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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Chattanooga shooting victims mourned

By TARA COPP

Stars and Stripes

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — On a gray and rainy Saturday, Chattanooga gathered once more to honor its five slain servicemen and their grieving families, and acknowledge a community forever changed by a lone gunman one month ago.

The July 16 ambush at the Naval Operational Support Center took the life of Navy Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Randall Smith, 26, husband to Angie and father to three young girls, Lyla, Ella and Kyla.

The gunman also took the lives of four Marines. Lance Cpl. Squire K. “Skip” Wells, 21, had become a Marine just eight months before. Sgt. Carson Holmquist’s wife, Jasmine, and young son, Wyatt, had welcomed the 25-year-old home from his most recent deployment to Afghanistan in May. Staff Sgt. David Wyatt, 35, and his wife, Lori, had been married 10 years and had two children, Rebecca and Heith.

Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Sullivan was a Marine who’d already earned two Purple Hearts in combat in Iraq, and was a beloved son and uncle in his Springfield, Mass., community.

“We come together as fellow citizens to honor these five fallen patriots. To mourn with those who loved them,” said Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, as he, Vice President Joe Biden, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus and several thousand others paid tribute to the men.

Five battle crosses, four with sand-colored Marine combat boots and one with the black boots of the Navy, stood center stage, with portraits of the men above them. Many rows above, two sailors in dress whites stood watch the entire time in section 204 of the Chattanooga arena.

“The meaning of their killing is yet unclear, what combination of disturbed mind, violent extremism, and hateful ideol-

ogy was at work,” Carter said. “We don’t know. Perhaps it will never be fully known. But I do know this ... that those who attempt to inspire fear or terror will find no satisfaction, have no success, in the United States of America. Instead ... we come back from tragedy stronger and more united than before.”

The five were killed when Mohammad Abdulazeez, 24, fired on the Naval Operational Support Center. He forced his way onto the facility after shooting at a military recruitment center, where Marine Sgt. DeMonte Cheeley was shot in the leg.

He led police on a chase to the support center. Abdulazeez entered the facility and killed the five before law enforcement shot and killed him.

During the ceremony, more details, both heartbreaking and honorable, emerged.

Mabus revealed that Holmquist’s widow is expecting their second child. The commanding officer of the Marine

unit training at the base that day, Maj. Michael Abrams of Battery M of 3rd Battalion, 14th Marines, noted that several of the Marines responded to the gunfire by rushing to protect children at a nearby playground.

Biden, who recently eulogized his own son, Army National Guard Maj. Beau Biden, was emotional during his speech, telling the families that while he had not met their lost soldiers, “I knew them; they were my son.”

Serving their country, Biden said, “was stamped in their DNA. Being a sailor, being a Marine, it’s not what they did. It was like all of you; it was who they are.”

Biden was at times both mournful and forceful. He ended with a stern warning to anyone who might hope attacks like Chattanooga will disrupt the U.S. will to fight: “Never underestimate us; it’s always been a bad, bad bet to do that.”

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US removing Patriot missiles from Turkey

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. is pulling its Patriot missiles out of southern Turkey, where American forces have been guarding Turkish airspace for nearly three years, the U.S. announced Sunday.

They will be redeployed to the U.S. for “critical modernization upgrades” to counter evolving global threats, the U.S. Embassy in Ankara and the Turkish Foreign Ministry said.

The decision comes at a time when the U.S. military is building up its presence to support

efforts against the Islamic State group, which operates across the Turkish border in Syria. Earlier this month, Turkey allowed the U.S. military to conduct airstrikes against the militants from Incirlik Air Base.

“As the United States deploys additional air assets and partners with Turkey to counter ISIL, the United States will also continue to work closely with Turkey on how to support Turkey’s air defense capabilities, including against ballistic missile risks and threats,” the U.S. Embassy said, using another

acronym for the militant group.

U.S. officials emphasized that the decision to pull out the Patriots is not a sign of weakening commitment to Turkey, but that the move was made after a U.S. review of its global missile-defense posture.

The U.S. and Turkey will consult with NATO allies on other ways to bolster Turkey’s defenses, the embassy said. The U.S. can redeploy Patriots to Turkey within a week if needed.

