



Nickel: Lorenzo Cain enjoying ride of Brewers' run

SPORTS, 4B

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'MY BODY IS A TEMPLE'



How employers are handling rising requests for religious exemptions

Sophie Carson Milwaukee Journal Sentinel | USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

Wisconsin residents unwilling to get vaccinated under their employers' COVID-19 vaccine mandates are requesting religious exemptions in growing numbers and flocking to lawyers for help. • Short of quitting, the process is the only avenue available to vaccine-resistant employees who can't get a medical exemption.

But it's not a simple solution for them or their employers, who face a challenging tradeoff as they try to follow a broad federal law banning religious discrimination.

In the past, "once you threw religion on the table, employers have kind of backed away," said Carrie Hoffman, a Dallas-based partner with Foley & Lardner's labor and employment group.

Now, though, especially as President Joe Biden's new vaccine mandate is set to affect as many as 100 million people, companies must balance the health and safety of the workplace with the religious liberty of individual workers — and the risk of getting sued if they don't.

The issue of whose requests to approve and whose to deny is complicated. How does someone demonstrate their religious belief against vaccines is "sincerely held," as the law puts it? And how far can an employer question someone about their beliefs?

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Residents unwilling to get vaccinated under their employers' COVID-19 vaccine mandates are requesting religious exemptions in growing numbers and flocking to lawyers for help. DREW PERINE/THE NEWS TRIBUNE VIA AP

"You're allowed to have a sincerely held religious belief where you're the only person in the world who believes it. Our Constitution doesn't require a permission slip from a priest or a pastor."

Dan Lenington Deputy counsel at WILL

A group of people gathered with signs Aug. 11 outside St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac to protest the mandatory requirement for all hospital workers to get the COVID-19 vaccination. DOUG RAFLIK/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

Fond du Lac School Board picks two new members after resignations

Sharon Roznik Fond du Lac Reporter USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

FOND DU LAC – Fond du Lac School Board selected two new members at a special meeting held Tuesday afternoon.

Todd Schreiter and Brittany Hoerth were chosen from a pool of 11 applicants who sought to fill two vacant seats on the board, said school board president Mark Jurgella.

Both Schreiter and Hoerth ran for school board seats in the April election but were defeated in a competitive race that drew seven candidates.

Schreiter fills the position previously served by Mark Strand, who resigned after 11 years on the board due to conflicts in his work schedule.

During the campaign, Schreiter ran on a platform of strengthening relationships and collaborations. He stated the school board needs to balance the scientific information regarding COVID-19 with what the administration and teachers are seeing within the schools and suggested creating a focus group that includes parents to explore challenges and help make the best decisions.

Schreiter is the wine and spirits assistant director at Festival Foods' support office and has an associate's degree in marketing from Fox Valley Technical College in Appleton. He is a board member of Fond du Lac Junior Football.

Hoerth said she wants to be an advocate for children and families and help make hard decisions through creative and critical thinking. She fills the seat of Nick Teifke, who resigned from the board for personal reasons following the board's implementation of a mask optional policy.

Hoerth said the most important thing the board can do to address the pandemic is lead by example and be aware of "what is happening within the community in relation to the pandemic, including the numbers and populations most significantly impacted." She said she did not support a blended learning platform and felt the school board needs to take into account the wishes of the public.

Hoerth is social worker pursuing a master's degree in public administration.

Jurgella said both candidates gave

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NFDL School District enforces 15-day mask mandate

Sharon Roznik Fond du Lac Reporter USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

NORTH FOND DU LAC – Students in the North Fond du Lac School District are required to wear masks for the next 15 days due to a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases within the district.

The announcement was posted on the school district's website that face masks must be worn inside buildings

during school and at after-school activities through Oct. 6.

At that time the school district will look at virus-related data and reevaluate the situation, said Superintendent Aaron Sadoff.

Since the temporary mandate went into effect on Tuesday, Sadoff said 99% of kids and families have complied, although there were some issues Wednesday morning that required a po-

lice presence. The district is working with the school resource officer and village police to "mitigate any issues that cause added stress," he said.

