

Asians in American sports • Asian Americans in world sports

Role model Lin becomes first Asian-American NBA champion

By Mike Street

Special to The Asian Reporter

This year's National Basketball Association (NBA) Finals produced a lot of great stories. The Toronto Raptors surprised everyone by beating the Golden State Warriors, winners of three of the last four championships. Toronto became the first team outside the United States to win an NBA championship, and Raptors superstar Kawhi Leonard won his second championship ring and second Finals MVP award.

And Asian-American sports fans rejoiced because Jeremy Lin became the first Asian American to win an NBA championship. Though he didn't log many game minutes for Toronto, Lin played an important supporting role and never failed to remind fans of his Asian ancestry.

At the start of this season, Taiwanese-American athlete Lin didn't expect to be anywhere near the NBA Finals. He'd already played for six different teams, the latest being the Atlanta Hawks, who were in full rebuilding mode after finishing last in the Eastern Conference in 2017-2018. Atlanta traded for Lin in July 2018, in part to serve as a mentor to their top draft pick, point guard Trae Young.

Prior to Atlanta, Lin had bounced around plenty since his 2011 "Linsanity" breakthrough, when he sparked the New York Knicks to the playoffs. Signed by the Houston Rockets the following season, Lin was ultimately blocked by Patrick Beverley and James Harden, so Houston traded him to the Los Angeles Lakers, where he spent one season as a backup.

Then Lin signed a two-year deal with the Charlotte Hornets, but found himself on the bench yet again. So he opted out of the final year of his deal and signed with the Brooklyn Nets, where a hamstring injury kept him out of the lineup for half of his first season. When a patellar injury sustained in the 2017 season opener knocked him out for all of his second season, Brooklyn traded him to Atlanta.

It took a little while for Lin to shake off the rust with the Hawks this season since he hadn't played a full game in more than a year. After a few months, he seemed to find a good rhythm, retooling his jump shot and improving his transition game. Unfor-



AP Photo/Tony Dejak

tunately, though, Atlanta hadn't improved, and a veteran point guard wasn't in their long-term rebuilding plans.

So Atlanta negotiated a buyout with Lin in February, allowing him to sign with Toronto for the remainder of the season. Once again, Lin found himself with a new team—but now the team was a legitimate, top-notch contender. When he signed with them, the Raptors were in first place in the Atlantic Conference and had the second-best record in the NBA.

Lin became Toronto's primary backcourt bench player, picking up three starts down the stretch. He served as a solid locker room presence, supporting the team in practice and from the sidelines.

"I play against these guys all the time, whether it's in workouts or whatever," Lin said of his contributions. "Even watching the game, talking to guys, giving my opinion, or being a voice—I think that's very, very valuable."

Lin appeared in 23 regular-season games but didn't get much court time in the playoffs. Leading up to the NBA Finals, he played a total of 26 minutes in seven games, and played less than a minute in Game 3 against Golden State. While it's disappointing for Lin, this kind of bench-shortening is typical in the championship series.

Have an old car? You're not alone. Vehicle age hits record.

DETROIT (AP) — The average age of cars and trucks in the U.S. has hit a record 11.8 years, as better quality and technology allows people to keep them on the road longer.

The 2019 figures from data provider IHS Markit show that the rate of increase is slowing, but the average age is still expected to go over 12 years early in the next decade. The average age is up 0.1 years from 2018.

People are feeling comfortable keeping vehicles longer because they're built better than in the past, said IHS Markit director of global automotive aftermarket Mark Seng.

Navy to name new destroyer after late Hawai'i senator Inouye

HONOLULU (AP) — The U.S. Navy christened a new guided missile destroyer the *USS Daniel Inouye* during a ceremony in Maine.

The Arleigh Burke-class ship is being named after the war hero and politician who broke racial barriers in congress.

Inouye represented Hawai'i in the U.S. senate for a half-century until his death in 2012.

He played key roles in congressional investigations of the Watergate and Iran-

"The quality is higher, lasting longer, withstanding the weather," Seng said.

Plus, original owners are keeping their vehicles longer and maintaining them better because they're financing them for longer, six or even seven years in many cases, he said.

"That helps improve the overall life of the vehicle," he said.

Western states have the oldest vehicles at 12.4 years, while in the Northeast the average age is only 10.9 years. That's due largely to less stop-and-start traffic that wears on a vehicle. Weather conditions also play a part.

Montana has the oldest average age at

Contra scandals and served as chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee.

He received the Medal of Honor for bravery fighting in World War II with the mostly Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He lost his right arm.

U.S. senator Mazie Hirono of Hawai'i spoke at the ceremony in Bath, Maine. Inouye's widow, Irene Hirano Inouye, was the ship's sponsor.

