SUNDAY

SUNDAY		
BASKETBALL	Time	TV
Men's college, Rhode Island at George Washington		NBCSN
Women's college, Purdue at Michigan St.	8:30 a.m.	FS1
Women's college, North Carolina at NC State	9 a.m.	ESPN2
Women's college, Syracuse at Virginia Tech	9 a.m.	Root
Women's college, Tennessee at Georgia	9 a.m.	SEC
Men's college, Michigan at Ohio St.	10 a.m.	CBS
Men's college, Cincinnati at Houston	10 a.m.	ESPN
Women's college, Ohio St. at Michigan	11 a.m.	ESPN2 Root
Women's college, Georgia Tech at Boston College Women's college, Florida at Missouri	11 a.m. 11 a.m.	SEC
Men's college, Maryland at Rutgers	noon	Big Ten
Women's college, Kentucky at South Carolina	noon	ESPN
Women's college, Oregon at USC	noon	Pac-12
NBA, Boston at New Orleans	12:30 p.m.	ABC
Men's college, Davidson at St. Bonaventure	12:30 p.m.	NBCSN
Men's college, UNLV at San Jose St.	1 p.m.	CBSSN
Women's college, Oregon St. at UCLA	1 p.m.	ESPN2
Women's college, Texas A&M at Ole Miss	1 p.m.	SEC
Men's college, Penn St. at Iowa	2 p.m.	FS1
Women's college, Arkansas at LSU	3 p.m.	SEC
Men's college, Navy at American	3 p.m.	CBSSN
Men's college, Wisconsin at Northwestern	4 p.m.	Big Ten
Men's college, Butler at Xavier	4 p.m.	FS1
NBA, Brooklyn at L.A. Clippers	5 p.m.	ESPN
HORSE RACING		
America's Day at the Races GOLF	10 a.m.	FS2
PGA Tour, The Genesis Invitational	10 a.m.	Golf
PGA Tour, The Genesis Invitational HOCKEY	noon	CBS
NHL, New Jersey at Washington	11 a.m.	NBC
NHL, Philadelphia vs. Boston	4:30 p.m.	NBCSN
WRESTLING		
College, Nebraska at Illinois	11 a.m.	ESPNU
College, Oklahoma at Oklahoma St.	3 p.m.	ESPNU
College, Iowa at Wisconsin MOTOR SPORTS	6 p.m.	Big Ten
NASCAR Cup Series, Daytona road course SOCCER	noon	FOX
Women's, SheBelieves Cup, United States vs. Brazil	noon	FS1
Women's, SheBelieves Cup, Argentina vs. Canada		FS2
GYMNASTICS	·	
Women's college, California at Oregon St. TRACK AND FIELD	2 p.m.	Pac-12
American Track League TENNIS	2 p.m.	ESPN
WTA, Adelaide; ATP, Singapore	4:30 p.m.	Tennis
MONDAY		
SOCCER		
Premier League, Brighton & Hove Albion vs. Crystal Palace	11:55 a.m.	NBCSN
BASKETBALL		ECDN12
NBA G League, Long Island Nets vs. G League Ignite		ESPN2
Men's college, Pepperdine at Saint Mary's	3 p.m.	Root
Men's college, Syracuse at Duke	4 p.m.	ESPN
Men's college, Wofford at Samford Women's college, Creighton vs. Marquette	4 p.m. 4 p.m.	ESPNU FS1
Men's college, Texas Tech at Oklahoma St.	4 p.m. 6 p.m.	ESPN
Women's college, Arizona at Stanford	6 p.m.	ESPN2
NBA, Portland at Phoenix	6 p.m.	NBCSNW
Men's college, Oregon at USC	6 p.m.	FS1
WRESTLING	o p.m.	ГЭТ
College, Maryland at Penn St.	3 p.m.	Big Ten
College, Indiana at Purdue	5 p.m.	Big Ten
	•	_
Listings are the most accurate available. The Bulletin	is not respon	isible

Listings are the most accurate available. The Bulletin is not responsible for late changes made by TV stations.

