have the company's lawyers pre-approve tweets with material information about the company.

Tesla in December was hit by a lawsuit over Musk's social media posts including his Twitter poll on stock sales that pulled down the company's share price. This was not the first lawsuit accusing Musk of violating the settlement terms.

Reuters reported last year that the SEC has opened an investigation into a whistleblower complaint that Tesla failed to properly notify its shareholders and the public of fire risks associated with solar panel system defects over several years.

Tesla said on Monday it "routinely" cooperates with government subpoenas and other investigations and inquiries. In the filing, the com-

pany also said the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing investigated allegations of race discrimination and harassment in Tesla workplaces and gave notice that it has grounds to file a civil complaint against the electric-car maker.

Tesla has already been battling a series of lawsuits on racial abuse and sexual harassment, and a federal jury in October ordered the company to pay \$137 million to a Black former contract worker in one of the cases.

New York State Common Retirement Fund said on Monday that it has filed shareholder proposals with Tesla, Activision Blizzard Inc and Starbucks Corp, requesting they report on their efforts to prevent harassment and discrimination against employees.

The proposals ask the companies to disclose, among other things, the total number and aggregate dollar amount of disputes settled related to sexual abuse or harassment



Aly Song / Reuters file photo

Tesla was subpoenaed after CEO Elon Musk, seen here in 2019, tweeted about selling his stocks in the company, triggering a stock selloff.

or discrimination.

Musk-White House tension

Tesla and the White House have been at odds over the past few months, with the Biden administration focusing on legacy automakers, including Ford Motor Co and General Motors in the electric vehicle race.

Last month, GM and Ford's CEOs attended a meeting of tech and auto companies hosted by U.S. President Joe Biden. Musk was not on

the list of attendees.

Musk has been using his Twitter account to attack the Biden administration for allegedly ignoring Tesla and holding up Detroit automakers as leaders in the shift to electric vehicles. Musk called Biden a "damp sock puppet" in a tweet last month.

Musk is also feuding with the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, a key ally of Biden's. The National Labor Relations Board in March ordered Musk to delete a tweet that said Tesla

workers could lose stock options if they voted to join the UAW. Tesla is appealing that order.

Tesla said on Monday the fair market value of the electric-vehicle maker's bitcoin holdings as of Dec. 31 was \$1.99 billion.

The company, which had invested \$1.5 billion in bitcoin last year before selling 10% of the holding, said it registered about \$101 million in impairment losses last year due to the value of bitcoin.

Belgium museum returns painting to Jewish family after 71 years

By Philip Blenkinsop
BRUSSELS - Belgium's leading art museum has returned a painting it held for 71 years to the great-grandchildren of a Jewish couple whose property was looted by the Nazis after they fled on the eve of World War Two.

The family's Berlin-based law firm approached the Musees royaux des Beaux-Arts (Royal Museums of Fine Arts) over five years ago and on Thursday, after a briefing signing ceremony, workers took down

the painting and wheeled it off to be packed.

"Altogether the family is looking for 30 artworks," said lawyer Imke Gielen. "This is the first that has been really identified because unfortunately we have no images of the missing paintings."

None of the nine great-grandchildren, who live outside Belgium, were present on Thursday.

The painting, of pink flowers in a blue vase by German artist Lovis Corinth, belonged to

Gustav and Emma Mayer, who fled their Frankfurt home in 1938 to Brussels until their passage to Britain in August 1939.

However, they were unable to take belongings, including the 30 paintings, which were plundered by the Nazis. Along those taken were the expressionist "Flowers" painted in 1913 by Corinth, most of whose work the Nazis condemned as "degenerate."

After the war, Belgian authorities failed to establish to whom it belonged and entrusted



Johanna Geron / Reuters

The painting "Flowers" by Lovis Corinth is returned to representative and lawyer Imke Gielen of the descendants of the Jewish couple Gustav and Emma Mayer, more than 70 years after it was plundered by the Nazis during World War Two, at a Thursday ceremony at Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels, Belgium.

it to the museum in 1951, where it has since hung.

Museum chief Michel Draguet said it had been easier to find the original owners of artworks in the case of Jewish families living in Belgium, because of the archives

and contacts.

"Here, it was impossible even to know if this work is coming from Germany, from another country," Draguet told Reuters.

The museum, which appealed to the public

in 2008 on its website for information on the painting, also launched on Thursday two rooms containing and addressing Nazi-looted art and works taken by Belgium during its colonial period.



Contributed / Pequot Lakes Chamber of Commerce

Wooden pucks with handles take the place of curling stones in ice bocce.

BOCCE

From Page 1

The director of the Pequot Lakes Chamber of Commerce said she thought the winter-time activity would be a cool way to attract visitors and business to the city of almost 2,400 residents.

"We just don't have any really big events that happen in the winter ... in Pequot, so I wanted to bring some people into the area," Heinen said of Pequot Lakes, which is known for its larger-than-life fishing bobber water towers.

Bobber Bocce on Ice is a hybrid of bocce ball and curling played on plowed lanes on the ice. Bocce is traditionally played on natural soil and asphalt courts up to 90 feet in length.

"Ice bocce is different from regular bocce ball because we actually use pieces of wood with a handle on them. And you have a lane that's all ice,"

Heinen said.

Bocce is an Italian game. The basic principle of the sport is to roll a bocce ball closest to the target ball, which is called a pallina.

Heinen said of Saturday's Bobber Bocce on Ice, "You take this big log with the handle, and you slide it down the ice lane to get closest to the small little ball ... so it's very similar to bocce but instead of using the ball, we use logs on lanes on frozen ice."

In that sense, it shares similarities with curling, which is among the games at the Winter Olympics in Beijing that are going on until Feb. 20. Curling is played on ice, typically by two teams of four players each, where people slide a granite rock toward a target circle at the other end of the rink.

