

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Report shows struggle on obstruction issue

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — A detailed report from special counsel Robert Mueller said investigators struggled with both the legal implications of investigating President Donald Trump for possible obstruction of justice, and the motives behind a range of his most alarming actions, from seeking the ouster of former officials to ordering a memo that would clear his name.

“The evidence we obtained about the President’s actions and intent presents difficult issues that would need to be resolved if we were making a traditional prosecutorial judgment,” the report stated. “At the same time, if we had confidence after a thorough investigation of the facts that the President clearly did not commit obstruction of justice, we would so state. Based on the

facts and the applicable legal standards, we are unable to reach that judgment.”

Since Mueller concluded his investigation last month, a central question facing the Justice Department has been why Mueller’s team did not reach a conclusion about whether the president obstructed justice.

The issue was complicated, the report said, by two key issues — the fact that under department practice, a sitting president cannot be charged with a crime, and that a president has a great deal of constitutional authority to give orders to other government employees.

Trump ultimately submitted written answers to the investigators. The special counsel’s office considered them “inadequate” but did not press for an interview because doing so would cause a “substantial delay,” the report says.

The report said investigators felt they have “sufficient evidence to understand relevant events and to make certain assessments without the President’s testimony.”

A copy of the report was delivered to Congress on Thursday morning.

Repeatedly, it appears Trump might have been saved from more serious legal jeopardy by his own staffers, who refused to carry out orders they thought were problematic or legally dangerous.

For instance, in the early days of the administration, when the president was facing growing questions about then-national security adviser Michael Flynn’s conversation about sanctions with a Russian ambassador, the president ordered another aide, KT McFarland, to write an email saying that the president did not direct those conversations. She de-

cidated not to do so, unsure if that was true and fearing it might be improper.

The special counsel’s report on possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russians to interfere in the 2016 election is extremely detailed with only modest redactions — painting a far less flattering picture for Trump than the attorney general has offered and revealing new details about interactions between Russians and Trump associates. Mueller’s team wrote that although their investigation “did not establish that the Trump Campaign coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities,” that assertion was informed by the fact that coordination requires more than two parties “taking actions that were informed by or responsive to the other’s actions or interests.”

## North Korea says it has test-fired a new weapon

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea test-fired a new “tactical guided weapon,” it said Thursday, hours before calling for the ouster of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from nuclear talks as the communist state shows increasing frustration over the stalled negotiations.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised Wednesday’s test and praised it for having “very weighty significance in increasing the combat power” of the North Korean army, according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

KCNA didn’t provide details

about the weapons system, which it called a new type of “tactical guided weapon” that showed the ability to be loaded with “a powerful warhead.” It said the test was conducted by the Academy of Defense Science.

It was the first known North Korean military move since the Feb. 27-28 Hanoi summit between Kim and President Donald Trump collapsed without agreement due to sharp differences over whether to trade sanctions relief for disarmament steps.

Experts said Wednesday’s test didn’t appear to be of a banned long-range ballistic missile and may have been aimed at a domestic audience

to show the country is maintaining its weapons development despite diplomatic efforts with Washington.

“It’s not as flagrant a violation as an [intercontinental ballistic missile] test. So that gives Trump room to ignore or downplay the test,” said Jean Lee of the Washington, D.C.-based Wilson Center.

“But it is designed to serve as a reminder that North Korea has limited patience — and is continuing to devote attention and resources to defense,” she added.

Lee said the test also was likely aimed at placating hardliners, “especially after the breakdown at Hanoi.”

Nuclear talks have stalled

as the U.S. insists it will maintain punishing economic sanctions until denuclearization is achieved. The North wants a reciprocal approach that would include rewards for disarmament steps already taken.

Harry Kazianis, the Korean studies director for the U.S.-based Center for the National Interest, noted that Kim never promised to stop all weapons testing.

“Kim is trying to make a statement to the Trump administration that his military potential is growing by the day, and that his regime is becoming frustrated with Washington’s lack of flexibility in recent negotiations,” he said in an emailed statement.

# New fines, loss of license for texting while driving in Italy

By SCOTT WYLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Military personnel would be wise to keep their hands on the wheel and off their phones while driving in Italy.

The Italian government is expected to enact much harsher penalties for drivers caught holding their phones, whether it's to text, chat or fiddle with their GPS.

According to the draft law making its way through parliament, drivers could be fined as much as 1,700 euros (\$1,915) and lose their licenses for up to two months. Repeat offenders could pay as much as 2,588 euros in fines and have their licenses suspended for three months.

The current fines for unlawful cellphone use run from 161

euros to 467 euros. Hands-free use with Bluetooth and earphones will still be allowed.

The new law would apply to the thousands of U.S. servicemembers and Defense Department employees with NATO drivers' licenses in Italy. A suspended license could cause problems for those who live off base and commute to their jobs, especially in areas that lack public transportation.

Sailors and military employees at the Navy base in Naples, Italy applauded the tougher penalties, saying they welcomed anything that makes the roads safer in a region notorious for unruly driving.