SPORTS BRIEFING

BASKETBALL

NCAA to allow limited number of fans in men's, wom**en's tourneys** — The NCAA will allow a limited number of fans to attend all rounds of its men's basketball tournament in Indiana and later rounds of its women's tournament in Texas. The governing body said Friday it is permitting 25% capacity at the men's tournament venues to allow for social distancing. That figure will include all participants and essential staff along with the family members of team players and coaches. On the women's side, the NCAA will allow a capacity of up to 17% at each venue from the Sweet 16 to the Final Four. Games taking place for the first two rounds will limit attendance to team guests. In each case, attendees must wear face coverings. while cleaning and disinfecting efforts will be emphasized at venues in keeping with COVID-19 safety protocols. The NCAA said it acted in conjunction with local health officials for each tournament.

GOLF

Wind forces Genesis Invitational delay — Tiger Woods arrived at Riviera on Saturday just in time for the Genesis Invitational to be delayed by high wind. Woods, the tournament host, is not playing this year as he recovers from a fifth back surgery. He spent most of the late morning visiting with Dustin Johnson, Xander Schauffele and other players who had time on their hands. The wind was gusting to 35 mph, strong enough in such dry conditions that golf balls wouldn't stay on the green. And then a piece of communications equipment was toppled near the 14th tee, and officials halted play. It was supposed to resume after a delay of just over three hours. But as players were warming up, play was stopped again. Sam Burns, who had a five-shot lead going into the third round, was poised over his opening tee shot when the horn sounded to suspend the round. Johnson, who was five shots behind Burns, had a 15-foot eagle putt when play was stopped. Jordan Spieth, in contention for the third straight week, opened with a birdie and was six shots back.

- Bulletin wire reports



Lottery

results

As listed at

oregonlottery.org

and individual

lottery websites

POWERBALL

The numbers drawn Saturday night are: **(4)(8)(22)(32)(58) 4**

The estimated jackpot was not available at press time.

MEGABUCKS

The numbers drawn Saturday night are: (8)(12)(17)(26)(41)(42)

The estimated jackpot is now \$2.2 million.

SCOREBOARD

BASKETBALL Women's college

PAC-12 CONFERENCE **All Games** Conference Stanford .895 20 .909 Arizona .867 .786 882 UCLA .813 Oregon Southern Cal .600 12 .667 .526 Colorado .467 .538 .474 Oregon St. .455 10 10 .412 Washington St. Arizona St. .385 10 .556 Washington 11 11 .214 11 14 .353 .000 Friday's Late Games

No. 6 Stanford 80, Arizona St. 41 Washington 78, Utah 61

Sunday's Games No. 13 Oregon at Southern Cal, noon Utah at Washington St., noon Oregon St. at No. 8 UCLA, 1 p.m. Arizona St. at California, 1 p.m. Colorado at Washington, 2 p.m. **Monday's Game**

No. 10 Arizona at No. 6 Stanford, 6 p.m

TOP 25 SCORES Saturday's Games

No. 1 UConn 83, Xavier 32 No. 9 Maryland 94, Minnesota 62 No. 12 South Florida 78, Tulane 69 No. 16 Gonzaga 69, San Diego 47 Creighton 83, No. 19 DePaul 72 No. 19 West Virginia 81, TCU 78 No. 23 South Dakota St. 69, North Dakota St. 60 No. 24 Northwestern 67, Wisconsin 54 No. 25 Missouri St. 75, Bradley 62

Men's college PAC-12 CONFERENCE Conference All Gam						
	W	L	Pct	W	L	Pct
Southern Cal	12	3	.800	18	4	.818
UCLA	11	3	.786	15	5	.750
Oregon	9	3	.750	14	4	.778
Colorado	11	6	.647	17	7	.708
Stanford	10	7	.588	14	9	.609
Arizona	9	8	.529	15	8	.652
Oregon St.	7	9	.438	11	11	.500
Washington St.	7	10	.412	14	10	.583
Utah	6	9	.400	9	10	.474
Arizona St.	4	7	.364	7	10	.412
Washington	3	13	.188	4	17	.190
California	3	14	.176	8	16	.333
Saturday's Games						
Arizona 81, No. 17 Southern Cal 72						

Oregon 67, Utah 64 Arizona St. at UCLA, 7 p.m California at Washington, 7 p.m.

