

The MIFA YETIE - Prelims

Main Tournament

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri voters could get to decide whether to expand Medicaid health care coverage for thousands of low-income adults after a decade of repeated rejections by the state’s Republican-led Legislature. Supporters of a proposed constitutional amendment said Friday that they turned in nearly 350,000 initiative petition signatures to place the proposal on the November statewide ballot. That’s about twice as many valid signatures as needed, though election officials still must verify the names. Social distancing requirements and stay-at-home orders caused by the coronavirus outbreak have stymied other initiative petition drives in Missouri and elsewhere. But supporters of Missouri’s Medicaid expansion proposal began gathering signatures last fall and completed most of their work by Missouri’s March 10 presidential primary, before the coronavirus restrictions were put in place. Supporters estimate 230,000 additional low-income adults would enroll in Medicaid, if voters approve the expansion. Thirty-six states have adopted Medicaid expansion measures, including several Republican-leaning states where voters approved ballot measures. Missouri’s GOP-led Legislature has repeatedly defeated Democratic attempts to expand Medicaid under the terms of the health care law signed by President Barack Obama in 2010. That law provides a higher-than-usual federal funding share for states that expand Medicaid coverage to adults earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level, about \$17,600 for an individual or \$30,000 for a family of three.

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia’s top diplomat on Thursday angrily dismissed media reports alleging a Russian plot to poison the mayor of Prague and another official in the Czech capital amid a tug-of-war over a Soviet military commander’s statue. Respekt weekly said in its latest edition published on Monday that Czech intelligence services suspected a Russian agent was sent to Prague three weeks ago to poison Prague Mayor Zdenek Hrib and Prague 6 mayor Ondrej Kolar. The story was based on anonymous sources. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov ridiculed the claims, saying that the notion that Czech authorities spotted a Russian man with powerful poison ricin and let him through doesn’t make any sense. Czech officials didn’t comment, but Kolar said in a television interview Tuesday that he has been under police protection because of “some facts that have been found, the fact that there’s a Russian here whose goal is to liquidate me.” He added that the alleged assassin was also targeting Hrib and Pavel Novotny, Prague’s Reporyje district mayor. Moscow and Prague have been at loggerheads for weeks after Kolar’s district removed the statue of Soviet World War II military commander Ivan Konev whose armies liberated Prague from Nazi occupation. Officials in Prague 6 said the statue will be moved to a museum and a new monument honoring the city’s liberation will be installed in its place. The statue’s removal caused outrage in Russia, which has angrily lashed out at any attempts to diminish the nation’s decisive role in defeating the Nazis. Lavrov charged Thursday

that the Prague authorities' action violated a 1993 friendship treaty that carried a Czech pledge to protect memorials to Russian World War II heroes.

WASHINGTON (AP) — A man armed with an assault rifle was arrested after opening fire outside the Cuban Embassy in Washington early Thursday, his bullets tearing holes into the walls and pillars near the front entrance in what authorities suspect was a hate crime. The gunfire broke out around 2 a.m. outside the embassy in northwest Washington. Metropolitan Police Department officers were called to the scene after neighbors reported hearing gunshots, authorities said. No injuries were reported. Officers found the man, Alexander Alazo, 42, of Aubrey, Texas, armed with an assault rifle, and they and took him into custody without incident, police said. A police report obtained by The Associated Press describes the shooting as a “suspected hate crime” and says Alazo “knowingly discharged multiple rounds from an AK-47 rifle into the Cuban Embassy.” But the report also says Alazo’s motivation is unknown. Alazo was arrested on charges of possessing an unregistered firearm and ammunition, assault with intent to kill and possessing a high-capacity magazine, a U.S. Secret Service spokeswoman said. Alazo remained in custody Thursday. It wasn’t immediately clear whether he had a lawyer. Cuba’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that embassy staff members were “safe and protected” but that the shooting caused “material damage” to the building. Photos showed large holes left in the building’s facade near the front door and in pillars outside the building. The Cuban government didn’t know the suspect’s potential motives, the statement said, adding that the State Department was aware of the incident.

