

STARS AND STRIPES®

Sunday, August 12, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

2 Koreas move closer despite nuke deadlock

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — At a time when the U.S. and South Korea are usually gearing up for annual war games, Seoul instead is preparing for a possible third summit with the allies' main foe.

The two Koreas have inched closer together with a series of exchanges and high-level talks despite a deadlock in nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang nearly two months after President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un shook hands in Singapore.

Senior North and South Korean officials were scheduled to meet Monday in the border village of Panmunjom to measure progress in implementing agreements reached in the previous two meetings between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

The delegates also will discuss logistics for a third inter-Korean summit.

Moon and Kim agreed during their initial April 27 summit to meet again in the North Korean capital in the fall, but a South Korean official said the location will be one of the topics during Monday's talks.

The leaders also held a surprise meeting in Panmunjom in May, but that was largely an effort to revive plans for the unprece-

dent U.S.-North Korean summit.

"We expect the date, venue and size of the South Korean delegation to be agreed on during the high-level talks tomorrow in light of the April 27 Panmunjom Declaration," presidential spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom told reporters Sunday.

The preparations come as the North stepped up its demands that the U.S. ease punishing economic sanctions and move toward declaring a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War in return for denuclearization efforts.

The North Korean propaganda website Uriminzokkiri posted an article Sunday that blamed the South for a lack of progress in improving relations, accusing it of having a "blind obedience" to the U.S.-led sanctions.

Trump and his administration have insisted that the tough sanctions will remain in place until the North agrees to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, leaving the two sides at loggerheads after the initial euphoria over the high-profile June 12 Singapore summit.

Pyeongyang pointedly has declined to criticize Trump but has turned its ire on other senior U.S. officials. The state-run Korean Central News Agency last week accused the administration of ignoring its goodwill measures by intensifying pres-

sure and refusing to ease sanctions or to declare a formal end to the war to replace the 1953 armistice.

Trump has maintained his optimism about the process, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo insists that progress is being made, although he has provided no details.

But national security adviser John Bolton signaled the administration's growing frustration, saying last week that North Korea "has not taken the steps we feel are necessary to denuclearize."

Caught in the middle, South Korea has maintained its parallel efforts to improve relations with the North while balancing the need to avoid violating the sanctions itself and to keep up a united front with long-time ally Washington.

"I think that the two Koreas are trying to move forward with improving relations despite U.S. issues," Catherine Dill, a senior research associate at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, said in an email.

"However, South Korea obviously is constrained by needing to manage its complex relationship with the U.S., as well as its domestic interests," she said. "South Korea cannot make significant progress unless it is willing to depart from the current structure of the U.S.-[South Korean] relationship."

Navy to retire some underperforming officers

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy will consider some underperforming officers for early retirement during boards convening Sept. 13, according to an administrative message issued Thursday.

The purpose is to cut the weakest links — not to slim down officer numbers to meet a quota like previous selective early retirement boards, the message said.

"Each board will select only those officers whose early retirement ... is in the best inter-

est of the Navy," Vice Adm. Robert Burke said in the message. "Selecting zero officers in a competitive category is an acceptable outcome for these boards because no mandatory quotas have been established."

The boards will consider captains who have spent three or more years in their grade and commanders who have been denied selection for promotion two or more times, the message said.

Those with approved voluntary retirement requests, who have statutory requirements in fiscal years 2018 or 2019 or are on promotion-recommendation

lists will not be considered.

The Navy posted a list of officers to be considered by the early retirement review boards on the Navy Personnel Command website. It includes some who have been in their current ranks since 1998.

Review boards will look at officers' "performance, the requirement for exemplary conduct and adverse information," the message said.

"The majority of the officers whose records are being reviewed for these boards are fully capable of performing the duties of their current grade," Burke said in the message.

He told reporters last week that physical fitness will not be a factor considered by the September board, according to a Military.com report published Thursday. He also said that a combination of factors will be needed to send someone into mandatory retirement.