Washington St. 85, Stanford 76, 3OT Colorado 61, Oregon St. 57

Oregon 67, Utah 64

UTAH (9-10) Allen 6-14 3-5 15, Battin 1-4 0-0 2, Carlson 6-10 1-2 13, Larsson 4-8 4-4 13, Plummer 5-11 3-3 17, Martinez 1-3 0-0 2, Thioune 0-1 2-2 2, Brenchley 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 23-

Saturday's Box Scores

OREGON (14-4) Lawson 2-2 0-0 4, Omoruyi 4-8 3-4 13, Duarte 4-12 5-6 15, Richardson 4-10 0-0 9, Figueroa 6-8 0-1 15, Williams

3-6 0-0 7, Kepnang 0-3 0-0 0, Terry 2-3 0-0 4, Hardy 0-0 0-0 0. **Totals 25-52 8-11 67. Halftime**—Utah 35-33. **3-Point Goals**—Utah 5-18 (Plummer 4-8, Larsson 1-3, Allen 0-1, Carlson 0-1, Martinez 0-2, Battin 0-3), Oregon 9-23 (Figueroa 3-5, Omoruyi 2-3, Duarte 2-7, Williams 1-3. Richardson 1-4. Terry 0-1). **Fouled Out**—Omoruyi. **Rebounds**—Utah 25 (Carlson 9), Oregon 27 (Omoruyi 6). **Assists**—Utah 12 (Larsson 5), Oregon 12 (Omoruyi 3). **Total Fouls**— Utah 13, Oregon 15.

Colorado 61, Oregon St. 57

Halftime—Colorado 35-29. 3-Point Goals—Colorado 4-18 (Horne 2-3, Parquet 1-2, Wright 1-3, Daniels 0-1, Walton 0-2, da Silva 0-2, Schwartz 0-5), Oregon St. 6-22 (Thompson 3-7, Hunt 1-3, Reichle 1-5, Lucas 1-6,

No. 1 Gonzaga 106, San Diego 69 No. 2 Baylor vs. Oklahoma St., ppd. No. 5 Illinois 94, Minnesota 63 Duke 66, No. 7 Virginia 65 No. 8 Alabama 82, Vanderbilt 78 No. 9 Oklahoma 66, Iowa St. 56 No. 10 Villanova 68, UConn 60 No. 13 West Virginia 84, No. 12 Texas 82 No. 23 Kansas 67, No. 15 Texas Tech 61 No. 16 Florida St. 79, Pittsburgh 72 Kentucky 70, No. 19 Tennessee 55 No. 20 Missouri 93, South Carolina 78 No. 24 Arkansas at Texas A&M, ppd.

EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	Pct			
Phila.	20	10	.667			
Brooklyn	19	12	.613			
Milwaukee	17	13	.567			
Indiana	15	14	.517			
Boston	15	14	.517			
Toronto	15	15	.500			
Charlotte	14	15	.483			
New York	14	16	.467			
Chicago	13	16	.448			
Miami	13	17	.433			
Atlanta	12	17	.414			
Orlando	12	18	.400			
Washington	9	17	.346			
Cleveland	10	20	.333			
Detroit	8	21	.276			
W	ESTERN C					
	W	L	Pct			
Utah	24	6	.800			
L.A. Clippers	22	9	.710			
L.A. Lakers	22	9	.710			
Phoenix	19	10	.655			
Portland	18	10	.643			
San Antonio	16	11	.593			
Denver	16	13	.552			
Golden State	16	15	.516			
Memphis	13	13	.500			
Dallas	13	15	.464			
New Orleans	12	17	.414			
Sacramento	12	17	.414			
Houston	11	17	.393			
Oklahoma City	11 7	18	.379			
Minnesota	/ "://	23	.233			

Toronto 86, Minnesota 81 L.A. Clippers 116, Utah 112

Miami 96, L.A. Lakers 94 Phoenix 128, Memphis 97 Chicago 122, Sacramento 114 San Antonio at New York, ppd. Indiana at Houston, ppd.
Washington at Portland, late Sunday's Games Boston at New Orleans, 12:30 p.m.