"You don't, like, throw the ball like you normally would," Heinen said of ice bocce. "You actually have to put your foot in a half-drilled hole on one side of the lane, and you get down on your hands and knees, and

you can actually push it down and slide it."

The event sign-in for teams begins at 8 a.m. and the tournament starts at 9 a.m. Prizes will be awarded for first-, second- and third-place teams in the form of a \$500, \$300 and \$150 cash prize, respectively.

"The challenging part of it is the ice is never, like, perfect, right? It's never super smooth everywhere ... but it's also pushing a log down the lane — they're definitely not light — so it is a challenge to get it to exactly where you want it to be on that lane," Heinen said.

Heinen called ice bocce "fun," "unique" and "a way to get out and play," especially during the long and arguably dreary winter months for those who may be experiencing cabin fever.

"I think the big thing is it just gets you out to meet new people ... and just to play something totally different and new and something that really isn't super common in Pequot," Heinen said.

The Brainerd Jaycees will sell alcohol from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and SKOL Food Truck will sell food from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the event. There will be a 50/50 raffle drawing at 3 p.m. with half of the proceeds to support a Pequot Lakes splash pad and the other half to go to the raffle winner.

"The nice thing about this event is we actually are also having a live band out there from 11 to 3 called 'My Famous Friends' ... and they're going to be playing out there, all generator-operated ... because we're not by a restaurant or anything like that. It is just on a lake," Heinen said.

The double elimination-style tournament ensures the teams of four play at least twice if they do not advance to the next round.

"You actually go down and back three different times on this ice lane, so that makes one game — down and back three different times — and you want to have the highest score. If you have the highest

score in the team and you win and go on to the next," Heinen said.

There will also be bonfires to keep things warm, and games for the spectators, such as life-sized Jenga.

"I think 27 teams is phenomenal and something that I wasn't necessarily expecting," Heinen said of the teams that paid \$100 each to compete in the Bobber Bocce on Ice tournament. "I think that's 108 people that are just playing."

There will be no parking on the ice near the event. Motorists may park at TDS Telecom, the Pequot Lakes High School along Government Drive, the Pequot Lakes Chamber of Commerce building or at St. Alice Catholic Church.

There will be a shuttle to take people from TDS Telecom in downtown Pequot Lakes to Sibley Lake. The free shuttle service will run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

FRANK LEE may be reached at 218-855-5863 or at frank.lee@brainerddispatch.com. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/DispatchFL.

CRASH

From Page 1

"I pulled my snowmobile to the side of the trail and turned around," Smith wrote. "I could see people getting off their snowmobiles and running towards what appeared to be two snowmobiles that crashed together. As I ran towards the two snowmobiles, others in the group where already rolling the snowmobiles apart. I could see there was an individual that appeared to have been under the snowmobiles."

That individual was Jasinski, Smith soon discovered.

According to Smith's report: "I asked what had happened and Jasinski stated the following:

► He was following behind me

► The left turn came up suddenly

► While slowing to make the turn, a ski on his snowmobile came in contact with the back of my snowmobile track

► That contact made his snowmobile roll to the side and fell off his machine

► He was then struck by another snowmobile

"I asked him whose snowmobile made contact with him, at which time Mark Johnson stated that it was his snowmobile that made contact with Jasinski.

"Johnson stated:

► He was following behind Jasinski

► He saw snowmobiles ahead making a left turn

► He slowed down

► He saw Jasinski's snowmobile roll to the side and Jasinski fall off it

► He turned his handlebars to the right to

avoid hitting Jasinski

► Once off the snowmobile, Jasinski's momentum carried him in front of Johnson's path and he was not able to avoid a collision

► His snowmobile struck Jasinski and stopped on top of him"

An initial Morrison County sheriff's statement, released Monday, was consistent with Smith's report, but a second "amended" statement suggested Johnson's snowmobile never struck Jasinski. An incident report released Tuesday also suggested all of Jasinski's injuries — he was the only one injured — were from being thrown and landing, not from any contact with Johnson's sled. An additional report released Wednesday by the sheriff's office referred

to the DNR reports for further details.

New sheriff's report

Wednesday's sheriff's report notes that both senators' snowmobiles — Jasinski's was red and Johnson's was blue — were demonstration models. "It should be noted that both of these snowmobiles are brand new owned by Polaris and were currently demo models with no registration displayed," according to the report, written by officer Mark Dziejewczynski.

That report also clarifies another question that surfaced in the previous report: the status of Johnson's snowmobile safety training certification. Neither Jasinski, 55, nor Johnson, 38, were able to furnish proof of such certification. It's not required for Jasinski,

but is for Johnson, under state law that requires anyone born after Dec. 31, 1976, to have such a certificate before operating a snowmobile.

Johnson told Dziejewczynski that he had completed certification, but the endorsement on his driver's license failed to transfer when he renewed his license to Minnesota's new enhanced license, which is processed using new software. Dziejewczynski was sympathetic. "I advised Johnson that I personally had the same thing happen to me as I recently renewed my driver's license to the enhanced version as well, and my snowmobile endorsement wouldn't transfer over either," he wrote.

A spokeswoman for Johnson confirmed he has a valid certificate.

"There are no charges pending," his report concludes.

In a statement earlier this week, Jasinski described his injuries and outlook.

"The accident left me with three broken ribs, a broken pelvis, and fractured L5 vertebrae," he said. "Because of the great care I received both at the accident site and in the hospital, I am expected to make a full recovery. ... While the physical recovery may be long, I'm ready to participate with remote access for hearings and floor sessions and fully engage in this session."

Johnson also issued a statement wishing "my friend and colleague the best in his recovery and look forward to having him back here at the Capitol as soon as he is able."