"We're not necessarily looking for a single disciplinary issue, but a disciplinary issue in the context of something else," he said, according to Military.com. "... So, an officer that's doing their job and performing just fine has nothing to worry about here."

US defies China on S. China Sea

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — U.S. forces have fired a barrage of tweets in response to Chinese harassment of a Navy reconnaissance plane in the South China Sea.

The Chinese sent six radio warnings to a P-8A Poseidon carrying journalists from CNN and the BBC on Friday as the jet approached islets in the disputed waters where the Chinese have been building military facilities.

The warnings said the area was Chinese territory and that the plane should leave, CNN reported.

“Leave immediately and keep out to avoid any misunderstanding,” a voice said, ac-

ording to CNN.

Aircrew replied to the warnings by saying they were “conducting lawful military activities beyond the national airspace of any coastal state,” the network reported.

The plane flew past Fiery Cross, Subi, Johnson and Mischief reefs in the Spratly Islands, where China has been building runways, radars and power plants.

Eighty-six vessels, including Chinese coast guard ships were moored at Subi alone, CNN reported.

Later, the Navy’s official Twitter account tweeted a link to the network’s report about the flight with the message, “We will sail, fly and operate wherever international law allows.”

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command followed up with, “The United States will not be ‘warned off’ from lawful operations in international waters and airspace.”

U.S. Forces Japan added, “Japan-based US Navy P-8As contribute to regional peace and security every day by flying wherever international law allows.”

The South China Sea and its vast natural resources are the subject of territorial disputes involving China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia.

The U.S. hasn’t taken a position on those disputes but has asserted the right of ships and aircraft to freely transit the waters, which has led to regular incidents with the Chinese military in recent years.

Union says TDY cuts are ending

By **WILL MORRIS**
Stars and Stripes

Servicemembers and Defense Department employees who travel a lot for work should see more money in their wallets soon thanks to the expected reversal of a policy that cut reimbursement rates for travel expenses on temporary duty assignments, a labor union said Thursday.

In the latest National Defense Authorization Act, Congress overturned a 2014 DOD policy that reduced per diem reimbursements for military and civilian workers who travel longer than 30 days at a time for work.

The cost-cutting measure was an attempt to save the DOD some \$22 million each year by encouraging long-term TDY travelers to obtain less expensive, extended-stay lodging.

“For nearly three years, DoD has been shortchanging our service members and civilian employees by taking money out of their pockets for legitimate travel expenses that the agency should have been covering,” J. David Cox Sr., president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said in a statement.

The old policy, which went into effect in November 2014, cut the per diem allowance for uniformed and DOD employees traveling for work longer than 30 days to 75 percent of the nationally established per diem travel rates. For employees traveling longer than 180 days, the per diem reimbursement rate was cut to 55 percent.

“This was a misguided attempt by the Pentagon to find cost savings at the expense of employees — mostly midlevel civilian employees outside of D.C. who frequently travel for work,” Cox said.

The DOD was not immediately available for comment.

Congress passed the 2018 NDAA on Aug. 1. It is now awaiting President Donald Trump’s signature.

3D figurines part of Plebe weekend

The (Annapolis, Md.) Capital

Jack Thornton counted down from five and brilliant lights flashed, illuminating the walls of the round, tent-like space.

Ninety cameras captured every angle of the person standing in the center — the first step to creating a lifelike figurine of anyone willing to stay still and hold a smile.

Lara Thornton and her children, Jack and Ella, temporarily have set up GoFigure — a 3D printing business specializing in miniature replicas of customers — in downtown Annapolis.

The pop-up was in time for Plebe Parents Weekend at the U.S. Naval Academy, where family and friends from across the country visit their new midshipmen for the first time in weeks.

Thornton comes from a military family — her father, Frank Jaklitsch, served in the Army during the Vietnam War and her father-in-law, Alan Thornton, graduated from the Naval

Academy in 1967. He served more than five years in the submarine community.

When she was looking for a new market for her keepsake business, she thought of the midshipmen and their families.