Minnesota at New York, 4 p.m.

COLORADO (17-7) Battey 3-4 4-6 10, Walton 1-4 4-4 6, Parquet 1-3 0-0 3, Wright 7-12 6-6 21, Schwartz 2-9 2-3 6, da Silva 2-5 1-1 5, Daniels 0-1 0-0 0, Horne 3-5 2-2 10, Barthelemy 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 19-43 19-22 61.

0-00. **Iotals** 19-43 19-22 b1.

Alatishe 5-8 2-2 12, Silva 3-5 2-2 8, Lucas 1-9 2-2 5, Reichle 3-10 0-1 7, Thompson 6-17 3-4 18, Hunt 1-4 0-0 3, Andela 2-40 -1 4, Calloo 0-10-00, Frankin 0-0 0-0 0, Johnson 0-0 0-0 0. **Totals** 21-58 9-12 57.

6-22 (Inompson 5-7, Hunt 1-3, Reichle 1-5, Lucas 1-6, Calloo 0-1). Rebounds—Colorado 32 (Battey, Walton, Schwartz 6), Oregon St. 29 (Alatishe 10). Assists—Col-orado 8 (Wright 3), Oregon St. 14 (Thompson 7). Total Fouls—Colorado 16, Oregon St. 17.

Monday's Game Oregon at No. 17 Southern Cal, 6 p.m.

TOP 25 SCORES Saturday's Games

MD/

1½

3 4½

4½

5½ 6 6½

111/2

GB

21/2

41/2

71/2 8½ 9

10

11½ 11½

No. 25 San Diego St. at Fresno St.

	NBA						
	EASTERN CONFERENCE						
		W	L	Pct			
l	Phila.	20	10	.667			
l	Brooklyn	19	12	.613			
l	Milwaukee	17	13	.567			
l	Indiana	15	14	.517			
l	Boston	15	14	.517			
l	Toronto	15	15	.500			
l	Charlotte	14	15	.483			
l	New York	14	16	.467			
l	Chicago	13	16	.448			
l	Miami	13	17	.433			
l	Atlanta	12	17	.414			
l	Orlando	12	18	.400			
l	Washington	9	17	.346			
l	Cleveland	10	20	.333			
l	Detroit	8	21	.276			
l		WESTERN C					
l		W	L	Pct			
l	Utah	24	6	.800			
l	L.A. Clippers	22	9	.710			
l	L.A. Lakers	22	9	.710			
l	Phoenix	19	10	.655			
l	Portland	18	10	.643			
l	San Antonio	16	11	.593			
l	Denver	16	13	.552			
l	Golden State	16	15	.516			
l	Memphis	13	13	.500			
l	Dallas	13	15	.464			
l	New Orleans	12	17	.414			
ı	Sacramento	12	17	.414			

Friday's Late Games

Saturday's Games Charlotte 102, Golden State 100

Detroit at Orlando, 4 p.m.

Oklahoma City at Cleveland, 4 p.m. Phila, at Toronto, 4 p.m. Denver at Atlanta, 4:30 p.m. Brooklyn at L.A. Clippers, 5 p.m. Sacramento at Milwaukee 6 n m

MOTOR SPORTS

NASCAR Cup Series Daytona Road Course Lineup After Saturday qualifying; race Sunday At Daytona Beach, Fla. Lap length: 2.50 miles

(Car number in parentheses)
1, (9) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, .000 mph. 2, (34) Michael McDowell, Ford, .000. 3, (3) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, .000. 4, (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, .000. 5, (4) Kevin

Harvick, Ford, .000. 6, (37) Ryan Preece, Chevrolet, .000. 7, (7) Corey Lajoie, Chevrolet, .000. 8, (5) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, .000. 9, (42) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, .000. 10, (23) Bubba Wallace, Toyota, .000.