Kirby Lee / USA Today Sports

San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Brandon Aiyuk (11) is tackled by Los Angeles Rams cornerback Darius Williams (11) in the second half during the NFC Championship Game on Jan. 30 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California.

UNDER-THE-RADAR PLAYERS WHO COULD PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SUPER BOWL

By DJ Bien-Aime II
New York Daily News

We all know who the stars are for Sunday's Super Bowl between the Bengals and Rams.

For the NFC champion Rams (15-5) — playing the game in their new stadium in L.A. — it's QB Matthew Stafford, WRs Cooper Kupp and Odell Beckham, and Jalen Ramsey and Von Miller on defense. With the AFC champion Bengals (13-7), it's QB Joe Burrow, WRs Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins, RB Joe Mixon and Trey Hendrickson and Jessie Bates on defense.

But it's a team game and the Super Bowl is known for turning lesser-known players into heroes. With that in mind, who are some of the under-the-radar players on both sides who could end up being a big factor in determining who walks away with the Lombardi Trophy on Sunday night.

Here are three players from each team to watch out for:

Bengals

► Tyler Boyd, WR

With the Bengals, the attention goes to their four dynamic playmakers (Burrow, Chase, Higgins and Mixon). And rightfully so. But Boyd is the slot



Joseph Maiorana / USA Today Sports

Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Tyler Boyd (83) celebrates the fourth quarter touchdown against the Kansas City Chiefs on Jan. 2 at Paul Brown Stadium.

receiver who makes underneath catches to keep drives alive. He had 828 yards on 67 catches in the regular season and 40 of them went for first downs. Boyd also scored a touchdown against the Raiders in the Bengals home playoff win. A lot of attention will be paid to Cincy's Big 4 so Boyd will have opportunities to take advantage of favorable coverage.

► Mike Hilton, CB

Most people outside of Cincinnati don't know who Hilton is, but as the Bengals' slot corner he will be tasked with the impossible matchup of guarding Cooper Kupp. Kupp secured the triple crown of receiving (145 catches for 1,947 yards with 16 touchdowns) in the regular season. And he has continued his hot play in

SUPER BOWL: Page 13

The Packers' Aaron Rodgers wins second consecutive NFL MVP

Field Level Media

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers was selected the AP NFL Most Valuable Player on Thursday during the NFL Honors celebration at Inglewood, Calif., earning the designation for the second year in a row and becoming a four-time winner.

Rodgers, who guided the Packers to the NFC's No. 1 seed in this season's playoffs, also was named MVP 2011, 2014 and 2020.

The only other player to win the honor at least four times was Peyton Manning, who was a five-time MVP. Manning presented the award to Rodgers on Thursday.

In 16 games this season, Rodgers passed for 4,115 yards and 37 touchdowns against just four interceptions in leading the Packers to a 13-3 record. Green Bay was eliminated in the divisional round of the playoffs by the San

Francisco 49ers.

Rodgers thanked his teammates and gave credit to Packers coach Matt LaFleur for putting him in a position to have success.

"You're a huge part of this and I love you and I appreciate you," Rodgers said. "Thanks for trusting me, supporting me, empowering me and making things easy for me. I appreciate you, buddy."

Pittsburgh Steelers outside linebacker T.J. Watt was chosen the NFL Defensive Player of the Year, while Los Angeles Rams wide receiver Cooper Kupp was named NFL Offensive Player of the Year.

Watt's 22.5 sacks in the 2021 season tied the NFL record set by the New York Giants' Michael Strahan in 2001. The award was presented to Watt by his brother J.J. Watt of the Arizona Cardinals, a three-time



Jeff Hanisch / USA Today Sports

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers during a NFC Divisional playoff football game Jan. 22 against the San Francisco 49ers at Lambeau Field.

defensive player of the year (2012, 2014, 2015).

"My teammates, coaches back home in Pittsburgh, this truly is not possible without you guys," said T.J. Watt, a first-round pick by the Steelers in 2017 who has 72 career sacks. "There are so many guys that put in so much work that goes unnoticed — and that goes for the guys in the cafeteria to the guys who are taping ankles. This one is for all of you guys."

Kupp claimed the Offensive honor after claiming the wide receiv-

er triple crown, leading the league in receptions (145), yards (1,947) and touchdowns (16). The last wide receiver to lead the league in all three categories was Steve Smith in 2005.

Kupp's exploits helped the Rams to a spot in Sunday's Super Bowl against the Cincinnati Bengals. In Los Angeles' 20-17 NFC Championship Game victory against the San Francisco Giants, Kupp had 11 catches for 142 yards and two touchdowns.

MVP: Page 13

Wild's Foligno is suspended for 2 games for kneeing

By Dane Mizutani
St. Paul Pioneer Press

ST. PAUL — For the first time in his 11-year NHL career, Minnesota Wild winger Marcus Foligno has been suspended.

The supplemental discipline came down on Thursday afternoon when the NHL Department of Player Safety announced it had suspended Foligno for two games for his actions in the Wild's 2-0 loss to the Jets in Winnipeg on Tuesday night.

As the rivalry game reached a boiling point, Foligno dropped the gloves with Jets winger Adam Lowry following a scrum near the benches. With both players on the ice surface, Foligno appeared to knee Lowry in the head while the officials tried to break up the scuffle.

Asked about the action postgame, Foligno claimed it wasn't intentional.

"I saw them complaining about maybe I got my leg in there or something," he said. "That was me just kind of ticked off and trying to get at him. There was no intent to not throw with my fist or use another body part."

Unfortunately for Foligno, the league did not agree.

"This is an intentional decision by Foligno, and not a player accidentally falling or stumbling onto his opponent," the NHL Department of Player Safety stated. "He clearly and intentionally uses his knee to inflict force on the head of his vulnerable opponent."