In Italy, where it's common for motorcyclists to zip in between cars at high speeds on the freeways, it's important that drivers aren't distracted,

said William Eldredge, a computer services administrator at Naval Support Activity Naples.

"I'm much more worried about people on their cellphones when I'm on my motorcycle," Eldredge said.

But both he and Bowen questioned whether tougher penalties will make any difference in cities like Naples, where enforcement often appears lax.

"If they want to put another arbitrary law on the books for a cop to enforce when he feels like it, then it's bad," Eldredge said.

The Italian parliament is expected to vote on the more severe penalties in May. A similar draft bill was proposed in 2017 but stalled in the legislature. However, officials are confident this bill will pass, the Italian media has reported.

## Navy crew rescues two fishermen near Guam

By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Navy helicopter rescued two spearfishermen stranded on a cliff on Guam's east side recently after their boat sank.

The incident marks the ninth emergency call, for a total seven medical evacuations, by the Island Knights of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 so far this year, according to a Navy news release April 12.

"This rescue highlighted the professionalism and efficiency of the Island Knight Team," said Lt. Cmdr. Sean Rice, commander of the MH6-S Knighthawk that rescued the men, in the release.

Once their boat sank April 11, the fishermen swam over a jagged reef and through breaking waves to the cliff, but they could not be reached from the shore or sea, according to the Navy statement.

The Knighthawk crew, responding to a call from U.S. Coast Guard Sector Guam, hovered above the two and hoisted them aboard.

"We received the report during preflight for a scheduled flight event," Rice said in the press release. "Within minutes, our maintenance team had the aircraft ready for an expeditious launch."

The two fishermen were brought to Naval Hospital Guam 30 minutes later, according to the statement.

The squadron performed three other medevacs in March, including the rescue of a stroke victim aboard the Ocean Dream cruise ship, then quickly rigging the same helicopter for airborne firefighting to contain a fire at Nimitz Hill in Guam, according to an email from Lt. Richard Schuster, squadron public affairs officer.

## Talks delayed between Afghanistan, Taliban

*The Washington Post*

DOHA, Qatar — The first talks between Afghan leaders and Taliban insurgents, scheduled to begin Friday, were abruptly postponed Thursday amid an eruption of internal disputes and Taliban complaints over the size and composition of the Afghan government delegation.

It was not clear how soon the talks would be rescheduled, but some Afghan officials said a small group might travel Friday to the Qatari capital from Kabul, while efforts continued to pare down and reconfigure the full list of 250 delegates from across Afghan society that was announced Tuesday by the government.

The planned meeting in Doha had been widely hailed as a potential breakthrough after

months of Taliban refusal to recognize the Kabul government while holding a series of peace discussions with U.S. officials in this Persian Gulf sheikhdom. Now, the eagerly awaited talks have fallen into question amid acrimony and disarray.

One aide to President Ashraf Ghani, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive topic, said the trip was delayed because the Taliban representatives and their host, the government of Qatar, wanted some individuals removed from the delegation "to make it weak."

Meanwhile, some delegates voluntarily withdrew Thursday from the planned talks, including one senior Afghan official who expressed anger at Taliban statements ridiculing the Afghan delegation and accused

the insurgents of trying to sabotage the talks.

On Wednesday, after the delegation was announced, the Taliban immediately ridiculed it as far too large and poorly organized. In a statement, a Taliban spokesman said the group's meetings with U.S. officials had been "orderly" and well-planned, while the sprawling Afghan delegation seemed more like an "Afghan wedding or other party in Kabul."

There were conflicting reports Thursday that officials in Kabul were working to cut down the list, which grew from about 50 to 250 as more and more political and civic leaders demanded to be included. Several sources said the list has now been cut in half, but a senior government aide said that only a few people have dropped out on their own.

# Airman arrested in suspected Okinawa drunken driving crash

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
AND AYA ICHIHASHI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — An airman assigned to Kadena Air Base was arrested early Wednesday on suspicion of drunken driving after his vehicle rear-ended a motorcycle and injured two people, police said Thursday.

Senior Airman Zachary Lamont Ransom, 26, was taken into custody at about 4:45 a.m. after the incident while driving north on Route 58 at Mihama in Chatan, said Okinawa Police Station deputy chief Hiroto Iha. Two people on the motor-

cycle suffered minor injuries to their arms.

When police arrived and administered a Breathalyzer test, the Ransom's blood-alcohol content was nearly twice Japan's legal limit of 0.03 percent, Iha said.

Ransom will be turned over to prosecutors to be officially charged with drunken driving and causing injury to motorists while drunken driving, Iha said. Police are investigating if he was on his way to work at the time of the collision.

Officials from Kadena's 18th Wing declined to comment on the case because it is an "ongoing investigation" when

reached Thursday morning, but said they were cooperating with the prefectural police.

"The U.S. Air Force takes all incidents and allegations involving misconduct or illegal behavior seriously and will continue to provide support to [Okinawa Prefectural Police] as needed," the 18th Wing said in a statement to Stars and Stripes.

In a letter dated Sunday, III Marine Expeditionary Force commander Lt. Gen. Eric Smith asked all U.S. servicemembers on Okinawa to keep a low profile to show respect to a community in mourning, The Associated Press reported.