In 2013, the U.S. along with Germany and the Netherlands deployed the anti-missile Pa-

triot batteries to Turkey in response to concerns over a cross-border shelling incident in 2012 that left several Turks dead.

While the prime focus for the Patriot mission was to counter any missile threat from Syria, none ever materialized.

Although Turkey has long viewed countering Bashar Assad in Syria as its prime strategic concern, the attacks by the Islamic State group prompted Ankara to reverse course and allow the U.S. fighter jet access to the base.

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DOD further limits use of military gear by police

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — One year after the use of military vehicles and equipment by police in the streets of Ferguson, Mo., prompted questions about how the Pentagon distributes unused gear and weapons to local law enforcement agencies, new guidelines tightening the program will soon take effect.

The impending change stems from the interagency Law Enforcement Equipment Working Group, which was formed by the White House after President Barack Obama called for a review last summer of programs that distribute military equipment to law enforcement agencies across the United States. The program led to criticism that some police departments were becoming militarized and overly aggressive.

The plan focuses in part on the Pentagon's Excess Property Program, often known as the 1033 Program.

The Obama administration

announced in May that it would not provide certain kinds of military equipment to police departments, including tracked vehicles; any aircraft, vessel or vehicle with a weapon installed on it; firearms larger than .50-caliber in size; and grenade launchers. Other restrictions will take effect Oct. 1, the beginning of fiscal 2016.

A defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the program, told *The Washington Post* that the Defense Department will meet with state coordinators of the 1033 Program later this month to brief them on other changes that have been made.

They include requiring detailed justifications for certain kinds of "controlled" equipment, including wheeled tactical vehicles like Humvees, riot gear and a variety of firearms, certifying that the necessary training is in place and providing evidence that a local civilian governing body also has seen the request and approves.

2 military parachutists injured at Chicago event

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Two parachutists were seriously injured Saturday during the Chicago Air & Water Show after colliding in midair while performing a stunt, a parachute team spokeswoman said.

Witnesses said at least one of the men clipped the top of a high-rise apartment building before falling to the ground in the city's Gold Coast neighborhood.

The two men were taken in serious-to-critical condition to Northwestern Memorial Hospital on Saturday morning, Fire Department spokesman Juan Hernandez said.

Golden Knights spokes-

woman Donna Dixon told the *Chicago Tribune* that one parachutist — a man in his late 20s — had surgery to relieve pressure in his brain caused by a head injury. She said he was still in critical condition Sunday. The man's name hasn't been released.

The other man is a member of the Navy Leap Frogs. Dixon said he broke his leg and was released over the weekend.

The Army Golden Knights and Navy Leap Frogs parachute teams were performing a stunt known as a "bomb burst," Dixon told WMAQ-TV. During the stunt, parachutists fall with red smoke trailing from packs and then separate, creating a colorful visual in the sky.

Mine blast highlights weakness along DMZ

BY ASHLEY ROWLAND
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Marked by rivers and rugged mountainsides, and laden with more than 1 million land mines, the Demilitarized Zone is often referred to as the most heavily guarded border in the world.

Still, sometime in recent weeks, North Korean troops were able to sneak across the demarcation line between the two Koreas and plant several land mines on the south side. Two South Korean soldiers on a routine morning patrol triggered one of the mines last week. One soldier lost both of his legs below the knee; the second soldier lost a foot.

The incident, though revealing a weakness in the seemingly impenetrable border, doesn't necessarily point to a major lapse in security, some analysts say. Instead, it highlights the near impossibility of thoroughly monitoring a swath of land that's 160 miles long and 2½ miles wide.

A South Korean military of-

ficial, speaking on customary condition of anonymity, said that while South Korean troops aggressively monitor the border with advanced surveillance equipment and their naked eyes, their ability to monitor some portions of the DMZ is limited.

North and South Korean troops man outposts along the Military Demarcation Line, or Armistice Line, often in forested areas.

"It's very difficult to keep watch there for 24 hours a day, especially if it's rainy or foggy," said Kim Seongmin, a defector and former North Korean military officer who now heads Free North Korea Radio. "If North Korean troops want to violate the armistice agreement, they can do it there," he said.