Students who refuse to wear masks will be sent home.

"We try to work with parents as best we can, try to reason and give information, but if they are truly opposed to masks we ask they do it in a respectful way and keep their kids home," he said.

Sadoff said the goal is to keep schools open and students in school.

A dashboard set up on the website shows 13 students and two staff members as testing positive for COVID-19. Five of those cases — four at the middle school and one at the high school — were determined to be caused by spreading in school.

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USA TODAY

Migrants staying: Many at border camp being released in U.S. 3A

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Fans watch as golfers practice for the Ryder Cup

Sarah Hauer Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

HAVEN – Fans watched from outside the ropes Tuesday as some of the world's top golfers finally took to the course at Whistling Straits along the shore of Lake Michigan for the first day of practice for the 43rd Ryder Cup.

After years of planning, a COVID-19 postponement and months of on-course construction, Tuesday kicked off three days of practice rounds before the USA vs. Europe tournament begins Friday.

Fans followed along on the 18-hole Straits course to watch players such as Steve Stricker, the captain of the American team, and Jordan Spieth practice on an overcast, windy day.

The golfers were relaxed, engaging with the crowd and taking multiple shots on each hole.

Four-year-old Jackson Hamilton, who came from Texas, was given a pin by American golfer David Love III while on the course with his dad, Alan.

Other fans had similar special moments.

"Tommy Fleetwood (on the European team) and my eyes met as I walked by. I'm thrilled," said Diana Ross, who drove from Michigan with her husband, Dan, for the first day of practice.

Jordan Parkin wore American flag shorts and a blue-starred polo shirt as his group of friends from Appleton took in the first day of practice.



Team USA's Bryson DeChambeau swings on hole No. 3 during Ryder Cup practice Tuesday at Whistling Straits in Kohler.

PHOTOS BY SAMANTHA MADAR/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

'It's a blast'

"Why wouldn't we want to come," said Karen DeZellar, who came from Illinois with her husband, Jim. "It's a blast."

She especially loved seeing the players intentionally hit their ball into a bunker as practice.

The Ryder Cup, which pits teams of golfers from the United States and Europe against one another, is expected to draw around 45,000 people to the small town outside of Kohler (population around 2,100). Around 4,000 volunteers will help stage the event.

Andy Bayston took his son Tyler, 15, out of school for the day to watch practice. Tyler recently joined his high school golf team.

"TV doesn't do the course justice," Bayston said. "It looks easy on TV."

The tournament is sold out, but tickets are available on third-party websites. Tickets for the tournament days started at around \$200. The teams play Friday and Saturday with one-on-one individual rounds and the trophy presentation scheduled for 5 p.m. Sunday.

A whole city of tents and stands has been built to host the tournament at Whistling Straits with around 1.3 million square feet of temporary infrastructure.

'The granddaddy of all golf tournaments'

For Herbert Kohler Jr., the former CEO of Kohler Co., hosting the Ryder Cup realizes his goal of bringing championship golf to the region when he started building courses decades ago.

"The Ryder Cup is the granddaddy of all golf tournaments," said Kohler. "If you have the honor of hosting a tournament like that recognized around the world that brings you more than 400 million people watching the event, that's pretty significant."

The Ryder Cup — the most lucrative tournament in golf — is similar to the World Series in baseball or the NBA Championship in basketball. Nearly 30 hours of live television will be broadcast on The Golf Channel and NBC during the tournament from Whistling Straits.

The course, owned by Kohler Co., hosted PGA Championships in 2004, 2010 and 2015.

"It's just one of those iconic places here in our state thanks to Herb (Kohler) and his family," Stricker said last week. "It started right here for Wisconsin golf to be quite honest. I mean, when Herb built these courses along with Blackwolf Run, it kind of put Wisconsin golf on the



Jackson Hamilton, 4, and his father, Alan, look at the pin Jackson received from Davis Love III during practice for the 43rd Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits on Tuesday in Kohler.

map."