# Navy's \$128B submarine project faces IG audit

*Bloomberg*

The Pentagon's inspector general plans to audit how well the Navy is overseeing development of the propulsion and steering system for its new \$128 billion Columbia class of nuclear-armed submarines.

An audit this early in the Navy's top-priority program — at least 17 months before construction is scheduled to start on the first of 12 vessels — signals concern about the potential risks in technology for the sub, which is still mostly in its design phase.

The review that's likely to begin by June will "determine whether the Navy is managing the development" of the system to "ensure that it meets performance requirements without cost increases or schedule overruns," the watchdog office said in its fiscal 2019 audit plan.

"There is a suggestion in this statement that the stern section may present some risk of cost growth or schedule delay," Ronald O'Rourke, naval systems analyst for the Congressional Research Service, said in an email. Until now, he said, concern about cost and delay "has focused on things other than the stern section."

The Navy disclosed last year, for example, that Electric Boat identified weld defects in missile tubes from one of three tube suppliers.

The review concerns the propulsor, which drives a submarine through the water, and the coordinated stern, which allows it to maneuver. The submarines are being built by General Dynamics Corp.'s Electric Boat division.

"We look forward to working with the DOD IG on any such effort," said William Couch, a spokesman for the Naval Sea Systems Command. The audit is likely to be complete next year as Congress considers the fiscal 2021 defense budget. The Navy is expected to seek an increase in funds to start construction of the first vessel in October 2020.

# Military academies begin implementing Trump administration transgender ban

*Associated Press*

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The elite academies that educate officers for the nation's armed forces have begun to implement the Trump administration's ban on transgender servicemembers.

The U.S. Naval Academy will ban people who are transgender from attending the school, beginning with the 2020 school year. The Defense Department confirmed that change to the Capital Gazette newspaper on Monday. The school in Annapolis, Md., currently accepts transgender students and retains midshipmen who transition to another gender.

The administration's new policy took effect last week, stripping transgender troops of rights to serve openly and denying servicemen and women medical care if they choose to transition to another gender.

The Obama administration had lifted restrictions on transgender servicemembers in 2016, allowing them to serve

openly, and covered gender affirmation surgery.

A current Naval Academy student, Midshipman Regan Kibby, is one of six servicemembers suing the Trump administration over its ban.

The U.S. Coast Guard has also implemented the new policy, as of April 12, the agency states on its website.

Coast Guard Academy spokesman David Santos confirmed in an email Wednesday that the policy change applies to the school in New London, Conn. A lengthy explanation on the Coast Guard's website states that past medical treatment, such as gender-reassignment surgery or hormone therapy, may disqualify future applicants from joining up.

The Trump administration's new policy also bars future applicants who've been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, a condition that can apply to people who identify as another gender and experience distress.

There are some exceptions

for people who've been diagnosed with gender dysphoria. For instance, someone can join the Coast Guard if their doctor says they can demonstrate three years of "stability in his/her biological sex immediately before applying to serve." The Defense Department says transgender people can serve if they remain in their "biological sex."

The administration's policy calls for troops diagnosed with gender dysphoria to be medically evaluated before they are discharged to see if they qualify as having a disability.

An estimated 14,700 troops identify as transgender. An organization that represents transgender servicemembers said several are attending each academy, although many haven't come out.

The Air Force Academy will conform with Defense Department policy when admitting future cadets, said Lt. Col. Tracy Bunko, an academy spokeswoman.

# Officials: No foreign attempts to recover wreckage

BY HANA KUSUMOTO  
AND SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — Speculation about foreign nations racing to find the wreckage of a downed F-35A stealth fighter in the Far East appears unfounded, according to U.S. and Japanese officials.

A search for the lost aircraft, property of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, and its pilot, Maj. Akinori Hosomi, continued Thursday, a JASDF spokesman said.

The plane went down approximately 85 miles east of Misawa Air Base, its home field in northeastern Japan, just before 7:30 p.m. April 9. A search team found parts of the jet's left and right rudders in the water about two hours later.

It's the first loss of an A variant of the

fifth-generation fighter anywhere in the world. A Marine Corps F-35B, capable of short takeoffs and landings, crashed in September near the Marine air station in Beaufort, S.C.

Media reports have offered speculation about the potential for America's adversaries to find the plane first and exploit the sensitive equipment and information on it. Assembled in Japan by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, the missing aircraft was purchased from the U.S., part of Japan's goal of procuring a total 105 F-35As.

The Okinawa Times newspaper reported Thursday that a Bahamas-registered deep-water support ship, the Van Gogh, was docked at the U.S. Naha Military Port. The article suggests that the ship may have been chartered to recover the F-35A

wreckage.

Business Insider reported Tuesday on concerns that a foreign power might get to the wreck first. "Were Russia or China to recover the downed F-35, it could be a major intelligence windfall, especially given the fact that both countries have their own fifth-generation fighter programs dedicated to rivaling the US fighter," the article states.