An Chanil, who was stationed at the DMZ as a platoon sergeant in the North Korean army, agreed. "Nobody can see everywhere," said An, who defected in 1979 and is now president of the World Institute for Korea Studies, a Seoul-based think tank.

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The Old Farmer's Almanac forecasts cold, lots of snow

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. — The Old Farmer's Almanac predicts it will be super cold with a slew of snow for much of the U.S., even in places that don't usually see too much of it, like the Pacific Northwest.

There's plenty more to peruse in the folksy, annual book of household tips, trends, recipes and articles, such as animal jealousy, the history of shoes and anticipation for the biggest Supermoon in decades in November 2016.

Otherwise, look for above-

normal snow and below-normal temperatures for much of the northeastern New England states; icy conditions in parts of the South; and frigid weather in the Midwest. The snowiest periods in the Pacific Northwest will be in mid-December, early to mid-January and mid-to late February, the almanac predicts.

"Just about everybody who gets snow will have a White Christmas in one capacity or another," editor Janice Stillman said from Dublin, N.H., where the almanac is compiled.

Serena falls in Toronto semifinals

Associated Press

TORONTO — Top-ranked Serena Williams stumbled in the Rogers Cup semifinals Saturday night, falling 6-3, 5-7, 4-6 to Swiss teenager Belinda Bencic.

The 18-year-old Bencic became the youngest player to beat Williams in a completed match since Maria Sharapova at 17 in the 2004 WTA Finals.

"I can't describe the feeling right now," said Bencic, the winner this year at Eastbourne for her first career title. "I was very overwhelmed from the situation on the court, but I'm just so happy the (winning) forehand landed in and she couldn't reach it anymore. It was an incredible feeling. I have no words."

The winner of the first three Grand Slam events of the season, the 33-year-old Williams lost for only the second time in 45 matches this season. She won titles in Toronto titles in 2001, 2011 and 2013.

"I think I played really crappy today," Williams said. "I'll try to be politically correct. And I don't think you would disagree."

In the other semifinal, second-ranked Simona Halep of Romania beat Sara Errani of Italy 6-4, 6-4.

Williams had 16 aces to just one for Bencic, but the American double-faulted 12 times.

"I just really didn't play up to par today — what a professional tennis player should play like. I played like an amateur, to be honest. ... "Today was not my day and hopefully I can rectify that going into next week and then going into hopefully the (U.S.) Open," Williams said. "Hopefully, I can have a few more better days."

Bencic, ranked 20th, has knocked off three seeded players en route to her first career appearance in a Premier-5 Level event. She opened with a victory over Canada's Eugenie Bouchard and followed with wins over fourth-seeded Caroline Wozniacki, Sabine Lisicki and fifth-seeded Ana Ivanovic.

In other tennis news:

■ Top-ranked Novak Djokovic advanced to the Rogers Cup final, beating France's Jeremy Chardy 6-4, 6-4 on Saturday in Montreal.

Djokovic will face second-seeded Andy Murray, a 6-3, 6-0 winner over fourth-seeded Kei Nishikori of Japan in the night semifinal.

"Andy is all-around player, very complete, and has been around for so many years," Djokovic said. "He knows how to play in the big stage, in the big matches."

Djokovic, the tournament champion in 2007, 2011 and 2012, has won 52 of 55 matches this year. The Serb is in position to tie the ATP Tour record for consecutive Masters 1000 event titles at five. He stretched his career record against Chardy to 10-0.

Djokovic is 19-8 against Murray, winning the last eight meetings with the Scot, including the Australian Open final this year. With the win Saturday, Murray will pass Roger Federer for the No. 2 spot in the world in the next ranking.

Biles wins 3rd straight title

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Simone Biles' friends are running out of words to describe her almost as quickly as Biles is running out of competition.

At the moment, there is none. And a year might not be enough time for the rest of the world to catch up.

Battling perfection as much as the rest of the field, Biles soared to her third straight U.S. women's gymnastics title on Saturday night, putting on a staggering display that served notice the gap between the 18-year-old and everyone else is widening with the 2016 Olympics less than 12 months away.