“It’s such an honor to go to the Naval Academy and I really thought the parents would enjoy capturing their child in the uniform and having that keepsake to look back on,” Thornton said.

Her pop-up shop was lined with 3-inch replicas of cheerleaders, bodybuilders and horseback riders. She’s reproduced everyone from her family to figure skaters to football players.

The small space, which GoFigure occupied until Sunday, housed the machine that makes the magic happen.

Here’s how it works: Stand inside. Strike a pose. Stay still, or it won’t work.

Listen for Jack Thornton’s countdown. Smile and brace

for the flash of bright light.

Jack has been his mother’s tech-minded partner since they started the business last year after encountering the technology on a vacation in Key West, Fla. He reviews the photos after each take and makes sure the software is working properly.

Thornton outsources the 3D printing to another company, which produces the sandstone figures layer by layer and prints in color. A 3D artist — yes, that’s a thing — touches up the figurine to ensure it looks as realistic as possible.

In her pop-up shop Thursday, Lara Thornton made sure two girls, one balancing with the other on piggyback, are OK inside the dark tent.

“These look pretty good,” Jack Thornton said, reviewing the photos.

“Well, let’s do it again,” Lara said. “We want good, not pretty good.”

Taliban's political stature rises with Uzbek talks

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — In a rare diplomatic foray and the strongest sign yet of increasing Taliban political clout in the region, the head of the insurgents' political office led a delegation to Uzbekistan to meet senior Foreign Ministry officials there, Uzbek and Taliban officials said.

Taliban political chief Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai represented the insurgents in the four-day talks that ended Friday and included meetings with Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov as well as

the country's special representative to Afghanistan, Ismatilla Irgashev.

The meetings follow an offer made by Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in March to broker peace in Afghanistan.

Suhail Shaheen, spokesman for the Taliban's political office in Qatar, said in a statement to The Associated Press on Saturday that discussions covered everything from the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan to peace prospects and possible Uzbek-funded development projects that could include railway lines and

electricity.

Shaheen said Uzbek officials discussed their security concerns surrounding the development projects.

"The Taliban also exchanged views with the Uzbek officials about the withdrawal of the foreign troops and reconciliation in Afghanistan," he said in the statement.

Uzbekistan's Foreign Affairs Ministry website offered a terse announcement on the visit, saying "the sides exchanged views on prospects of the peace process in Afghanistan."

Still, the meetings are sig-

nificant, coming as the Taliban are ramping up pressure on Afghan security forces with relentless and deadly attacks. Washington has held preliminary talks with the insurgents in an attempt to find a negotiated end to Afghanistan's protracted war.

The Taliban have gained increasing attention from Russia as well as Uzbekistan, which view the insurgency as a bulwark against the spread of Islamic State in Afghanistan. The U.S. has accused Moscow of giving weapons to the Taliban.

Blast in northern Syria kills at least 36

Associated Press

BEIRUT — An explosion in northern Syria killed at least 36 people Sunday and wounded many others, but the cause of the blast wasn't known immediately, opposition activists said.

The opposition-run Syrian Civil Defense, first responders also known as the White Helmets, said the blast occurred in the village of Sarmada near the Turkish border, killing 36 people and wounding many others. The explosion collapsed two five-story buildings, burying many of the victims, it said.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights put the death toll at 39, including 21 women and children.

An opposition media collective known as the Smart news agency, said the dead included civilians as well as members of the al-Qaida-linked Levant Liberation Committee.

The Observatory said an arms depot in the basement of a building had detonated. It said the depot was run by an arms dealer close to the Levant Liberation Committee.

Meanwhile, Syrian government forces fighting rebels in Idlib province have sent more reinforcements ahead of a potential offensive on the last major

rebel stronghold in Syria.

The pro-government Al-Watan daily said Sunday that huge military reinforcements have reached the outskirts of Idlib province as a preliminary step to launch a wide-scale offensive.