Tyler Rogoway, the editor of the defense publication *The War Zone*, tweeted soon after the crash: "If one of Japan's F-35s is sitting at the bottom of the Pacific, we are probably about to see one of the biggest underwater espionage and counter-espionage ops since the Cold War."

However, U.S. and Japanese officials have poured cold water on those fears.

## Some new Samsung phones appear to be breaking

*Associated Press*

SAN FRANCISCO — Some of Samsung's new, almost \$2,000 folding phones appear to be breaking after just a couple of days.

Journalists who received the phones to review before the public launch said the Galaxy Fold screen started flickering and turning black before completely fizzling out. Two journalists said they removed a thin, protective layer from the screens that they thought was supposed to come off, but was meant to stay.

But reporters from *The Verge* and *CNBC* said they left that layer on and

their screens still broke. A *CNBC* video shows the left side of the inside screen intermittently flashing, and the right side as unresponsive.

The phone was "completely unusable" after two days, *CNBC* reporter Todd Haselton wrote.

The long-anticipated folding phone is about the size of a standard smartphone when folded, but can open up to the size of a small tablet. The phone is designed to work whether closed or open; when open, the single screen display is bisected by a crease.

Samsung promises the screen can with-

stand being opened and closed 200,000 times, or 100 times a day for five years.

The Galaxy Fold goes on sale April 26 in the U.S. for \$1,980, making it one of the most expensive phones anywhere — particularly if it isn't as durable as promised.

Samsung acknowledged it had heard reports of the screens breaking and said it would "thoroughly inspect these units in person to determine the cause of the matter."

A company spokesman also said it would make it clear that the top protective layer is necessary to prevent scratches.

## Couple accused of forcing day laborer into sex at gunpoint

*Associated Press*

PHOENIX — A Phoenix couple is accused of forcing a Mexican day laborer into sex at gunpoint and filming another encounter to blackmail him.

Jorge Murrieta, 45, and Brenda Acuna-Aguero, 39, were arrested last week on suspicion of sexual assault, aggravated assault and unlawful recording of a person, according to court documents obtained Wednesday. Murrieta faces additional charges of kidnapping, unlawful distribution of images of nudity and sexual extortion.

The pair approached the victim outside a home improvement store on April 8 about helping them move items in their house, a probable cause statement says. Police say that once they got to the home, Acuna-Aguero told the victim that she had fanta-

sies about having sex with a laborer. They engaged in a consensual encounter, but he didn't know that Murrieta had filmed it through a window from another room.

Authorities said Murrieta then pulled out a rifle and pointed it at the victim's chest. He ordered the victim to have sex with his wife again.

The victim complied. He says the couple then took his visa and Mexico-issued driver's license. They also forced him to show contact information in his phone for his wife, who lives in Mexico. The couple threatened to send her images of the encounter if the victim did not return the next day.

Police say Murrieta dropped the victim back at the home improvement store, then contacted him a short time later. He did not respond and later received a call from

his wife, who said she got explicit photos of him with Acuna-Aguero.

Police say the victim then reported the sexual assault. Investigators seized the cellphones of all three and say evidence on them confirms the victim's allegations.

When questioned by police, the couple acknowledged forcing the victim into sex at gunpoint, filming him and making threats with the footage. Murrieta also said they had done the same thing four other times with random men.

A judge last week ordered both held on a \$250,000 cash-only bond and attorneys appointed for them. The county public defender's office has not yet assigned them lawyers.

The couple was still in jail Wednesday, Maricopa County sheriff's spokesman Calbert Gillett said.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Man charged after tossing iguana

**OH** PAINESVILLE — Authorities said a customer at an Ohio restaurant pulled out a turquoise iguana from under his shirt, swung it around and threw it at the manager.

Police said the Madison man walked into Perkins Restaurant in Painesville, about 30 miles northeast of Cleveland, on Tuesday. He laid down in a booth, threw a menu at a waitress then threw the lizard at the manager who tried to talk to him.

Authorities did not say what provoked the attack.

Records show bond has been set at \$10,000 for Arnold Teeter, 49. He's been charged with animal cruelty, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

Police say the iguana they named "Copper" has a fractured leg.

### Police: Goose attacks 2 people at Walmart

**IN** FISHERS — Suburban Indianapolis police warned people to give plenty of room to geese after one attacked two people in a parking lot.

The Fishers Police Department said the two people suffered minor injuries in the parking lot of the city's Walmart. Sgt. Tom Weger said one suffered a bite mark on an arm.

Weger says the two didn't intentionally approach the goose, but it attacked them after they entered its vicinity.

### Police: Man called in threat to see girlfriend

**NM** LOVINGTON — A New Mexico man

faces charges after police said he made a bomb threat to a Family Dollar so his girlfriend could get off work.

Lovington police said Aaron Gutierrez, 26, was arrested this week in connection with a phoned-in bomb threat in February.

According to investigators, Gutierrez called in the bomb threat to get his girlfriend off of work so he could see her.

### Man accused of firing pee-filled squirt gun

**FL** GULFPORT — Authorities in Florida said a 71-year-old man filled a squirt gun with urine and sprayed a woman who was walking her dog.