Regardless of playing time, Lin made his presence known throughout the playoffs. During Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May, Lin wore clothes to celebrate the month during every playoff game. He wore a shirt that read "Phenomenally Asian" and another with the Sandra Oh quote, "It's an honor just to be Asian." He wore clothing created by Asian-American designers such as Phillip Lim, Ryan Higa, and Public School NYC. He filled his Instagram feed with expressions of his Asian pride.

And after the Finals victory, he posted a photo with his family and the NBA trophy, saying, "Promise Ill [sic] never stop reppin Asians with everything I have!" Sure enough, he kept representing. During the Raptors victory parade, he wore a throwback-style Raptors jersey with Chinese lettering. When he saw a fan wearing a Jeremy Lin jersey in the crowd, he called for the fan to throw it to him, then he signed it and threw it back.

Lin hasn't always dealt so easily with his heritage. Of his early career success, he explained, "After I went through Linsanity, I learned the world wasn't quite ready or didn't know how to handle Asian Americans, Asian Americans in sports, Asian-American masculinity, and a lot of different Asian-American issues."

16.6 years, while the youngest is Vermont, with an average age of 9.9 years.

The aging vehicles should be a boon to

NASA to open moon rock samples sealed since Apollo missions

By Marcia Dunn
AP Aerospace Writer

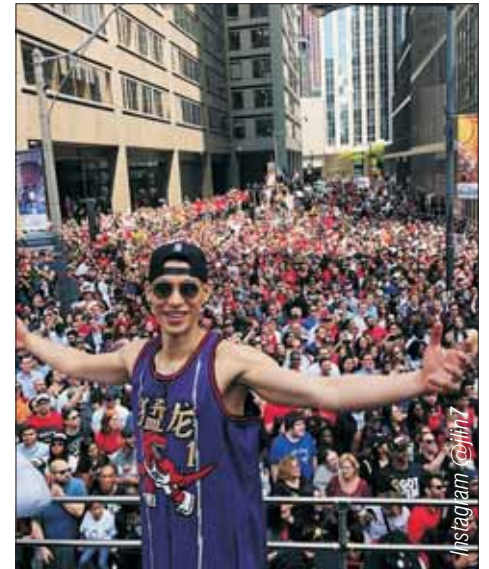
HOUSTON — For the first time in decades, NASA is about to open some pristine samples of moon rocks and dirt collected by Apollo astronauts.

Hundreds of pounds of moon rocks are locked up at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. Lab workers are preparing to give some of the samples to scientists for study. Nine U.S. research teams will get a sliver of the lunar loot to examine.

July marks the 50th anniversary of the first Apollo moon landing, but sample curator Ryan Zeigler says the timing is a coincidence.

His job is to preserve what the 12 moonwalkers brought back from 1969 through 1972 — lunar samples totalling 842 pounds.

Some samples will be opened and sent to the scientists over the next year.



RAPTOR RAPTURE. At the start of the National Basketball Association (NBA) season, Taiwanese-American athlete Jeremy Lin (#17) didn't expect to be anywhere near the NBA Finals. In February, however, he negotiated a deal that allowed him to sign with the Toronto Raptors, a legitimate, top-notch contender. The Raptors surprised everyone by beating the Golden State Warriors, winners of three of the last four championships. And Toronto became the first team outside the United States to win an NBA championship. In the photo on the right, Lin wore a throwback-style Raptors jersey with Chinese lettering during Toronto's victory parade.

He also explained how he struggled with the way people viewed him. After Toronto signed him, he said of his heritage, "Everything was about being Asian in the NBA. At a point, I was like, 'Man, just stop talking to me about being Asian.' ... It became a huge burden, because I felt like I had to be this phenomenon for everybody else."

But then he learned to embrace it. Now, he says, "I take pride in it. It is not a burden to me anymore. I am not scared anymore. I appreciate it and want to help and challenge the world, stereotypes and everything."

Lin has done that and more, offering a role model to younger Asian players, a new paradigm for sportswriters, and a fantastic focus for Asian-American sports fans. He's smart, humble, and adaptable, and he's kept his head up despite racist chants in college and the NBA. Wherever he lands next year, Lin will keep shattering stereotypes, confounding expectations, and making his fans proud.

repair shops, which may want to change strategies to cater to owners of older vehicles who may want to spend less on parts, Seng said.

The number of light vehicles in use in the U.S. also hit a record of more than 278 million this year, according to IHS, which tracks vehicle registrations nationally.



The Asian Reporter's Asian Heritage Month edition got a glimpse of the Petronas Towers on a rainy day in Malaysia, courtesy of Willie Rates! Thanks, Willie, @KhAnubis, for sharing the photo!