"I just keep shocking myself," Biles said. "Everybody else too."

Biles posted a two-round total of 124.100, nearly five points ahead of BFF Maggie Nichols in a sport typically decided by fractions. The two chatted before taking the floor on Saturday, with Biles telling Nichols "it's going to be close."

It wasn't. Biles joined Kim Zmeskal-Burdette as the only Americans to win three consecutive national all-around titles while the two-time world champion extended her unbeaten streak to nine meets and counting.

"Today, she was just 'wow,'" Nichols said.

And she did it against a group laden with Olympic medals. Three-time Olympic medalist Aly Raisman was third, Bailie Key was fourth and defending Olympic all-around champion Gabby Douglas was fifth in the final major event before the world championship this fall in Scotland.

Biles can feel free to book her passport now after four near flawless. Douglas,

Raisman, Key Nichols also figure to be in great position to make the six-person world team as the U.S. tries to back up the team gold it won in China last October.

"Tonight felt really good," Raisman said. "I'm relieved that it's over because I was so nervous."

So was Biles, at least at the start. She slogged through a largely uninspired opening round Thursday, even landing flat on her face at the end of a tumbling run on floor. The crowd gasped at the rare misstep, though Biles recovered to end her night by drilling her Amanar vault. Her personal-best score of 16.250 caused her to go "Wow."

All four rotations were kind of like that in the finals. Biles began the night on balance beam, making the 4-inch wide piece of wood 4-feet off the ground feel as wide as the backyard patio. Linking together difficult combinations without so much as a wobble, she put together a 15.9 that might as well have sent the message that "the champ is here."

"I just needed to come back and redeem myself," Biles said.

She followed with an impeccable, bouncy floor routine. Her red-and-white leotard glittering under the bright lights, Biles is equal parts acrobat and showman who makes pushing the boundaries of the sport look as easy as an afternoon goofing around in the gym. Her 15.85 was bettered even Raisman — the reigning Olympic champion on the event — and somehow still left a little room for improvement for a gymnast who considers herself a closet perfectionist.

Biles nearly attained it on vault. She's been the best in the world since McKayla

Maroney stepped away two years ago. Momentum surging, she quite literally flirted with perfection with an Amanar that would have left Maroney impressed. She packed 2 1/2 twists into a split second then jammed her feet into the mat so hard it appeared as if they were suction-cupped to the ground. Her score of 16.300 included a 9.9 for execution, as close as anyone has come to a 10.0 since the scoring system was revamped following the 2004 Olympics.

"That's pretty ridiculous," Biles said.

In a sport where it's difficult to stay on top for more than a few months, Biles has overwhelmed gymnastics for the better part of two years. While Raisman and Douglas are well on their way to successful returns following lengthy layoffs after the U.S.'s triumph in London in 2012, Biles shows no signs of coming back to the pack.

Still, there were encouraging signs that Raisman and Douglas are rounding into form. Raisman hopped off the beam on Thursday but put together a rock-steady 14.950 on the apparatus she earned a bronze on at the 2012 games.

Douglas hit a 15.1 on uneven bars for the second straight competition. The 18-year-old said she is pacing herself during her return and there are considerable upgrades available if she can stay healthy.

While Biles continued to roll, the development of Nichols' gives the Americans a fourth all-around threat. The 17-year-old from Little Canada, Minnesota has attitude — and skills — that match her twitter handle (@MagsGotSwag12). She has spent the last 18 months slowly making inroads on everyone not named Biles and bested three stars with far more extensive resumes.

Stewart boosts Pirates past Mets

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Clint Hurdle believes games like this will boost the Pittsburgh Pirates' confidence down the stretch.

Pinch-hitter Chris Stewart singled home the go-ahead run in the 14th inning and the Pirates again beat the New York Mets in extra innings, 5-3 Saturday night.

"We've become battle tested with extra-inning games this year," Hurdle said. "We've had things thrown at us, and these guys' mind-set is you control what you can control. And that's your time on the field and your time in the box."