Gulfport police said in an arrest report that Joel William Benjamin approached the woman and squirted her several times with urine.

The report said Benjamin told officers he would "do it again," but it was unclear what motivated the attack. He faces a misdemeanor battery charge.

### Woman has meltdown over lack of ice cream

**MO** ST. LOUIS — A woman who wanted chocolate ice cream had a meltdown after employees at a St. Louis restaurant told her they only had vanilla last month, police say.

She spit on workers and took a baseball bat to the windows of a Rally's restaurant in the Central West End after she was told they'd run out of chocolate early March 27, police say. She broke out the windows of the restaurant about 2:25 a.m., according to authorities.

She then got in a vehicle and split, heading west.

Authorities are still looking for the attacker.

### Rescued abandoned puppy is no puppy

**CA** SAN DIEGO — A man found an adorable newborn puppy in a Southern California canyon. But that puppy was no puppy — it was a coyote.

The San Diego Union-Tribune reported that San Diego Humane Society officers received a call from the Tirasanta resident who found the pup while walking his dog in a nearby canyon. The man took it back to his house and summoned the officers.

Upon examination, the officers discovered that the newborn animal was a coyote.

### Police: Shotgun blast was to scare crows

**OR** PORTLAND — Authorities said a 66-year-old man was arrested after firing his shotgun near two Portland schools in an effort to scare crows off his property.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office said a teacher at Catlin Gabel School in southwest Portland reported hearing a gunshot and seeing a man run into a home with a shotgun. That school and another then went into temporary lockdown.

The sheriff's office said deputies quickly located a man fitting the description of the shooter. Deputies say Mark Mordini told them he fired his shotgun once to scare the crows.

### Man who shot, killed dog gets jail time

**MA** SPRINGFIELD — A Massachusetts man who shot and killed a dog on the sidewalk during an argu-

ment with the animal's owner was sent to prison.

The Republican newspaper reported that Edwin Harrison, 39, of Springfield was sentenced after pleading guilty to animal cruelty, firearms and drug charges.

He received six to eight years on the gun charges, and five to six years for killing the dog, to be served concurrently with the firearms sentence.

Authorities said he got into an argument with the dog's owner on a Springfield street in November 2016, pulled out a gun, shot the Jack Russell terrier-Chihuahua mix, and casually walked away.

### Man charged with 100 counts of rape

**LA** PINEVILLE — A 71-year-old Louisiana man has been charged with 100 counts of first-degree rape over allegations of criminal sexual conduct involving minors.

The Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office told news outlets that the earliest allegations against Harvey Joseph Fountain date back to the 1970s.

The sheriff's office said deputies received a tip on April 1 that Fountain was sexually involved with juveniles.

Deputies said an investigation found evidence supporting the allegations and Fountain was arrested on 50 counts of first-degree rape on April 9. Days later, additional victims were identified — the sheriff's office isn't saying how many — and the still-jailed Fountain was charged with an additional 50 counts of first-degree rape.

From wire reports

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# NBA playoffs give 3 players extra edge

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Damian Lillard stared intently well after his deep, buzzer-beating three fell to close out Portland's third quarter against the Thunder. The look on his face was one of determination, focus and, yes, even a little bravado.

It was as if Lillard was making a statement. It's not new for the Portland guard.

Lillard, the Thunder's Russell Westbrook and Patrick Beverley all play with an edge and have provided some of the most entertaining moments of the postseason so far.

With Lillard and Westbrook squaring off in the Portland-Oklahoma City series, they almost feed off each other's energy. Lillard finished with 29 points — including the stone-cold three — on Tuesday night and the Trail Blazers took a 2-0 lead against the Thunder with a 114-94 victory. The series shifts to Oklahoma City for Friday's Game 3.

Lillard has been dialed in from the start of the series against the Thunder, in part because the Trail Blazers were

ousted in four games by the New Orleans Pelicans, becoming the first No. 3 seed to get swept in a best-of-seven series by a No. 6 seed.

Sometimes overlooked on a smaller-market team in a conference dominated by Steph Curry and James Harden, Lillard has often played with a chip on his shoulder — and he's embraced it.

His determination was intensified by critics who suggested the Blazers' playoff fate was sealed when they lost center Jusuf Nurkic late in the season to a broken leg. Asked what he would say to those naysayers after two games, Lillard simply said: "Nothing."

Westbrook has his own motivation.

A former league MVP, two-time scoring champion, two-time assists leader and two-time All-Star MVP, Westbrook nonetheless appears to seek validation every night. He always has been volatile, sometimes getting into disagreements with players, officials, fans and the media. He led the league with 16 technical fouls this season and even

drew a one-game suspension this season for accumulating too many.

Like the Blazers, the Thunder haven't made it out of the first round for the past two seasons — ever since Kevin Durant went to Golden State.

"I think it's just two really competitive guys. You know, probably, both guys individually have worked hard. Both guys want to win. Both guys are leaders of their team," Oklahoma City coach Billy Donovan said about Lillard and Westbrook. "Both guys take their job very, very seriously, so I think it probably speaks to the competitive nature of both of them."