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Friday that Michigan’s stay-at-home order remains in effect despite Republicans’ refusal to extend her underlying coronavirus emergency declaration, as she amended it to allow construction, real estate and outdoor work to resume next week. The Democratic governor, who may be sued by the GOP-led Legislature, addressed reporters hours after President Donald Trump tweeted that she should “make a deal” with conservatives who protested her restrictions at the Capitol a day earlier. She denounced the protest as “disturbing,” noting there were swastikas, Confederate flags, nooses and some people with assault weapons who “do not represent who we are as Michiganders.” The state reported nearly 1,000 new COVID-19 cases and 77 additional deaths, bringing the total to 3,866 dead and more than 42,000 cases. Whitmer late Thursday issued directives both proclaiming that the COVID-19 emergency continues and declaring new states of emergency and disaster after the Legislature refused her request for a 28-day extension. The declarations are the foundation of her stay-home order and other measures to curb the spread of the virus. Republican lawmakers, who want more input on gradually restarting the economy, also voted to authorize a lawsuit challenging her authority and actions. Whitmer last week let some businesses reopen, subject to social distancing and other precautions. She said the Legislature’s actions Thursday, including passing a bill she will veto, were “incredibly reckless” and “lured all these people to Lansing and got people riled up.” On Friday, she allowed in-person work that is traditionally and primarily done outdoors — forestry workers, power equipment technicians, parking enforcers — to resume

next Thursday. Construction workers, real estate agents, appraisers, brokers, inspectors and surveyors also can work in person, as can manufacturing workers who make cubicles and other “workplace modification” items to help stop infections.

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Australian police fatally shot a man who stabbed and slashed seven people at and near a shopping mall on Friday, officials said. None of the victims of the rampage in the northwest coastal town of South Hedland suffered life-threatening injuries. Five were hospitalized with stab wounds, including two who remain in serious but stable condition, officials said. Police have not revealed a motive. There was no indication the assailant, aged in his 30s, was politically or ideologically motivated, Western Australia state Police Commissioner Chris Dawson said. The assailant first stabbed a man at a motel near the mall and then another man who was sitting in a car at a nearby fast food restaurant, police said. He then knifed two men and three women at the mall, including a woman pushing a baby carriage. The child was not injured. Two police officers Tasered the man but he still lunged at them with the knife, Dawson said. A policeman fired several shots and killed him, he said.

The weather for Grand Rapids

Mostly Sunny	69°/37°	10%
Partly Cloudy	59°/41°	10%

MARQUETTE, Mich. (AP) — Northern Michigan University in the Upper Peninsula said the fall term will open with classes on campus. “We feel confident that every precaution will be taken to protect our entire campus community, while being able to provide a robust learning and living experience for students,” President Fritz Erickson said. NMU in Marquette is one of the first state universities to declare plans for the next school year. Trustees approved the plan Thursday. Colleges and universities emptied early because of the coronavirus and turned to online instruction. “Unless some external force stops us, we will have face-to-face instruction at Northern in fall,” said board chairman Steve Mitchell. NMU has 7,600 undergraduate students. Marquette County has reported at least 50 cases of coronavirus and eight deaths. The Upper Peninsula has not been hit as hard as other areas of Michigan.

DETROIT (AP) — Lawyers are seeking testing for all Michigan prisoners and staff as well as other steps to protect them from the highly contagious coronavirus. A lawsuit, proposed as a class action, was filed against the state Corrections Department. At least 41 prisoners have died of complications from COVID-19, the respiratory illness caused by the coronavirus. Michigan

has roughly 38,000 prisoners but has tested only 3,100 so far, according to statistics posted online Wednesday night. Forty-five percent tested positive. The hot spots are Lakeland prison in Branch County and Parnall prison in Jackson County where 23 men became ill and died. Besides widespread testing, the lawsuit seeks free disinfectant supplies and soap, personal protection equipment, a 6-foot buffer between prisoners and other remedies. “Most of what is contained in this lawsuit are things the department has already been doing, and another request – to let out low-level prisoners to home confinement – would cause us to violate state law,” Corrections Department spokesman Chris Gautz said.