Joe Blanton (2-0) struck out six in three scoreless innings. Mark Melancon got the last three outs for his major league-leading 37th save.

Red Sox 22, Mariners 10: Jackie Bradley Jr. hit two homers and three doubles to drive in seven runs as host Boston once again battered Seattle.

Boston got 26 hits in the highest-scoring game ever against the Mariners. Pablo Sandoval and Alejandro De Aza homered, and David Ortiz and Blake Swihart each had three RBIs.

Yankees 4, Blue Jays 1: Masahiro Tanaka allowed just five hits for his first complete game in more than a year, leading visiting New York over Toronto.

Tigers 4, Astros 1 (11): Victor Martinez hit a tiebreaking RBI double in a three-run 11th as Detroit outlasted host Houston.

Twins 4, Indians 1: Tyler Duffey took a no-hit bid into the sixth inning of his second big league game and pitched Minnesota past visiting Cleveland.

Orioles 4, Athletics 3: Chris Davis hit two home runs, the second a tiebreaking shot with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning off switch-pitcher Pat Venditte, to lift host Baltimore past Oakland.

Giants 12, Nationals 6: Matt Duffy hit a three-run double in San Francisco's decisive six-run third inning and a late run-scoring double, Jake Peavy worked into the sixth to end a three-start winless stretch, as the Giants beat visiting Washington for the third straight game.

Cardinals 6, Marlins 2: John Lackey was dominant into the ninth inning and gave host St. Louis an unexpected bonus with two hits and an RBI.

Royals 9, Angels 4: Salvador Perez homered to lead off a six-run second inning and Johnny Cueto won his second consecutive start for Kansas City as the Royals rolled past visiting Los Angeles.

Diamondbacks 8, Braves 4: Patrick Corbin continued to gain momentum in

his return from Tommy John surgery, allowing only three hits and no runs while pitching into the seventh inning as Arizona beat host Atlanta.

Brewers 4, Phillies 2: Scooter Gennett had a career-high four hits and Jimmy Nelson pitched into the seventh inning as host Milwaukee beat Philadelphia.

Cubs 6, White Sox 3: Jake Arrieta pitched into the seventh inning as the visiting Chicago Cubs won their ninth straight to match their longest streak in seven seasons.

Rangers 12, Rays 4: Colby Lewis gave up one run and five hits in six innings to pick up his 13th win as Texas used a seven-run sixth inning to cruise past visiting Tampa Bay.

Padres 7, Rockies 5: Pinch-hitter Brett Wallace had a tiebreaking RBI single as San Diego took advantage of Colorado catcher Nick Hundley's throwing error to score three runs in the ninth inning and hand the host Rockies their sixth straight loss.

Dodgers 8, Reds 3: Yasiel Puig and Kike Hernandez homered during a five-run second inning, and Adrian Gonzalez and Justin Turner also went deep, as the NL West-leading Los Angeles beat visiting Cincinnati.



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Day holds on to lead at PGA

Associated Press

SHEBOYGAN, Wis. — Three times this year, Jason Day has gone into the final round of a major with his name atop the leaderboard.

Twice this year, Jordan Spieth has posed with the trophy.

The two hottest golfers were to face off in the final group of the final major of the year at the PGA Championship, both wanting nothing more than to have their names etched on the Wanamaker Trophy. Both went into the final round relying on a different set of memories.

Day made six consecutive 3s in the middle of his round, lost momentum with a double bogey from a bunker and then steadied himself with a 25-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole that sent him to a 6-under 66 and a two-shot lead over Spieth.

"I'm not looking at it as a negative," Day said about his close calls. "You can't, because you've got two shots and I've played phenomenal golf leading up to this. But now I've got to focus on round four. Everything I need to do is just make sure that I focus and prepare myself for tomorrow."

Spieth was losing patience with nine straight pars until he blistered the back nine, closed with three straight birdies and shot 65.

He was five shots behind and had two holes to play, hopeful to stay within three or four shots. He wound up only two shots behind and poised to join Tiger Woods (2000) and Ben Hogan (1953) as the only players to win three majors in one season.

Just like his bid for the Grand Slam that ended at St. Andrews, Spieth is more concerned with one trophy than a collection.