Beverley is another one of those players always playing like he belongs.

Known as a pesky defender, he's been tireless in his pursuit of Durant during the first-round series between the Clippers and Warriors. Both were ejected when their battle got too heated in Game 1.

Beverley has been the fly that Durant hasn't been able to shoo away.

The Clippers point guard is

a major reason why the series was tied 1-1 heading into Thursday's game in Los Angeles.

"I don't try to get in people's head, man," Beverley said. "I can't help people get irritated by me. It's not my fault. I go out there and I try to be the best defender on the (expletive) planet, consistently — day in and out."

Beverley is nothing if not tenacious. When his career at Arkansas was cut short by academic issues, he went overseas to play for several years before landing with the Rockets in 2013. He's since solidified his league-wide reputation as a vexing defender.

Perhaps it was Durant who summed up Beverley the best.

"He's a Chicago kid, grew up and played in the Chicago area, so those dudes play with a different type of grit, so I can appreciate that about Pat," Durant said. "You know what he's going to bring to the table, just physicality, the mucking up the game a little bit with his physicality, his talking, everything. ... That's his identity."

## NBA playoffs roundup

### Irving scores 37 points as Celtics go up 2-0 on Pacers

Associated Press

BOSTON — Kyrie Irving scored 37 points and the Boston Celtics rallied late in the fourth quarter to beat the Indiana Pacers 99-91 on Wednesday night for a 2-0 lead in the first-round series.

Coming out of a timeout with a chance for Indiana to tie it, the Pacers' Wesley Matthews threw an inbounds pass into the bench on the other side of the court with 12.1 seconds left. On the ensuing play, the Celtics' Al Horford passed to Jayson Tatum, who was fouled on a two-handed dunk. He completed the three-point play to make it 97-91 with 8.8 seconds left.

The Pacers turned it over

again and the Celtics were able to close out the game at the free-throw line.

Tatum scored 26 points, including a thunderous dunk down the stretch to help punctuate a 10-0 run by Boston over the final five minutes. Bojan Bogdanovic led Indiana with 23 points.

**Rockets 118, Jazz 98:** James Harden put on an MVP performance with 32 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists to lead Houston to a second straight rout of visiting Utah for a 2-0 series lead.

Harden had his third career playoff triple-double. He had 25 points in the first half.

Harden controlled the game

from the start as the Rockets raced to a 39-19 lead after a first quarter where he scored just two points fewer than the Jazz. Houston made 6 of 13 three-pointers in the first and Utah hit just one of its 14 tries. The Rockets didn't let up in the second quarter and led 70-44 at halftime.

Ricky Rubio and Royce O'Neale each had 17 points for the Jazz.

**Bucks 120, Pistons 99:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 13 of his team's 26 points in a big third quarter and host Milwaukee beat Detroit to take a 2-0 series lead.

Eric Bledsoe led the Bucks with 27 points, and Khris Mid-

dleton had 24. Milwaukee is trying to win a series for the first time since 2001. Luke Kennard had 19 points for Detroit. Reggie Jackson and Andre Drummond each added 18, and Drummond had 16 rebounds.

Detroit star Blake Griffin sat out again with a left knee injury, but received a technical for the second straight game for arguing from the bench.

After scoring 10 points and playing only 14 minutes in the first half because of foul trouble, Antetokounmpo scored Milwaukee's first seven points in the third quarter. The Bucks outscored Detroit 35-17 in the period to take a 93-76 lead into the fourth.

# NFL schedule has 5 international games

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NFL's 100th season will begin with its most classic rivalry and feature the Super Bowl champion Patriots hosting Pittsburgh in the first Sunday night game.

As previously announced, NFL 100 will kick off with Green Bay at Chicago for the 199th meeting of a series that began in 1921. That Sept. 5 game in the Thursday night slot usually reserved for hosting by the NFL champ forced New England to open three nights later.

The Patriots have a home schedule loaded with top attractions, including Kansas City on Dec. 8 in an AFC title game rematch, and Dallas on Nov. 24.

Monday night's doubleheader on ESPN will feature Houston at New Orleans and Denver at Oakland.

Week 2 includes an intriguing Monday night matchup of Cleveland at the New York Jets. The very first Monday nighter was a Browns win over Joe Namath and the defending champion Jets in 1970. This one

will feature the return to the Meadowlands for now-Browns receiver Odell Beckham Jr., and two young, potential star quarterbacks in Cleveland's Baker Mayfield and New York's Sam Darnold.

National broadcasts rarely have included the downtrodden Browns, but they're a popular choice this year: Cleveland will have four prime-time games, also facing the Rams, San Francisco and archrival Pittsburgh.

Every team will have at least one national TV appearance. New England, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Green Bay, Seattle and the Rams get the maximum prime-time games, five.

The traditional Thanksgiving Day games will have Detroit at home to Chicago, then Buffalo at Dallas. The night game to close the holiday schedule will be New Orleans at Atlanta in another long-time rivalry.

The NFC champion Los Angeles Rams will host Cincinnati in London for one of five international games on the 2019 schedule. The Rams and Bengals will face off at Wembley Stadium on Oct. 27.