Quoting military sources, the paper said that troops have reached the northern countryside of the neighboring Hama province as part of military preparations to recapture Idlib province.

The expected offensive on Idlib comes after government forces captured major rebel strongholds earlier this year near the capital, Damascus, and in the southern provinces of Daraa and Quneitra.

The paper said that the battle would be "comprehensive" starting from Hama's northern countryside to the southern countryside of Aleppo, adding that the target of the battle is to seize Idlib City.

Government airstrikes on the province on Friday killed dozens.

Pro-government activists said on social media that the elite Tiger Force, led by Brig. Gen. Suheil al-Hassan, arrived in northern Syria to spearhead what they called the "Dawn of Idlib" operation.

Charlottesville sees tense confrontation amid vigils

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — The city of Charlottesville marked the anniversary of last summer's white supremacist violence that sent ripples through the country with largely peaceful vigils and other events, but police had a brief, tense confrontation with demonstrators angry over the heavy security presence there this weekend.

"Why are you in riot gear? We don't see no riot here," activists chanted Saturday evening.

Shortly before a planned evening rally to mark the anniversary of a campus confrontation between torch-carrying white nationalists and counterdemonstrators, activists unfurled a banner that said, "Last year they came w/ torches. This year they come w/ badges."

A group of more than 200 protesters — students, residents and others — then marched to another part of the University of Virginia's campus, where many in the crowd shouted at officers in riot gear who had formed a line.

At some point after the UVA rally, a group of dozens of demonstrators marched off campus through other parts of the city, chanting things like, "Whose streets? Our streets," and "Who

do you protect? Who do you serve?" The group made its way to downtown before dispersing.

Meanwhile, downtown Washington was calm Sunday morning, but the relative quiet was not likely to last.

As many as 400 people were expected to make their way to Lafayette Park across the street from the White House later to take part in an event planned by the organizer of last year's deadly white supremacist rally in Charlottesville.

The gathering, billed as a "white civil rights" rally, is taking place on the anniversary of the Charlottesville violence, which killed an anti-racist demonstrator, Heather Heyer, 32, and took the lives of two Virginia State troopers whose helicopter crashed as they returned from monitoring the day's events.

Thousands protesting the white supremacist rally were expected at numerous locations, and many planned to converge on Lafayette Park before the organizer of the rally, Jason Kessler, and his followers arrive. Both Kessler and opposition groups have permits from the National Park Service to demonstrate at the park, a leafy, seven-acre enclave just across Pennsylvania Avenue from the president's residence.

NASA probe rockets toward sun for the closest look yet

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — A NASA spacecraft zoomed toward the sun Sunday on an unprecedented quest to get closer to our star than anything ever sent before.

As soon as this fall, the Parker Solar Probe will fly straight through the wispy edges of the sun's corona, or outer atmosphere, that was visible during last August's total solar eclipse. It eventually will get within 3.8 million of the surface in the years ahead, staying comfortably cool despite the extreme heat and radiation and allowing scientists to explore the sun in a way never before possible.

No wonder scientists consider it the coolest, hottest mission under the sun, and what better day to launch to the sun than Sunday, as NASA noted.

"All I can say is, 'Wow, here we go.' We're in for some learning over the next several years," said Eugene Parker, the 91-year-old astrophysicist for

whom the spacecraft is named.

Protected by a revolutionary new carbon heat shield and other high-tech wonders, the spacecraft will zip past Venus in October. That will set up the first solar encounter in November.

Altogether, the Parker probe will make 24 close approaches to the sun on the seven-year, \$1.5 billion undertaking.

For the second straight day, thousands of spectators jammed the launch site in the middle of the night as well as surrounding towns, including Parker and his family. He proposed the existence of solar wind — a steady, supersonic stream of particles blasting off the sun — 60 years ago.

Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA's science mission chief, was thrilled not only with the launch, but Parker's presence.

"I'm in awe," Zurbuchen said. "What a milestone. Also what's so cool is hanging out with Parker during all this and seeing his emotion, too."