"We have heard Foligno's argument that this was not a violent knee strike, or an exceptionally forceful blow, and we agree," the NHL Department of Player Safety continued.

"It is only the relative lack of force on this play that keeps Foligno from being subject to much more severe discipline for an action that is unacceptable for an NHL player to perform."

The suspension means Foligno will miss two games, both at Xcel Energy Center — against Carolina on Saturday and Detroit on Monday. He is eligible to return to the Wild lineup on Wednesday night during a rematch with the Jets in Winnipeg.

Get the popcorn ready.

Duhaime elevated

While the Wild were hoping for the best when it came to Foligno's suspension, they were clearly preparing for the worst.

Instead of skating Foligno on his regular line during Thursday's practice, coach Dean Evason opted to elevated rookie winger Brandon Duhaime to play alongside center Joel Eriksson Ek and opposite winger Jordan Greenway.

"Just an opportunity to get Duhaime a few more touches with that group," Evason said. "We just wanted the touches to go that way today."

Those touches will pay off now that Foligno is officially suspended.

Dumba returns

The good news for the Wild is defenseman Matt Dumba appears to be on the mend. He participated in Thursday's practice after missing the past couple of games with an upper-body injury.

Will he be ready to go this weekend?

"We will have to see how he comes out of it today," Evason said. "He looked real good."



James Carey Lauder / USA Today Sports

Linesman Kory Nagy watches as Minnesota Wild left wing Marcus Foligno, left, and Winnipeg Jets center Adam Lowry (17) fight in the third period Tuesday at Canada Life Centre in Winnipeg.

WRESTLING

Warriors split at Mounds View

MOUNDS VIEW — Going up against the Easton Dircks, Gabe Wagner and Dalton Barrett each tallied two pins as Brainerd split two matches at the Mounds View Triangular Thursday, Feb. 11.

The Warriors fell to Mounds View 42-27, but defeated Edina 48-36.

Brainerd led 21-18 after a pin by Wagner, but they only recorded six points after that on a pin from Barrett.

Going up against the Hornets and with the match tied at 18, the Warriors won the next three matches on pins from Isaiah Jillson, Wagner and Damien Benthon to take the lead for good at 36-18.

Mounds View 42, Brainerd 27
Brainerd 48, Edina 36
106: Landon Elling 1-1
113: Dossidy Fleischhacker 1-0, Easton Dircks 1-0
120: Easton Dircks 1-0, Cade Ostrowski 1-0
126: Cade Ostrowski 1-0, Isaiah Germann 1-0
132: Elijah Germann 1-1
138: Hunter Bergin 0-2
145: Isaiah Jillson 2-0
152: Gabe Wagner 2-0
160: Damien Benthon 1-1
182: Shane Carlson 1-1
195: Carson Faehrich 0-2
220: Titus Thomposn 0-1
285: Dalton Barrett 2-0
Overall: Brd 12-14, Next: Brainerd at Mound Westonka 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11.



Wagner

AREA BOYS BASKETBALL

Flyers drop close game to Mora

LITTLE FALLS — Austin Neu finished with 17 points and Jaxon Janski was close behind with 15, but Little Falls came up on the short end of a 58-53 game against Mora in a Granite Ridge Conference game

Thursday, Feb. 10. Beau Thoma also hit double figures with 11 points for Little Falls. Mora 28 30 — 58 Little Falls 30 23 — 53 LITTLE FALLS Jaxon Janski 15, Beau Thoma 11, Riley Czech 2, Austin Neu 17, Brock Lutzke 1, Ethan Poser 3, Zach Gwosti 2, Elijah Schultz 2. FG 18-47 (38%), FT 12-20 (60%), 3-point 5-23 (22%), Conference: 4-5, Overall: 6-12. Next: at Willmar 2:45 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12.

Albany 65, Pierz 58 PIERZ — Noah Oberfeld scored 24 points and the Pierz Pioneers tallied 42 second-half points, but couldn't overcome a 12-point deficit to Albany 65-58 in a Granite Ridge Conference game Thursday, Feb. 10. After scoring just 16 points in the first half, the Pioneers recovered in the second half and finished with a shooting percentage of 41% for the game. Albany 28 37 — 65 Pierz 16 42 — 58 PIERZ Joseph Stuckmayer 2, Andrew Winscher 2, Benjamin Virnig 3, Kirby Fischer 2, Zachary Jones 6, Noah Oberfeld 24, Eugene Skiba 3, Ian Oberfeld 16. FG 21-51 (41%), FT 6-14 (42%), 3-point 10-28 (35%), Conference: 2-7, Overall: 6-12. Next: vs. Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted at St. Cloud State University 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12.

percentage of 41% for the game. Albany 28 37 — 65 Pierz 16 42 — 58 PIERZ Joseph Stuckmayer 2, Andrew Winscher 2, Benjamin Virnig 3, Kirby Fischer 2, Zachary Jones 6, Noah Oberfeld 24, Eugene Skiba 3, Ian Oberfeld 16. FG 21-51 (41%), FT 6-14 (42%), 3-point 10-28 (35%), Conference: 2-7, Overall: 6-12. Next: vs. Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted at St. Cloud State University 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12.

SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL

AREA EVENTS

Friday, Feb. 11 BOYS BASKETBALL Brainerd at Sauk Rapids 7:15 p.m. Aitkin vs. Hinckley-Finlayson at Virginia 5:45 p.m. Detroit Lakes at Crosby-Ironton 7:15 p.m. Lake Region at St. Cloud Christian 6:30 p.m. Perham at Pequot Lakes 7:15 p.m. Sebekka at Pillager 7:30 p.m. Cass Lake-Bena at Pine River-Backus 7:30 p.m. Henning at Verdale 7:30 p.m. Menahga at Wadena-Deer Creek 7:30 p.m. GIRLS BASKETBALL Park Rapids at Aitkin 7:15 p.m. Lake Region at St. Cloud Christian 5 p.m. St. Cloud Cathedral at Little Falls 7:15 p.m. Mora at Pierz 7:15 p.m. Pine River-Backus at Blackduck 6 p.m. Detroit Lakes at Staples-Motley 7:30 p.m. Verdale at New York Mills 7:30 p.m. Wadena-Deer Creek at Pillager 6 p.m. BOYS HOCKEY Sauk Rapids at Brainerd 7:15 p.m. Little Falls at Detroit Lakes 7:15 p.m. Northern Lakes at Alexandria 7:15 p.m. WRESTLING Brainerd in Mound Westonka Invite 4 p.m. Wadena-Deer Creek at Fergus Falls Triangular 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 12 BOYS BASKETBALL Aitkin vs. Rock Ridge at Virginia 2:45 p.m. Park Rapids at Pequot Lakes 7:15 p.m. Little Falls at Willmar 2:45 p.m. Pierz vs. Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted at St. Cloud State 12:30 p.m. GIRLS BASKETBALL Brainerd at Bemidji 5:30 p.m. Hibbing at Crosby-Ironton 2:30 p.m. BOYS HOCKEY Centennial at Brainerd 3 p.m. Totino-Grace vs. Little Falls at Brooklyn Park 3 p.m. GIRLS HOCKEY No. 6 Sartell/Sauk Rapids at No. 3 Brainerd/Little Falls in Section 8-2A Quarterfinals 1 p.m. WRESTLING Crosby-Ironton at Morris Invite 10 a.m. GYMNASTICS Brainerd in Section 8-3A Championship at St. Cloud Tech 2 p.m. Little Falls in Section 8-1A Championship at Detroit Lakes BOYS SWIMMING AND DIVING Brainerd in Central Lakes Conference Championship at St. Cloud Tech 10 a.m. DANCE TEAM Pierz in Section 2-1A meet at Melrose 1:30 p.m. MEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL Mesabi Range at Central Lakes 3 p.m.

TV AND RADIO

Friday, Feb. 11 BASKETBALL: College women: Kent State at Akron, 6 p.m., ESPN2 College men: Connecticut at Xavier, 6 p.m. FS1 NBA: Denver at Boston, 6:30 p.m., NBATV NBA: Minnesota at Chicago, 7 p.m., BSN, KKIN-FM (94.3), KFGI-FM (101.5), WCCO-AM (830) College men: St. Bonaventure at St. Louis, 8 p.m., ESPN2 College men: Nevada at Utah State, 8 p.m., FS1 College men: Fresno State at Colorado State, 8:30 p.m., CBSN College men: UNLV at Boise State, 10 p.m., FS1 CORNHOLE American Cornhole League, 8:30 p.m., ESPN GOLF PGA Tour: Waste Management Phoenix Open, 2 p.m., GOLF HOCKEY: College men: Minnesota at Ohio State, 5:30 p.m., BTN College men: Omaha at Miami, 6 p.m., CBSN OLYMPICS: Men's skeleton (Final run) 7:55 a.m., USA Olympics Primetime, 7 p.m., NBC Men's hockey (U.S. vs. Canada), 10:10 p.m., USA WRESTLING College: Ohio State at Minnesota, 8 p.m., BTN Saturday, Feb. 12 BASKETBALL: College women: Navy at Army, 10 a.m., CBSN College men: 11 a.m., ESPN College men: 11 a.m., ESPN2 College men: Creighton at Georgetown, 11 a.m., FS1 College men: Seton Hall at Villanova, noon, FOX College men: Oklahoma at Kansas, noon, CBS College men: Navy at Army, 12:30 p.m., CBSN College men: 1 p.m., ESPN College men: 1 p.m., ESPN2 College men: Rutgers at Wisconsin, 1 p.m., FS1 College men: Memphis at Houston, 2:30 p.m., ABC College men: Indiana at Michigan State, 2:30 p.m., FOX College men: The Citadel at VMI, 2:30 p.m., CBSN College men: 3 p.m., ESPN College men: 3 p.m., ESPN2 College men: Marquette at Butler, 3:30 p.m., FS1 College men: Fordham at Duquesne, 4:30 p.m., CBSN College men: 5 p.m., ESPN College men: 5 p.m., ESPN2 College men: DePaul at Providence, 5:30 p.m., FS1 College men: 7 p.m., ESPN2 College men: Air Force at San Diego State, 7 p.m., CBSN NBA: Los Angeles Lakers at Golden State, 7:30 p.m., ABC College men: Penn State at Minnesota, 7:30 p.m., BTN, WW-WI-FM 95.9, KKIN-AM (930), KLT-FM (960), WWWI-AM 1270 College men: BYU at Pepperdine, 9 p.m., CBSN College men: 9 p.m., ESPN College men: 9 p.m., ESPN2 College men: 11 p.m., ESPN2 FISHING Bassmaster Elite Series: St. John's River Day 1, 7 a.m., FS1 GOLF PGA Tour: Waste Management Phoenix Open, noon, GOLF PGA Tour: Waste Management Phoenix Open, 2 p.m., CBS HOCKEY: College men: Minnesota at Ohio State, 5 p.m., BTN NHL: Carolina at Minnesota, 7 p.m., BSN, KKIN-AM (930), KUAL-FM (103.5), KSKK-AM (1070) LACROSSE College men: Loyola (MD) at Maryland, 11 a.m., BTN OLYMPICS Figure skating (Ice Dance: Rhythm Dance), 5 a.m., USA Olympics Primetime 7 p.m., NBC Women's Alpine (Downhill: training), 10 p.m., USA RUGBY Major League Rugby: Old Glory DC at Austin Gilgronis, 7:30 p.m., FS1 SOCCER: Premier League: Norwich City vs. Manchester City, 11:30 a.m., NBC WRESTLING College: Maryland at Rutgers, 1 p.m., BTN

HOCKEY

Table with columns for Professional NHL, Eastern Conference, Atlantic Division, Metropolitan Division, Western Conference, Central Division, Pacific Division, and Tuesday's Games.