11, (22) Joey Logano, Ford, .000. 12, (20) Christopher Bell, Toyota, .000. 13, (41) Cole Custer, Ford, .000. 14, (18) Kyle Busch, Toyota, .000. 15, (2) Brad Keselowski, Ford,

16, (47) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Chevrolet, .000. 17, (1) Kurt Busch, Chevrolet, .000. 18, (14) Chase Briscoe, Ford, .000. 19, (19) Martin Truex Jr, Toyota, .000. 20, (77) Justin Haley, Chevrolet, .000.

Haley, Chevrolet, 000. 21, (51) Cody Ware, Chevrolet, .000. 22, (24) William Byron, Chevrolet, .000. 23, (52) Josh Bilicki, Ford, .000. 24, (8) Tyler Reddick, Chevrolet, .000. 25, (53) Garrett Smithley, Ford, .000. 26, (10) Aric Almirola, Ford, .000. 27, (12) Ryan Blaney,

Ford, .000. 28, (78) Scott Heckert, Ford, .000. 29, (00) Quin Houff, Chevrolet, 000, 30, (17) Chris Buescher, Ford, 000. 31, (38) Anthony Alfredo, Ford, 000. 32, (21) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford, 000. 33, (6) Ryan Newman, Ford, .000. 34, (16) A.J. Allmendinger, Chevrolet, .000. 35, (99) Daniel Suarez, Chevrolet, .000.

36, (48) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, .000. 37, (43) Erik Jones, Chevrolet, .000. 38, (96) Ty Dillon, Toyota, .000. 39, (15) James Davison, Chevrolet, .000. 40, (66) Timmy Hill, Ford, .000.

HOCKEY

NHL							
East	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	15	10	3	2	22	44	33
Philadelphia	14	8	3	3	19	48	44
Washington	16	8	5	3	19	54	57
Pittsburgh	16	9	6	1	19	51	53
N.Y. Islanders	17	8	6	3	19	41	41
N.Y. Rangers	16	6	7	3	15	40	42
New Jersey	12	6	4	2	14	33	33
Buffalo	14	5	7	2	12	35	43
Central	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GΑ
Carolina	16	12	3	1	25	62	43
Florida	16	11	3	2	24	56	47
Chicago	19	9	6	4	22	55	56
Tampa Bay	15	10	4	1	21	54	36
Columbus	19	8	7	4	20	55	64
Dallas	12	5	3	4	14	40	34
Nashville	17	7	10	0	14	40	57
Detroit	20	.5	12	3	13	39	64
West	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	18	10	6	2	22	59	56
Vegas	14	10	3	1	21	43	31
Colorado	13	8	4	1	17	41	27
Los Angeles	16	7	6	3	17	51	48
Arizona	17	7	7	3	17	44	49
Minnesota	14	8	6	0	16	38	36
San Jose	16	7	7	2	16	45	58
Anaheim	18	6 W	9 L	3 OT	15	34	50
North Toronto	GP	14	3		Pts 30	GF 72	GA 51
	19	14	3 8	2	30 22	72 65	51 61
Edmonton	19	10	8 6	1	21	57	46
Winnipeg Montreal	17 16			2	20		46 44
	17	9 8	5 8	1	17	55 46	44
Calgary	21	8	12	1	17	40 62	74
Vancouver	19	8	14	1	9	62 44	
Ottawa							78
NOTE: Two po						erume	1055.
Friday's Late Games							