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — Jordan’s Foreign Ministry said Thursday that Israeli farmers will no longer be allowed to work their fields in an enclave of southern Jordan, ending a more than 25-year arrangement meant to shore up a historic peace agreement. The announcement reflects the poor relations between the countries, which have been underscored by Jordan’s vocal opposition to Israeli plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank. Under their landmark 1994 peace deal, Jordan granted Israel a 25-year lease on two small areas along their border, Baqura and Ghamr. Last year, Jordan said it would not renew the leases, but agreed to allow Israeli farmers to continue to harvest their crops in Ghamr, known to Israelis as Tsofar, for one more season. It required the farmers, however, to obtain visas and enter the country through official border crossings, instead of the former system of allowing them to enter the areas freely. On Thursday, Jordan’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Ambassador Dhaifallah Al-Fayez, said the additional harvesting period “will end this evening.” Israel’s Foreign Ministry had no immediate comment. The peace treaty, Israel’s second with an Arab nation, began with great optimism, but relations have steadily deteriorated. The accord remains a vital strategic asset for both countries, which maintain tight security cooperation and joint economic projects. But Israel’s occupation of the West Bank and its policies in east Jerusalem, where Jordan has custodial rights over Muslim holy sites, have repeatedly raised tensions. A large part of Jordan’s population is Palestinian, and public opinion has remained largely against normalized relations with Israel.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on Friday emphatically denied all allegations from a former Senate staffer that he sexually assaulted her in the early 1990s, declaring flatly “this never happened.” Biden’s first public remarks on the accusation by a former employee, Tara Reade, come at a critical moment for the presumptive Democratic nominee as he tries to relieve mounting pressure after weeks of leaving denials to his campaign. “I’m saying unequivocally, it never, never happened,” the former vice president and senator said in an interview on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.” Biden said he will ask the National Archives to determine whether there is any record of a complaint being filed, as Reade has claimed. He said the Archives was the only possible place a complaint would be, and that his Senate papers held under seal at the University of Delaware do not contain personnel records. “The former staffer has said she filed a complaint back in 1993,” Biden said. “But she does not have a record of this alleged complaint.” Reade did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday. The Archives deflected inquiries to Capitol Hill: “Any records of Senate personnel complaints from

1993 would have remained under the control of the Senate.” Senate officials did not immediately respond to a request for information. Biden, in his TV interview, said “there are so many inconsistencies” in Reade’s various accounts. But he also said he does not “question her motive.” He said that over his five decades in public life, none of his employees was asked to sign a nondisclosure agreement.

CLEVELAND (AP) — Indians reliever Emmanuel Clase has been suspended 80 games by Major League Baseball for testing positive for a banned performance-enhancing drug. Clase was acquired from the Texas Rangers this winter in Cleveland’s trade of two-time Cy Young winner Corey Kluber. The commissioner’s office said the 22-year-old Clase tested positive for Boldenone, an anabolic steroid. The hard-throwing right-hander was expected to have a major role at the back end of the Indians’ bullpen this season. Clase’s suspension will not begin until the start of the 2020 regular season, which has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If the season doesn’t cover 80 games, MLB and the players’ association are still working out if any carry over will apply for 2021. The Indians said they were “disappointed” by Clase’s suspension. “We fully support Major League Baseball’s policy and its efforts to eliminate performance-enhancing drugs from our game,” the team said in a statement. “We have been in contact with Emmanuel, and we will welcome him back after the discipline has been served.” Clase made his debut with the Rangers in August. He appeared in 21 games, going 2-3 with a 2.31 ERA. He struck out 21 in 23 1-3 innings.

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced an immediate ban Friday on the sale and use of assault-style weapons in Canada, two weeks after a gunman killed 22 people in Nova Scotia. “Canadians need more than thoughts and prayers,” he said, rejecting the reaction of many politicians after mass shootings. Trudeau cited numerous mass shootings in the country, including the rampage that killed 22 in Nova Scotia April 18 and 19. He announced the ban of over 1,500 models and variants of assault-style firearms, including two guns used by the gunman as well as the AR-15 and other weapons that have been used in a number of mass shootings in the United States “You do not need an AR-15 to take down a deer,” Trudeau said. “So, effective immediately, it is no longer permitted to buy, sell, transport, import or use military-grade, assault weapons in this country.” There is a two-year amnesty period while the government creates a program that will allow current owners to receive compensation for turning in the designated firearms or keep them through a grandfathering process yet to be worked out. Under the amnesty, the newly prohibited firearms can only be transferred or transported within Canada for specific purposes. Owners must keep the guns securely stored until there is more information on the buyback program. Mary-Liz Power, a spokeswoman for Canada’s public safety minister, said details of how the buyback program will work will be determined by the government and the other parties in Parliament. Trudeau said the weapons were designed for one purpose and one purpose only: to kill the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time. “Today we are closing the market for military-grade assault weapons in Canada,” he said. Mass shootings are relatively rare in Canada, but Trudeau said they are happening more often. Trudeau has said his

government would introduce further gun control legislation prohibiting military-style assault weapons, a measure that had already been planned before the coronavirus pandemic interrupted the current parliamentary session.