"Just to try to get my name on the Wanamaker Trophy, that's about it. That's the only history I'll be thinking of when we

step on the first tee is you can hoist that trophy tomorrow and make it happen," Spieth said. "I'll go into tomorrow strictly for the history piece of trying to get my name on a different major."

Day was at 15-under 201.

The abundant sunshine and endless action Saturday might have been a preview for what could be a sensational end to the majors. And while the focus is on Day and Spieth, this was hardly a two-man race.

Branden Grace holed out from the front bunker on the tough 18th hole for birdie and a 64, the low score of the third round that put him three shots out of the lead.

Justin Rose, despite a double bogey on the fourth hole for the second straight day, had a 68 and was three shots behind. And not to be overlooked was Martin Kaymer, the winner at Whistling Straits five years ago. He had a 65 and was four shots behind.

But in this undeniable generation shift in golf, Day and Spieth in the final pairing is compelling.

"You can never count out Jordan right now with how he's playing, especially this year," Day said. "He's just full of confidence right now. So with my confidence level and his stellar play right now, I feel like it's going to be an exciting finish tomorrow."

Spieth, even with a Masters and U.S. Open title in hand, still has a chip on his shoulder the way he lost his bid at St. Andrews. He was tied for the lead with two holes to play and finished one shot out of a playoff at the British Open.

"When I think of this being the last major of the year, it's a little bit of a sad feeling because I really, thoroughly enjoy playing in majors," Spieth said. "You want to make the most of it, even though ... we've won two this year."

"So you look at it as a single major, as a chance to win this major, and there's

enough fight in us to finish this one off tomorrow, I believe."

The turnaround late Saturday afternoon was stunning.

Looking determined as ever, in control of his swing and putting beautifully, Day was 6 under over a six-hole stretch in the middle of his round. That included an eagle on the 11th hole, where he hit his drive with such force that he hit pitching wedge to 15 feet.

One swing changed everything.

He tugged a 5-iron into a bunker left of the 15th green and was surprised by the amount of sand. The first shot didn't make it up the slope and rolled back into the sand, and Day wound up with a double bogey right about the time Spieth shifted into another gear.

Spieth made a two-putt birdie on the par-5 16th and then hit 4-iron to 12 feet for a birdie on the 17th. His goal after a slow start was to stay close enough to have a chance on Sunday.

The volunteers were slow to post Day's double bogey on the leaderboard on the 18th green, which Spieth couldn't help but notice as he lined up his 7-foot putt.

"I saw Jason was at 16 under and I said, 'You've got to be kidding me. When is he going to slow down?'" Spieth said. "I saw that he was 16 under with four holes to go, thinking he could get to 17 (under pretty easily). I need to make this to have a chance within four of the lead. And then I think he's dropped a couple of shots since then. But I did all I could do to finish off the round."

It put him in position to sweep the three American majors. But he still was two shots behind Day, determined not to let his great year end without winning his first.

"If he goes out and wins tomorrow from him putting well, then he deserves it," Day said. "But I'm going to give him a fight."

Bears' WR White out indefinitely

Associated Press

BOURBONNAIS, Ill. — One day after injured Chicago Bears wide receiver Kevin White started running on grass for the first time at training camp, he felt pain and knew he faced a worst-case scenario.

White will have surgery on his left shin to repair a stress fracture and will start the regular season on the physically unable to perform list after rest and therapy failed to cure shin pain he first had in June in organized team activities.

"I mostly just tried to let it heal on its own," White said Saturday. "I wanted to do it natural."

"Surgery is not a No. 1 option for anyone so it was obviously the last option and we're at a last option."

White, the former West Virginia player drafted seventh overall, will have a rod put in the tibia to stabilize the leg. It's possible he could miss the entire season, but the Bears are holding out hope he can return for the second half of the season. They can use his roster spot for another player until Week 11 without activating him or putting him on injured reserve.

White had figured into the Bears' plans as either an opening day starter or eventual starter during the regular season opposite wide receiver Alshon Jeffery, who currently is sidelined with a calf strain. For now White will be on PUP doing rehab and studying the offense.