The Ryder Cup takes place every two years, alternating between sites in the U.S. and Europe. The Europeans won the last Ryder Cup in 2018. It is the only major golf event that is played with teams.

"I'm just pleased that we've gotten to this point," Kohler said. "It's been a difficult road but here we are."

Event planned years ago

The deal to host this event was inked years ago. Build-out began in May. The official logo and merchandise are all still labeled for 2020 — the year in which the tournament would have been held if not for a postponement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

And it's another significant sporting event in the region following the Milwaukee Bucks winning the NBA Championship on the team's home court this summer. The Milwaukee Brewers have clinched a spot in the playoffs with a shot at winning the World Series.

"Wisconsin can be immensely proud

of that circumstance and that position in the world of sports," Herbert Kohler said.

The courses have not been named to host any upcoming major men's tournaments. Erin Hills will host the U.S. Women's Open in 2025.

"It will be a little bit before we do host another PGA Championship or U.S. Open since they do plan numerous years ahead," said Marissa Werner, director of Sports Milwaukee for Visit Milwaukee.

"However, we have such an opportunity to use Ryder Cup as a catalyst to make sure that we're in the spotlight for publications and golf shows and having presence at other majors. I don't think people are going to forget that Wisconsin has some of the top courses in the country."

Reach is beyond Sheboygan County

The Ryder Cup extends beyond the course in Haven.

Hotels are booked across the region,

south to Milwaukee and north to Green Bay. All of Marcus Corp.'s properties in the state are full for the tournament — even the Grand Geneva 110 miles south of the golf course.

"I think as a run of five nights it's probably the strongest demand period we will have seen since the pandemic," said Andrew Flack, chief commercial officer for Marcus.

Potawatomi Hotel will be at capacity today, Friday and Saturday. It will be the first time since March 2020 that all 500 rooms at the hotel will be booked, said Potawatomi Hotel and Casino CEO Dominic Ortiz. Airbnb searches near Whistling Straits increased 40% from June to July, according to the short-term rental website.

Kohler is hosting a golf party through Sunday at the Shops at Woodlake with film screenings, food trucks, live music and autograph sessions with Milwaukee Bucks player Pat Connaughton and coach Mike Budenholzer. Local businesses like 3 Sheeps Brewing are getting in on the fun with specialty golf-themed beer.

Mask

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In all, 64 students and two staff are also exhibiting symptoms of the virus, the dashboard indicates.

Fond du Lac County Health Department reports that within the community of North Fond du Lac, 52 new cases were reported over the last two weeks, 16 of them occurring in persons age 19 and younger.

The policy for this school year set a threshold for enforcing temporary mask mandates if at least four students test

positive for COVID-19 and it was determined to be caused by school spread or the school community has a new case rate of 50 people or more for a two-week period.

The issue of mask wearing in the district has been contentious. An Aug. 31 meeting drew a crowd of sign-carrying parents — many opposed to the idea of wearing masks.

Two school board members, Shawn Pollack and Paula Stettbacher, resigned following a special meeting over whether masks should be worn in schools, due to a lack of decision-making at the time.

But early this month the school board

approved a "Welcome Back" plan for the school year that allows the superintendent to adjust the school's mask policy, dependent on COVID-19 metrics.

Other schools districts in the county have similar policies in place that allow their mask-optional policies to be adjusted if necessary. North Fond du Lac appears to be the first to do so.

The health department's COVID-19 dashboard for area schools for this week shows a "very high" numbers of cases with the school communities of Campbellspoint, Fond du Lac, North Fond du Lac, Oakfield, Ripon, Rosendale-Brandon and Waupun.

The breakdown for positive cases in

persons age 19 and younger is: Campbellspoint, 24; Fond du Lac, 141; North Fond du Lac, 16; Oakfield, 2; Ripon, 17; Rosendale-Brandon, 8; and Waupun, 23.

Around the state other school districts have been reacting to the rising number of COVID-19 cases. In Winnebago, elementary schools have gone virtual for two weeks, and the Lac Du Flambeau and Mercer school districts are also on temporary virtual learning status.

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