Earlier in October, the league will play two games at Tottenham Hotspur's new stadium in London. The Raiders will host the Bears on Oct. 6, and the Buccaneers will be the home team against the Panthers on Oct. 13.

Wembley will be the site of the fourth London match, with Houston facing host Jacksonville on Nov. 3.

The league returns to Mexico, after last season's Chiefs-Rams game was moved to Los Angeles because of poor field conditions at Azteca Stadium. On Monday night Nov. 18, the Chiefs will play LA's other team, the Chargers.

In Week 16, the NFL has left 10 teams in semi-limbo. Three games are scheduled for NFL Network on Saturday, Dec. 21, and will be chosen among these five: Detroit at Denver; Oakland at the LA Chargers; Buffalo at New England; the Rams at San Francisco 49ers; and Houston at Tampa Bay. The non-Saturday games will be played Sunday.

The season ends Dec. 29, when Chicago finishes at Min-

nesota for the fourth successive year. All finales are divisional games for the 11th straight season.

Among the oddities, in one stretch the Raiders will go seven weeks before playing a game in Oakland. They entertain the Chiefs on Sept. 15, then have road games at Minnesota and Indianapolis, host Chicago in London, are off Oct. 13, then go to Green Bay and Houston. They return to Oakland on Nov. 3.

Miami opens with four 2018 playoff opponents: home for Baltimore and New England, at Dallas, home for the Chargers. Then the Dolphins have a bye.

One team, Philadelphia has three straight home games and three consecutive road games. No other team has three away matches in a row, though the Rams will be away from LA for a visit to Atlanta on Oct. 20, that "home" contest in London the next week, then a bye and a trip to Pittsburgh.

Also with three straight home games will be Green Bay, Atlanta, Arizona, San Francisco, Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Houston.

## NHL playoffs roundup

# Bruins hold off Maple Leafs, draw even in series

Associated Press

TORONTO — David Pastrnak scored twice in quick succession, Brad Marchand had a goal and two assists and the Boston Bruins held off the Toronto Maple Leafs 6-4 on Wednesday night to tie the first-round series 2-2.

Charlie McAvoy had a goal and an assist, Zdeno Chara and Joakim Nordstrom also scored and Tuukka Rask made 38 saves. Auston Matthews scored twice for Toronto. Zach Hyman and Travis Dermott also scored and Frederik Andersen stopped 25 shots.

Game 5 is Friday night in Boston.

After the Maple Leafs over-

came a 2-0 deficit to tie it early in the second period, Pastrnak put Boston back in front at 3:16 when he redirected a pass from Marchand on a 2-on-1. The Bruins then got a power play when Matthews went off for roughing, and Marchand whipped a backhand pass to a wide-open Pastrnak, who snapped the puck short-side on Andersen for his second goal in 1:35.

Chara made it 5-2 at 5:39 of the third. At 42 years, 30 days, the Boston captain became the second-oldest defenseman in NHL history to score a playoff goal. Chris Chelios holds the record at 45 years, 86 days.

**Stars 5, Predators 1:** Roope Hintz and Alexander Radu-

lov scored power-play goals on their team's first two shots, and host Dallas chased Nashville goalie Pekka Rinne with an early four-goal onslaught to even their best-of-seven series at two games each.

Hintz added his second career playoff goal in the second period, on John Klingberg's third assist of the game.

Ben Bishop stopped 34 shots. Bishop allowed a couple of soft goals in Game 3 in his home playoff debut with Dallas, when the Predators won their second consecutive game after the Stars won the series opener in Nashville.

**Avalanche 3, Flames 2 (OT):** Mikko Rantanen scored on a

slap shot 10:23 into overtime after tying the game with a goal late in regulation and host Colorado rallied past Calgary to take a 3-1 lead in the teams' best-of-seven series.

Moments after weathering a penalty, Carl Soderberg got the puck and sent a pass to Rantanen, who lined a shot past Mike Smith before being mobbed by teammates.

Trailing 2-0 in the third period, J.T. Compher started Colorado's comeback on a rebound and Rantanen tying it on a power-play goal with 2:50 left.

Elias Lindholm and Derek Ryan had goals for the Flames, the top seed in the West.

# Royals drill Anderson after bat flip in win

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Tim Anderson says he isn't sure what he did to rile up the opposing pitcher or get ejected from the game.

But he's certain of this much: He's not changing his ways.

And if flipping a bat to celebrate a towering home run offends the other team, so be it.

"It's all confusing," he said. "I'm the one that ended up in the locker room, and I was the one that got hit by a pitch."

The fiercely energetic Anderson spiked his bat following a home run and Kansas City's Brad Keller responded by drilling him with a fastball in his next at-bat, setting off a benches-clearing fracas in the Royals' 4-3, 10-inning victory over the Chicago White Sox on Wednesday.

Anderson tossed his bat toward the White Sox dugout following his two-run drive in the fourth inning. Keller hit him in the buttocks with his first pitch

leading off the sixth.