AREA GIRLS BASKETBALL

Patriots knock off Esko in section contest

ESKO — Maci Martini scored a game-high 20 points as Pequot Lakes recorded their 15th-straight with a 71-54 triumph against Section 7-2A opponent Esko Thursday, Feb. 10.

The Patriots improved to 9-0 against section opponents and are currently No. 1 in the Section 7-2A standings. Esko dropped to 5-3 against section opponents and was

no. 3 in the standings. Kelsi Martini and Isabel Larson each added 10 points as the Patriots won for the 20th time. Esko 28 26 — 54 Pequot Lakes 39 32 — 71

ESKO Hannah Swanson 2, Kallie Sinnott 3, Jayden Karpinen 18, Aila Gabel 4, Avery Kuklinski 12, Emily Rengo 2, Kyra Johnson 10, Rachel Antonutti 3. FT 5-9 (56%). PEQUOT LAKES Isabel Larson 10, Kelsi Martini 10, Maci Martini 27, Sydnie Wgeishofski 2, Kaillyn Geschwill 3, Lauren Schultz 7, Reese Laposky 8, Ella Kratochvil 4, FT 8-11 (73%). Overall: 20-1. Next: hosts St. Cloud Cathedral 7:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15.

AREA GIRLS HOCKEY

Northern Lakes shuts out Morris-Benson in playoffs

BREEZY POINT — Section 6-1A Quarterfinals Thursday, Feb. 10. Rose Aldridge scored two goals and assisted on another as No. 3 seeded Northern Lakes beat No. 6 seeded Morris-Benson 4-0 in the

First period: NL-Rose Aldridge (Riley

Fogarty, Jada Brodzinski) PPG 2-48, NL-Aldridge (Fogarty) 11:19 Second period: NL-Natalie Stueven (Aldridge) 0:20 Third period: NL-Fogarty (Kiana Landt) Shots on goal: NL 42, MB 17 Goalies: NL-Kate Stephens (17 saves) Overall: NL 15-10-1. Next: Northern Lakes in Section 6-1A Semis TBA Tuesday, Feb. 15.

Manfred: Losing MLB games over lockout would be 'disastrous'

Reuters



Bob Levey / Getty Images / TNS

Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said on Thursday it would be "disastrous" if the lockout resulted in lost games for the 2022 regular season but is optimistic a new labor agreement will be reached in time to avoid that scenario.

MLB players have been locked out since early December and the March 31 start day for the 162-game regular season could be in jeopardy unless significant progress is made toward creating a new collective bargaining agreement.

"If I hadn't given consideration to what it would mean to miss games I wouldn't be doing my job obviously. I pay attention to that," Manfred told reporters at the owners' meeting in Orlando, Florida.

"I see missing games as a disastrous outcome for this industry and we are committed to making an agreement in an effort to avoid that."

Among the issues of the current dispute are owners and players not agreeing on service time toward free agency, playoff expansion, a luxury tax and possible salary floor, and several proposed rule changes.

The lockout is MLB's first work stoppage since the players' strike of 1994-95, a dispute that forced a premature end to one season, delayed the start of the next year's campaign and turned off fans, with attendances plummeting when play finally resumed.

Spring Training camps are scheduled to open next week in Arizona and Florida with exhibition games to start on Feb. 26. Manfred, who had not addressed the lockout since the dispute began, said four weeks of workouts would be preferable.

After an 11-day break, MLB will

Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred looks on prior to Game 1 of the World Series between the Atlanta Braves and the Houston Astros at Minute Maid Park on Oct. 26 in Houston.

meet with representatives from the MLB Players Association on Saturday in New York, where Manfred said the league will offer what he described as a "good faith" proposal in an effort to move the process forward.

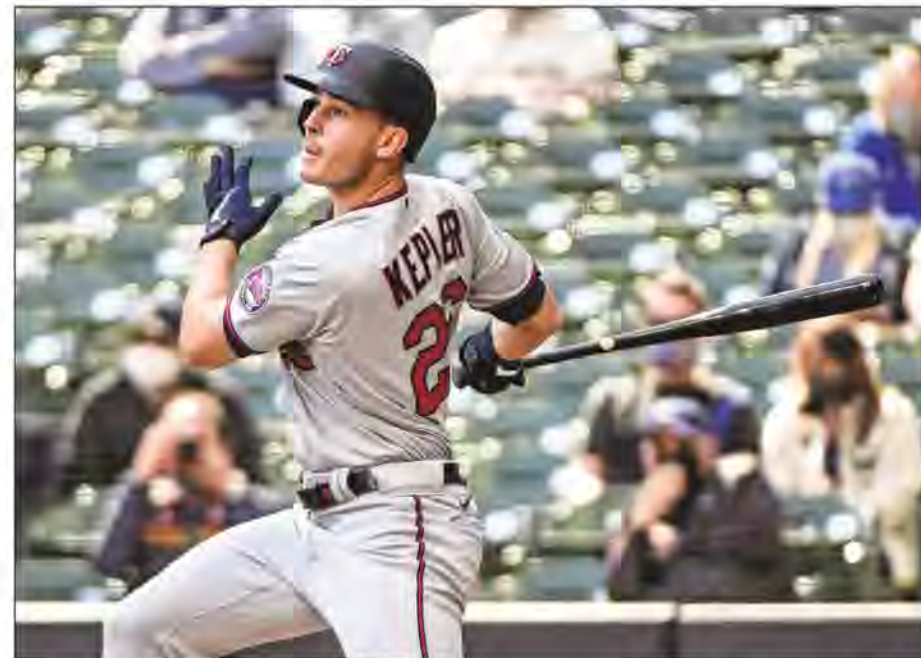
"The status of Spring Training is no change right now," said Manfred. "We're going to have a conversation with the MLBPA about the calendar; we understand where the calendar is."