Parker, the probe, will start shattering records this fall. On its very first brush with the sun, it will come within 15.5 million miles, easily beating the current record of 27 million miles set by NASA's Helios 2 spacecraft in 1976. Zurbuchen expects the data from even this early stage to yield top science papers.

With this first-of-its-kind stellar mission, scientists hope to unlock the many mysteries of the sun, a commonplace yellow dwarf star around 4.5 billion years old. Among the puzzlers: Why is the corona hundreds of times hotter than the surface of the sun and why is the sun's atmosphere continually expanding and accelerating, as Parker accurately predicted in 1958?

"The only way we can do that is to finally go up and touch the sun," said project scientist Nicola Fox, of Johns Hopkins University. "We've looked at it. We've studied it from missions that are close in, even as close as the planet Mercury. But we have to go there."

Ex-Trump aide plays audio of her firing

Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. — Former presidential adviser Omarosa Manigault Newman said Sunday she secretly recorded conversations she had in the White House, including her firing by chief of staff John Kelly in the high-security Situation Room. It was a highly unusual admission, which immediately drew fire from allies of the president.

Parts of her conversation with Kelly were played on the air during an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press" to promote her new book, "Unhinged," which will be released this week.

In it, she paints a damning picture of President Donald Trump, including claiming without evidence that tapes exist of his using the N-word as he filmed his "The Apprentice" reality series, on which she co-starred.

Manigault Newman said in the book that she had not personally heard the recording. But she told Chuck Todd on Sunday that after the book had closed, she was able to hear a recording of Trump during a trip to Los Angeles.

But the other recording she discussed Sunday could prove equally explosive.

"Who in their right mind thinks it's appropriate to secretly record the White House chief of staff in the Situation Room?" tweeted Ronna McDaniel, chair of the Republican National Committee.

The Situation Room is a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility, or SCIF, and staff are not permitted to bring in cellphones or other recording devices.

Manigault Newman defended her decision to covertly record White House conversations, describing it as a form of protection.

"If I didn't have these recordings, no one in America would believe me," she said.

Suspects, Jordanian forces killed in clash

Associated Press

SALT, Jordan — Jordanian search teams pulled the bodies of three suspected militants from the rubble of their hideout, a government official said Sunday, hours after assailants opened fire and set off explosions that killed four members of the security forces trying to storm the building.

The clash late Saturday was among the deadliest between suspected militants and Jordanian security forces in recent years. It raised new concerns about attempts by domestic and foreign militants to carry out attacks and destabilize the pro-Western kingdom.

Jordan has played a key role in an international military coalition that helped push back

the extremist Islamic State in neighboring Syria and Iraq.

The chain of events in Jordan began Friday when assailants detonated a homemade bomb under a police car guarding a music festival in the predominantly Christian town of Fuheis, west of the capital, Amman. The blast killed a police officer.

King Abdullah II on Sunday denounced the "cowardly act of terrorism" and said Jordan would respond with "force and determination to eradicate terrorism and its criminal gangs."

The kingdom's security forces have cracked down on suspected Islamic militants in recent years, but a series of fatal attacks, including on security installations, have highlighted Jordan's continued vulnerability.

Jordanian authorities did not say Sunday what motivated the Fuheis attackers, and there was no claim of responsibility.

Security forces chasing the suspects in the Fuheis attack zeroed in on a multistory building in the nearby town of Salt on Saturday and attempted to storm it. The suspects holed up inside opened fire and set off powerful explosions, officials said. A wing of the building collapsed.

The Hala Akhbar news website, linked to Jordan's military, said the suspects are Jordanians and that the cell had planned to attack security installations and other sensitive targets. The site said the suspects had been armed with explosives, grenades and other weapons.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Crane used to remove vehicles from sinkhole

PA LANCASTER — Vehicles stranded in a large sinkhole that opened up in the parking lot of a Pennsylvania outlet mall were removed with the help of a crane.

At least six vehicles were engulfed by the sinkhole that opened at Tanger Outlets just east of Lancaster late Friday afternoon.