Edmonton 2, Calgary 1 Winnipeg 2, Vancouver 0

Saturday's Games Buffalo 3, New Jersev 2

N.Y. Rangers 4, Washington Detroit 2, Florida 1 Los Angeles 4, Arizona 2 Carolina 4, Tampa Bay 0 Pittsburgh 3, N.Y. Islanders 2 San Jose 5, St. Louis 4 Nashville 4, Columbus 2 Toronto 5, Montreal 3 Minnesota 5, Anaheim Chicago at Carolina, ppd. Tampa Bay at Dallas, ppd. Vegas vs. Colorado at Edgewood Tahoe Resort, late Calgary at Edmonton, late

Sunday's Games New Jersey at Washington, 11 a.m. Montreal at Ottawa, 4 p.m.
Phila. vs. Boston at Edgewood Tahoe Resort, 4:30 p.m. Winnipeg at Vancouver, 7 p.m.

TENNIS

Australian Open Saturday at Melbourne, Australia (Seedings in parentheses) WOMEN'S SINGLES

Championship — Naomi Osaka (3), Japan, def. Jen nifer Brady (22), United States, 6-4, 6-3.

DEALS

Transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball

American League
TEXAS RANGERS — Assigned RHP Jimmy Herget
outright to Round Rock (Triple-A West).

National League
CHICAGO CUBS — Assigned SS Sergio Alcantara outright to lowa (Triple-A East).

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with 3B Todd Frazier on a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL

NBA G League
WESTCHESTER KNICKS — Signed F J.J. Moore.
FOOTBALL

National Football League CLEVELAND BROWNS — Signed CB Robert Jackson. HOCKEY

National Hockey League
ANAHEIM DUCKS — Waived LW Adam Henrigue.
ARIZONA COYOTES — Recalled G David Tendeck
from Rapid City (ECHL) and D Aaron Ness from Tucson
(AHL) loans. Loaned C Frederik Gauthier and D Kyle Capobianco to Tucson (AHL). COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Recalled D Gabriel

Carlsson from the minor league taxi squad.

DALLAS STARS — Recalled F Joel Kiviranta from the minor league taxi squad. Assigned F Rhett Gardner to

the taxi squad.

DETROIT RED WINGS — Designated D Alex Biega for assignment to the taxi squad then recalled to active roster. Recalled D Danny DeKeyser from the minor league taxi squad. LOS ANGELES KINGS — Recalled C Rasmus Kupari

from Ontario (AHL) taxi squad loan.

MONTREAL CANADIENS — Recalled LW Michael Frolik from the minor league taxi squad loan.

NEW JERSEY DEVILS — Named C Nico Hischier captain. Assigned D Matt Tennyson to the minor league taxi

squad and F Nick Merkley to Binghamton (AHL) from the taxi squad. NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Recalled RW Oliver Wahlstrom from the minor league taxi squad. NEW YORK RANGERS — Recalled Ds Anthony Bitetto and Libor Hajek, G Igor Shesterkin and RW Kaapo Kakko

from the minor league taxi squad. Designated G Keith Kinkaid for assignment to the taxi squad. OTTAWA SENATORS — Designated G Joey Daccord

for assignment to the taxi squad.

VEGAS KNIGHTS — Recalled G Oscar Dansk from the minor league taxi squad. WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Recalled G Craig Anderson from the minor league taxi squad. Designated G llya Samsonov for assignment to the taxi squad

SOCCER Major League Soccer INTER MIAMI CF — Signed D Ryan Shawcross.

Mariners

Continued from B1

The Mariners are confident they are building toward that — and they have a slew of top five farm system rankings to back them up. But this is the year when prospect love has to manifest itself in tangible progress toward the ever-pres ever-elusive goal of playoff baseball.

Rarely has a season dawned with so much ambiguity for the Mariners. The data-driven predictive programs are not kind to Seattle. Baseball Prospectus' "PECOTA" algorithm forecasts a 70-92 season with a 0 percent chance to win the division. That's zero," as in the number of postseason appearances by Seattle since 2001, a disgrace odyssey.