"But until we have that conversation, and until we see how this session on Saturday goes, it's no change."

After a round of unsuccessful talks, owners requested the assistance of a federal mediator to help resolve the lockout but the MLBPA rejected the idea, saying the best way to resolve the dispute is by returning to the bargaining table.

Manfred described the latest proposal as a positive one and remains hopeful it will lead to a resolution.

"I'm an optimist. I believe we will have an agreement in time to play our regular season schedule," said Manfred.



USA Today Sports file photo

Minnesota Twins center fielder Max Kepler drives in two runs with a single against the Milwaukee Brewers at American Family Field in Milwaukee on April 4.

Team USA finishes strong, beats China, 8-0

By Mick Hatten
Brainerd Dispatch

BEIJING — After a bit of a slow start, the U.S. men's Olympic hockey team scored seven goals in the last two periods to beat China 8-0 in a Group A preliminary round game at National Indoor Stadium on Thursday.

Sean Farrell, a sophomore from Harvard, had a big game for the Americans with three goals and two assists. Farrell, a 20-year-old from Hopkinton, Mass., had a goal and an assist in the second period and two goals and an assist in the third period for Team USA. It is the first hat trick at the Olympics for an American male since Phil Kessel in 2014.

The college players on the U.S. roster played a big role in the win.

Michigan sophomore forward Brendan Brisson, Minnesota Duluth senior forward Noah Cates, Gophers junior forward Ben Meyers, Michigan sophomore Matty Beniers and former Yale forward Brian O'Neill all had goals for the Americans.

Meyers, a 23-year-old from Delano, also had two assists

in the game. Matthew Knies, a freshman forward for the Gophers, and Brock Faber, a sophomore defenseman for the Gophers, had assists in the game for Team USA.

Drew Comness, a sophomore at Boston University, made 29 saves for the Americans. At 19, Comness is the youngest goalie to start an Olympic game for the men's team.

Jeremy Smith made 47 saves for China, which is participating in Olympic hockey for the first time.

Team USA led 1-0 after the first period with Brisson, a 20-year-old from Manhattan Beach, Calif., picking up a power-play goal at 10:38. The Americans led 4-0 after the second period after goals by Cates (5:32), O'Neill (11:13) and Farrell (18:07). Farrell added Team USA's first and last goals of the third period to complete the hat trick.

Team USA is likely to get a much tougher test in its next game. The Americans play Canada at 10:10 p.m. Friday. Canada beat Germany 5-1 in its first game of the preliminary round.



Annegret Hilsle / Reuters

Noah Cates (27) of the United States celebrates scoring the Americans' second goal with teammates Sean Farrell (26) and Ben Meyers (39). Farrell, a freshman from Harvard, had three goals and two assists and Meyers added a goal for Team USA in an 8-0 win over China in an Olympic men's hockey Group A preliminary round game on Wednesday at National Indoor Stadium, Beijing.

Confident Buckeyes await Gophers as B1G crunch time arrives

By Jess Myers
Brainerd Dispatch

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Way back in November, the Ohio State Buckeyes were college hockey's great mystery when they visited Minneapolis for two games. Picked by the Big Ten coaches to finish seventh in the seven-team hockey conference, the Buckeyes were off to a 6-3-0 start and getting some buzz as a dark horse in the conference race.

The Minnesota Gophers dispelled that notion in the first 20 minutes of their weekend series. Or so they thought. Trailing 3-0 after one period at 3M Arena at Mariucci, the Buckeyes kept shooting, and caught Gophers goalie Jack LaFontaine on a rare off night. When the final horn sounded, the scoreboard read "Buckeyes 4, Gophers 3" and any remaining mystery about Ohio State had been solved.



Rohlik

"On the road, at Minnesota, down 3-zip, u s u a l l y that one's filed in the bank," said Steve Rohlik, the St. Paul native who is in his ninth season as the Buckeyes head coach. "For us to come back was a huge win for us. But it was a long time ago. I think they're a much better hockey team and



Bjorn Franke / University of Minnesota Athletics

Minnesota Gophers forward Jonny Sorenson celebrated his game-winning goal in the first period of his team's 2-0 blanking of the Ohio State Buckeyes on Nov. 13 at 3M Arena at Mariucci in Minneapolis.

hopefully we're a better hockey team."

LaFontaine responded with a 2-0 shutout (his last as a collegian) the next night for a weekend split, but the Buckeyes didn't leave the U of M campus defeated. They have gone 13-4-2 since then, and sit atop the Big Ten standings with three weeks left in the regular season.

After a COVID mess of a season a year ago, the Buckeyes brought in three of the most dynamic rookies in col-

lege hockey. Their top scorer is freshman Georgii Markulov. Their top defender is freshman Mason Lohrei. Their every night goalie is freshman Jakob Dobs.

Gophers coach Bob Motzko, who has known Rohlik, Buckeyes assistant coach Steve Miller, and their style for a long time is not surprised by any of it.

"They're well-coached, they don't beat themselves," Motzko said. "What's changed (since November) is the

big impact they've got from their freshmen. The goaltender, Lohrei, Georgii ... all freshmen and making a huge impact in their team, so they have their confidence going now."