Anderson, the AL's leading hitter, was restrained by Royals catcher Martin Maldonado but kept jawing with Keller on the way to first base. The dugouts and bullpens emptied, though no punches appeared to be thrown. White Sox manager Rick Renteria and Royals bench coach Dale Sveum shoved each other, and the usually mild-mannered Renteria was particularly animated.

There were four ejections — Anderson, Keller, Renteria and Sveum.

Though Keller insisted he wasn't trying to hit anyone, Kansas City's Hunter Dozier said Anderson should have expected retaliation.

"And once you get hit, just deal with it and go to first. That's my take on it," said Dozier, who hit a tiebreaking homer in the 10th.

Anderson has often talked about encouraging players to express themselves, something

Major League Baseball has tried to embrace with its "Let the Kids Play" marketing campaign. But not everybody in the game sees it the same way.

"I'm going to continue to be me and keep having fun," Anderson said. "Our fans, they pay their hard-earned money to come to the ballpark to see a show so why don't I give them one?"

The 25-year-old Anderson and the Royals have mixed it up before.

In April 2018, Anderson shouted after a home run against Kansas City. Later in the game, he was playing shortstop when Royals star catcher Salvador Perez reached second base. Words were exchanged and the benches cleared.

When the tempers cooled, Perez and Anderson shook hands. Perez said Anderson had hollered a few weeks earlier when he homered twice on opening day.

Anderson also has a his-

tory with crew chief Joe West, who he called "terrible" after getting tossed from a game against the crosstown Cubs in September.

West had little to say Wednesday, telling a White Sox spokesman: "Because of the language that was used on the field, the umpires declined comment."

Renteria insisted Anderson "clearly" wasn't showing up the Royals.

"Get him out. You want him to not do that? Get him out," Renteria said.

He also called his flare-up with Sveum a "misunderstanding" in the heat of the moment with players and coaches slow to clear the field.

"He just got excited and said, 'Get your team back, get your team in the dugout,'" Sveum said.

That angered Royals manager Ned Yost, who said, "We've got no issues but I'm not going to allow anybody to yell at my team."

## MLB roundup

# Hamels goes seven innings as Cubs sweep Marlins

Associated Press

MIAMI — The Chicago Cubs are starting to look more like themselves.

Cole Hamels pitched seven strong innings and the Cubs completed a three-game sweep of the Miami Marlins with a 6-0 win Wednesday night.

"We obviously know that we need to come in and start winning," Hamels said. "We know we're a good ball club so no matter what team we're playing, let's just go out there and win. If we keep that mentality that's how you start good win streaks."

The Cubs, who won 95 games last season, entered the series with a 5-9 record and outscored the last-place Marlins 17-2 over the three games.

The Marlins have lost nine of 10 and are 4-16 overall.

Hamels (3-0) allowed three hits and did not walk a batter. He struck out eight while throwing 65 of his 97 pitches for strikes.

**Yankees 5, Red Sox 3:** Brett Gardner hit a grand slam off Ryan Brasier in the seventh inning for his 100th career home run, and host New York rallied for a two-game sweep of the reeling World Series champions.

**Indians 1, Mariners 0:** Carlos Carrasco rebounded from one of his worst starts with 12 strikeouts, Jake Bauers hit a solo homer and visiting Cleveland completed a three-game sweep.

**Cardinals 6, Brewers 3:** Michael Wacha cooled off NL MVP Christian Yelich, Matt Carpenter and Marcell Ozuna each went deep, and St. Louis beat host Milwaukee.

**Phillies 3, Mets 2:** Jake Arrieta pitched neatly into the ninth inning, Scott Kingery and Cesar Hernandez hit solo homers and host Philadelphia beat New York.

**Dodgers 3, Reds 2:** A.J. Pollock hit a three-run homer in the sixth inning, and host Los Angeles tied the major league record by homering in its 32nd consecutive home game.

**Pirates 3, Tigers 2 (10):** Colin Moran hit an RBI single in the 10th inning and Pittsburgh beat host Detroit in extras for a second straight night.

**Diamondbacks 3, Braves 2 (10):** Adam Jones worked a bases-loaded walk against Jesse Biddle in the 10th inning and also homered, lifting Arizona over host Atlanta.

**Rays 8, Orioles 1:** Brandon Lowe, Ji-Man Choi and Yandy Diaz homered and host Tampa

Bay beat Baltimore.

**Nationals 9, Giants 6:** Juan Soto and Howie Kendrick hit first-inning home runs, Matt Adams and Kurt Suzuki connected in the seventh, and host Washington beat San Francisco.

**Rangers 5, Angels 4:** Shin-Soo Choo delivered a tiebreaking two-run triple off Matt Harvey (0-1) and host Texas finished a three-game sweep of Los Angeles.

**Twins 4, Blue Jays 1:** Nelson Cruz had two hits and two RBIs, helping Jake Odorizzi and host Minnesota beat Toronto following a 54-minute rain delay.

**Athletics 2, Astros 1:** Frankie Montas pitched into the seventh inning, Matt Chapman homered for the third time in six games and host Oakland ended Houston's 10-game winning streak.