FanGraphs has them at 74-88, with a 2.4 percent chance to make the playoffs. ("So you're saying there's a chance?") USA Today's six-person panel of experts put the Mariners at 70-92. Statistician Clay Davenport has them at 71-91. About the only good news on the prognostication front is that almost everyone has the Mariners finishing out of last place, ahead of the Texas Rangers — a team not as far advanced in their own rebuild.

So where exactly is that ambiguity, you might ask? The analysts seem to have unanimity in their predictions of doom for Seattle. There's not much that's ambiguous about 90 losses — a total the Mariners have exceed seven times since 2004.

Well, the Mariners believe they have breakout candidates that are flying well under the radar.

They believe their influx of youth, which figures to be parceled out incrementally during the season — outfielder Jarred Kelenic, starter Logan Gilbert and catcher Cal Raleigh being the prime candidates to break in at some point — will provide a boost that can't be measured.

Also, the Mariners play in a division, the AL West, that doesn't have an overwhelming favorite. The defending champion A's suffered considerable offseason free-agent departures (though on Thursday they did sign closer Trevor Rosenthal, a pitcher who would have fit very nicely in the Mariners' bullpen). The Astros, a playoff team last year despite finishing under .500 (29-31, just two games ahead of the Mariners), lost one of their major stars, George Springer.

The Mariners' postseason chances will rise exponentially if MLB expands its playoff field. The decision to do so last year letting in eight teams per league instead of the usual five — was made hours before opening day. There could be a late format change again in 2021 if the union uses it as a bargaining chip to get a concession it



Fred Thornhill/The Canadian Press via AP file

Seattle Mariners pitcher Yusei Kikuchi throws against the Toronto Blue Jays in Toronto in 2019.

seeks.

Also, all those predictions I cited were made before the Mariners signed James Paxton, a move that became official Thursday and adds considerable depth to their rotation.

That said, the Mariners could have considerably boosted their chances to compete at a playoff level with a more active offseason. Instead, Paxton is the only offseason acquisition that can be called major. They hope they got a sleeper in starter Chris Flexen, who thrived in Korea after struggling in the Mets' organization. The Mariners re-signed their free agent, reliever Kendall Graveman, and added Keynan Middleton and Rafael Montero to the bullpen, in addition to the usual variety of nonroster, speculative additions.

Rumored budget constraints may have limited the ability of general manager Jerry Dipoto to improve the club for 2021. Dipoto said Thursday that he aggressively and unsuccessfully — pursued a veteran left-handed hitter who could play second base and/or the outfield.

"We just fell short at every turn," he said. Dipoto said Thursday it is unlikely the Mariners will pursue any more offensive

players on major-league contracts.
"We're going to go with what we have in house," he said.

Dipoto has been insistent that he doesn't want to block the progress of any young player, which is the proper stance. But this is a roster that could have benefited from

a greater infusion of more-proven talent to bridge the gap until their blue-chippers

Instead, as so often happens, they will have to dream on some things. Like a major uptick in the offensive contributions of first baseman Evan White and shortstop J.P. Crawford, Gold Glove winners in 2020. Like Dylan Moore showing that he can maintain last year's surprising pop at the plate over a full 162 games, and Mitch Haniger reverting to his 2018 All-Star form after missing a year and a half from a gruesome injury. And that's just for start-

Servais talked Thursday about how great Haniger looked, along with Tom Murphy, the catcher who also missed last season. Crawford and outfielder Jake Fraley caught Servais' eye, as did left-handed pitcher Yusei Kikuchi. Largely a disappointment during his previous two seasons, despite significant signs of improvement last year, Kikuchi is a classic breakout candidate who can change the entire tenor of the Mariners' outlook for 2021 if he finally harnesses his high-caliber stuff. Everyone has limitless possibilities in February. Any number of scenarios for team success can be conjured — and, alas, so can the potential pitfalls and prophecies of doom, for which the vision is even clearer.

Those, however, tend to be pushed aside in Arizona to focus on the upside for the Mariners. The question is, will you still love them in July, August and September?