The Gophers are a confident bunch as well, coming off a sweep of Michigan State which clinched home ice in the first round of the conference playoffs. They are still very much in the hunt for the conference title with six games to play, but need wins, and

some help, to overtake Michigan.

The two wins versus the Spartans last weekend marked the Gophers' first home sweep since October, but it is worth noting that since two losses versus Minnesota Duluth on Oct. 22-23, Motzko's team has won at least one game every weekend.

"I've liked our team all year. I know we don't sweep all the time, but we've found ways to keep getting better," he said. "We've had junk

thrown at us and our team keeps battling. And we've just got to keep doing it. What's important is we've been good all year long."

The three Gophers at the Olympics will miss this series and next weekend's trip to Penn State. Motzko said he is hopeful that injured forward Jaxon Nelson, who resumed skating this week, could return by next weekend.

Weekend details

Friday's game at Ohio State is a 5:30 p.m. CT start, while the Saturday rematch faces off at 5 p.m. CT. Both games will be broadcast by Big Ten Network with Dan Kelly and Paul Caponigri on the call.

On radio, the Gophers can be heard on 1130 AM / 103.5 FM in the Twin Cities with Wally Shaver and Frank Mazzocco describing the action. Saturday's game will be carried by KFAN+ which is 96.7 FM in the metro area.

Postgame interviews with coach Motzko and Gophers players can be seen live, roughly 10 minutes after the final horn at The Rink Live's Facebook page.

The Gophers lead the all-time series versus Ohio State with a 35-8-5 record. They first played on Dec. 26, 1968, during a Big Ten holiday tournament in Madison, Wis., with the Gophers prevailing 10-1.

SUPER BOWL

From Page 11

the Rams' playoff run with 25 receptions for 386 yards and four touchdowns. Hilton won't shut down Kupp, but he must prevent Kupp from destroying the Bengals' defense. It won't be 1-on-1 as he'll have safety help, but Hilton must execute against one of the best slot receivers in NFL history.

► Larry Ogunjobi, DT

The Bengals have allowed 127 rushing yards per game in the playoffs, but the Rams have struggled to run the ball in the postseason. They're averaging just 2.9 yards per attempt (283 yards on 97 carries). The former Charlotte star produced 44 run stops and nine run stiffs during the regular season. He also finished with seven sacks, so he can get after the passer, too. So the Bengals' best defensive tackle must be forceful in the run game and make the Rams one-dimensional on Sunday.

Rams

► Leonard Floyd, OLB

Donald and Miller are Hall of Fame talents and rightfully earn the bulk of the praise, but Floyd is a premier rusher even if most people outside of L.A. don't know much about the former Georgia star. He finished with 9.5 sacks during the regular season and netted one against Tom Brady as L.A. stunned the Bucs in the NFC title game to advance to the big game on Sunday. Simply put, the Bengals' offensive line isn't good. Burrow was sacked 51 times in the regular season and was sacked nine more times in the divisional round. The Bengals will have their hands full with Donald and Miller and will send more attention their way so Lloyd will have 1-on-1 opportunities and should dominate.

► Darius Williams, CB

Ramsey receives a ton of credit because he is arguably the best CB in the NFL. He earned first-team All-Pro honors again this season, the third of his career. But Williams is no slouch. QBs completed only 60% of their passes during the '21 campaign throwing in his direction and he had nine pass breakups.

Ramsey is probably going to be matched up with Chase a good amount in the Super Bowl. So if Williams can blanket Higgins, it'll make Burrow's job difficult. And if the Rams secondary can make Burrow uncomfortable — and hesitant — that'll increase their chances of winning.

► A'Shawn Robinson, DT

Robinson is one of L.A.'s better run stuffers, he finished the regular season with 49 run stops. The 49ers were bludgeoning teams on the ground throughout the regular season (127 yards per game) and playoffs (137 per game) until they ran into the Rams. The Rams crushed San Fran's rushing attack in the NFC title game, holding the Niners to a measly 50 yards on the ground. Obviously, the entire Rams' defensive front played a part in their success. But Robinson's strongest trait is shutting down rushing attacks. The Rams will need his prowess against Mixon, who finished with 1,205 yards and 13 rushing touchdowns during the regular season.

© 2022 New York Daily News. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency LLC.

MVP

From Page 11

"I have my teammates and coaches who have made it an absolute joy to come in and do the work every single day," Kupp said. "I have enjoyed it."

Kupp's teammate, offensive tackle Andrew Whitworth, received the NFL Walter Payton Man of the Year award for his charitable contributions off the field. Whitworth has a unique perspective on Sunday's Super Bowl as somebody who played for both teams. His first 11 seasons came with the Bengals before he played the past five seasons with the Rams.

Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker was honored with NFL Moment of the Year for his record-breaking, 66-yard field goal at Detroit on Sept. 26 as time expired in a 19-17 victory.

Bengals wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase was named NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year. Chase, the No.

5 overall selection in last year's draft, had 81 receptions for 1,455 yards and 13 touchdowns for the AFC champions.

Dallas Cowboys line-backer Micah Parsons was named unanimous NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year after recording 13 sacks and 84 tackles. The No. 12 selection in last year's draft out of Penn State had three forced fumbles in 16 games.

Quarterback Joe Burrow was named NFL Comeback Player of the Year after guiding the Bengals to Sunday's Super Bowl. Burrow's rookie season in 2020 was cut short after 10 games because of a devastating knee injury sustained against the Washington Football Team. He tore the ACL and MCL in his left knee while also damaging his PCL and meniscus.

The Tennessee Titans' Mike Vrabel was named NFL Coach of the year after guiding his team to a 12-5 record and a No. 1 seed in the AFC for this season's playoffs.

