

THE SCORE

Baseball fan banned for hitting Verdugo

NEW YORK (AP) — The fan who hit Boston Red Sox left fielder Alex Verdugo with a baseball thrown from the Yankee Stadium stands has been banned for life from attending big league games.

The decision was confirmed Sunday by spokesmen for both the New York Yankees and Major League Baseball.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora briefly pulled his team off the field in the sixth inning Saturday night after Verdugo was struck in the back by a ball thrown from the left-field seats. He did not appear to be hurt.

An angry Verdugo shouted at fans and was re-

strained by first-base coach Tom Goodwin as the game was held up in a driving rain. The fan was ejected from the ballpark.

"While the Yankees appreciate the spirit and passion of our fans in our various rivalries — especially with the Red Sox — reckless, disorderly and dangerous behavior that puts the safety of players, field staff or fellow fans in jeopardy will not be tolerated," the Yankees said in a statement Sunday.

"There is absolutely no place for it at Yankee Stadium. The safety of everyone at Yankee Stadium, including guests in the stands and players on the field, will al-



AP PHOTO

Boston Red Sox first base coach Tom Goodwin, second from left, calms left fielder Alex Verdugo (99) after he was hit in the back by an object thrown by a fan during the sixth inning of a baseball game against the New York Yankees in New York, July 17.

ways be the top priority for the Yankees organization every time we open our doors."

Verdugo said he tossed the ball into the stands to a young Red Sox fan, but a Yankees fan intercepted it

and threw it back onto the field, hitting the outfielder.

"It's awful, embarrassing, unacceptable," New York manager Aaron Boone said afterward.

Verdugo returned to left field when play resumed

following a discussion with umpires near Boston's dugout.

"It felt like it was targeted towards me and it don't sit well with me," he said.

New York won 3-1 in a game called after six innings due to heavy rain.

NJ.com reported Sunday the fan was not arrested.

US basketball roster heads to Tokyo

Associated Press

The U.S. Olympic men's basketball team has been together for two weeks. There have been six practices. The team played four exhibitions. A pair of roster changes have already been required and the Americans have no idea when three other players will join the team.

That's probably not the formula for Olympic success, but ready or not, Tokyo awaits.

"It's a little bit different," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said.

No, it's a lot different. Unprecedented, really, just like almost everything else about these Tokyo Olympics that start on Friday. The U.S. — the three-time defending men's basketball gold medalists — leaves Las Vegas on Monday for the trip to Japan, where it'll commence final preparations for the Tokyo Games.

The plan is to have four more practices in Japan



AP PHOTO

United States' Zach Lavine (5) dunks against Spain's Alex Abrines (21) during the second half of an exhibition basketball game in preparation for the Olympics in Las Vegas July 18.

before opening Olympic play against France on July 25. The Americans have 12 names on the roster; only nine will be with the team for the trip to Japan because the other three — Khris Middleton, Jrue Holiday and Devin Booker — are still playing in the NBA Finals.

"I think all of us are better for the adversity we go through, because you either handle it or you don't," Popovich said.

The adversity has come in bunches for the Americans. During their two-week stay in Las Vegas:

— Bradley Beal was forced to leave the team for virus-related reasons and Kevin Love backed out because of an injury.

— Jerami Grant was briefly in the health and safety protocols related to the virus and missed a few days.

— Keldon Johnson was promoted from the Select Team (the players brought to Las Vegas so they could practice against the Olympians) to replace Beal, and JaVale McGee was added to the roster to replace Love. McGee was with the team for Sunday's exhibition finale against Spain but did not play, meaning his first action with this team will be during actual Olympic competition.

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