"That gives us the option of bringing him up in the later portions of the season if need be, but I want to state right now, our whole focus is his long-term health," Pace said. "I know he's going to be a great player for the Chicago Bears. I want to make sure that we protect him."

Preseason game takes on female flair

Associated Press

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Jen Welter walked from the sideline and shook hands with the line judge for the night's game between the Cardinals and Kansas City Chiefs.

This was no everyday meeting. More like a barrier-breaker.

Once a men's-only world, the NFL entered a new era Saturday night, when Welter became the first woman to coach an NFL game and Sarah Thomas became the first woman to work as a full-time on-field official.

This wasn't exactly new territory for Thomas. The 41-year-old had already worked NFL preseason games and training camp, including this year with a variety of teams. She also was the first woman to officiate in major college football and work a bowl game.

Saturday night's game was a little different because Thomas is now full-time official, a move that has generated plenty of attention in the male-dominated NFL.

Welter earned her place in the spotlight last month, when she was hired for a six-week internship as an inside linebackers coach for the Cardinals. She has earned praise from the Cardinals and coach Bruce Arians for her knowledge

and go-all-time attitude during training camp, and will stay on through Arizona's four preseason games.

Welter played rugby at Boston College and spent 14 years as a linebacker, most with the Dallas Diamonds of the Women's Football Alliance, and won two gold medals with the U.S. team at the International Federation of American Football women's world championships.

She became the first woman to play a non-kicking position on a men's professional football team last year when she played running back and on special teams for the Texas Revolution of the Indoor Football League. Welter broke another barrier in February, becoming the first woman to coach for a men's professional team when the Revolution made her linebackers and special teams coach.

The NFL's gender breakthrough follows women's breakthroughs in the NBA.

Violet Palmer and Dee Kantner were hired as NBA officials in 1997, and last season Lauren Holtkamp became the league's third female official.

Becky Hammon became the NBA's first assistant coach with the San Antonio Spurs last season and the Sacramento Kings recently hired Nancy Lieberman, a Hall of Fame player, as an assistant coach under George Karl.

QB Rivers agrees to 4-year extension

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Philip Rivers and the San Diego Chargers have agreed to a four-year contract extension.

The question is, will the quarterback finish his career in San Diego or Los Angeles?

The Chargers announced the extension Saturday night. The deal reportedly is worth \$84 million, with \$65 million guaranteed.

Rivers, 33 and the team's starter since 2006, is entering the final year of a \$93 million, six-year extension he signed in August 2009.

The extension comes as team chairman Dean Spanos has angered many Chargers fans by exploring a move to the Los Angeles area. The Chargers walked away from negotiations for a new stadium in San Diego in mid-June.

Mayor Kevin Faulconer has said that if the sides haven't agreed to a term sheet by Sept. 11, there won't be a special election in January.

The Chargers have partnered with their archrivals, the Oakland Raiders, on plans for a \$1.7 billion stadium in Carson if they can't get new stadiums in their home markets.

On Tuesday, Carmen Policy, who is spearheading Carson stadium efforts,

told NFL owners that "the Chargers and Raiders are committed to Los Angeles." The Carson project is competing with a stadium project in Inglewood backed by St. Louis Rams owner Stan Kroenke.

Earlier this year, Rivers didn't seem keen on moving to L.A. if the team moved. He has said he'd be OK playing out his current deal, but also said he'd be open to an extension, as long as talks didn't drag out into the season.

Rivers played through back and chest injuries in 2014. He was sacked seven times in a season-ending loss at Kansas City that cost the Chargers a playoff berth.

He was obtained in a draft-day deal with the New York Giants in 2004 for Eli Manning, whose family had said he didn't want to play for San Diego. Rivers became the starter in 2006 after Drew Brees was allowed to leave as a free agent.

Rivers has started 144 straight regular-season games, the second-longest active streak behind Manning's 168, and thrown for 36,655 yards. His 252 career touchdown passes are two short of the team record set by Hall of Famer Dan Fouts.

The QB led the Chargers to four straight AFC West titles from 2006-09 and to a wild-card berth in 2013.