CHICAGO (AP) — Marc Eversley gets a chance to help restore an iconic NBA franchise and set an example for the city's youth. He welcomes the opportunities. A former Nike executive who spent the past four years in Philadelphia's front office, Eversley was introduced as the Bulls' general manager on Friday. He succeeds the fired Gar Forman and will work under new top executive Arturas Karnisovas. Eversley also becomes the Bulls' first black general manager, after spending the past two years as the 76ers' senior vice president of player personnel. "It means a lot," he said. "I take pride in that. I think it's a tremendous responsibility. I am a black man, I'm in a leadership position now in a city with so many black youths. I see this as a great opportunity. I think being visible is going to be important. And being invested is going to be important. I think this position with the Bulls provides me with some resources to help drive some change." Karnisovas said "it's our responsibility" and "it falls on our shoulders" to seek diversity. He will work with Eversley to transform a young team that expected to contend for a playoff spot. Instead, the Bulls were 11th in the Eastern Conference at 22-43 and finishing their third straight losing season when the NBA suspended play due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks closed broadly lower on Wall Street Friday after Amazon and other big companies reported disappointing results, the latest evidence of how the coronavirus pandemic is hobbling the economy and hurting corporate earnings. A day after closing out its best month since 1987, the S&P 500 fell 2.8%. The slide gave the benchmark index its second-straight weekly loss. The selling accelerated as the day went on, with energy stocks taking the biggest losses. Technology stocks and companies that rely on consumer spending accounted for a big slice of the decline. Amazon sank 7.6% after it reported profit for the latest quarter that fell short of Wall Street's forecasts. A sharp increase in costs related to providing deliveries safely during the pandemic outweighed a big increase in revenue. The retail giant's movements have an outsized sway on the S&P 500 because it's the third-largest company in the index. "We all had these great expectations for Amazon," said J.J. Kinahan, chief strategist with TD Ameritrade. "The stock ran up amazingly because we were expecting their earnings to be good." The S&P 500 gave up 81.72 points to close at 2,830.71. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 622.03 points, or 2.6%, at 23,723.69. At one point, the index was down 700 points. The Nasdaq, which is heavily weighed with technology stocks, slid 284.60 points, or 3.2%, to 8,604.95. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks fell more than the rest of the market, shedding 50.18 points, or 3.8%, to 1,260.48. Wall Street has been bracing for a poor showing by companies this earnings season due to the economic shock from the coronavirus. Many companies have pulled their earnings guidance for the rest of the year, citing uncertainty about how much of an impact the outbreak will have on their business and the economy, which is now in a recession.

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — NASCAR is preparing to be the first major U.S. sport to restart its season during the coronavirus pandemic — a welcomed return to racing and one that will be closely watched by the public and other professional leagues for missteps. More than 700 people — no fans — are expected to be at the track when the stock cars return in front of a national television audience on May 17 in Darlington, South Carolina. It is NASCAR's moment to shine. A mistake could be a setback for other sports eager to get going and start earning revenue that has been on hold for the past month. Darlington Raceway will host the first of seven races over 11 days, using both Darlington and Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, North Carolina. NASCAR worked with health professionals on a plan to meet federal guidelines and presented it to public health officials in the Carolinas. Suggestions were returned to NASCAR. For at least the first seven races, O'Donnell said, NASCAR wants to use venues located within driving distance of teams based in the Charlotte area to eliminate air travel and hotel use. Team rosters are limited to 16 participants, which includes the driver, the spotter and the owner. NASCAR has recommended those who travel to the tracks do not also go back to work in the race shops, a potential challenge for low-budget teams that might not even have 16 full-time employees.