LNP newspaper reported that a worker tethered to a tower ladder from Lafayette Fire Company climbed into the sinkhole and connected the cars to the crane. All vehicles had been removed by about 1:15 a.m. Saturday.

A woman was reportedly in one of the vehicles when the sinkhole opened, but no injuries were reported.

Vets can get lifetime park, museum pass

ME AUGUSTA — Maine veterans can now receive a free lifetime pass for state parks and the state museum.

A new law passed this year allows veterans free admission to the Maine State Museum.

Previously, veterans received discounted admission to the museum.

Only veterans who are residents of Maine are eligible. Veterans must have also received an honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions.

Couple jailed over boy's mistreatment

FL KEY LARGO — A Florida couple was behind bars after an 11-year-old boy alleged they only allowed him to eat one meal a day and forced him to clean the toilet with his

toothbrush as punishment.

Monroe County Sheriff's officials charged Randell Howell, 36, with child abuse for allegedly punching, kicking and beating the boy with a belt.

The boy also told child welfare officials that Jennifer Franklin forced him to perform a graphic sexual act upon her using terminology he didn't understand.

Investigators determined the boy had been sexually abused and neglected. He remains in state custody.

Mountain lion breaks into home, kills cat

CO BOULDER — A mountain lion that became trapped inside a Colorado home killed a house cat before police and wildlife officers were able to scare it out.

Boulder police said the homeowner came back to the house Thursday night and found the mountain lion inside.

It appeared that it had pushed through a screen and couldn't get back out.

The big cat roamed throughout two levels of the home for more than an hour before officers used nonlethal rounds to scare it out the front door and away from the neighborhood, which is just southwest of downtown Boulder.

Life-size statue stolen from bench is found

LA BATON ROUGE — A tip called into Crimestoppers has led to the recovery of a life-size statue stolen from the downtown area of Louisiana's capital city.

Baton Rouge police said it was found in a parking lot not far from where it disappeared.

In a news release, Sgt. Don Coppola Jr. said investigators believe the 400-pound statue — worth about \$60,000 — was

removed from a downtown bench near the Mississippi River levee sometime between mid-March and mid-April.

The statue was part of a public art installation called "Borders" that included 22 sculptures by an Icelandic artist intended to celebrate unity.

Arm reattached after boulder crushed it

CA ANAHEIM — A 15-year-old boy whose arm was crushed and nearly severed by a falling boulder at a Southern California beach is back home after doctors reattached the limb.

The boy was discharged Thursday from the University of California Medical Center in Anaheim after having seven operations.

Authorities said the boy's right arm was virtually amputated above the elbow on July 18 when a boulder the size of an ice chest fell on him as he and a friend walked by an oceanside cliff in Emerald Bay.

Cassidy Museum plans to expand

ID MONTPELIER — The Butch Cassidy Museum in Montpelier is getting a face-lift.

The museum is the last standing bank that the infamous outlaw robbed. Between 5,000 and 6,000 people visit the museum in the 100 days it is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, museum owner Radek Konarik said.

Because of that growth, the museum is expanding. One of the back rooms, which was used for storage, has been made into another room of the museum, where an 1800s-style jail has been added, KIFI-TV reported.

Another recent addition since last summer's Butch Cas-

sidy Days festival is the original bank vault.

Another expansion Konarik is working on for next year is a history story wall, he said. The wall is just drawings and sketches right now, but soon it will be digitized for people to see Cassidy's story.

Weapons, ammo stolen at gun show

SC COLUMBIA — More than 100,000 rounds of ammunition and five assault-style guns were stolen from a South Carolina gun show location.

Police said the ammunition and guns were worth more than \$19,000.

Lexington County Sheriff Jay Koon said that several people involved with the gun show reported items stolen from their merchandise trailers.

The gun show was being held at Jamil Temple, a Shrinero-owned hall that is rented out to raise money for sick, injured and disabled children.

Video captures shark leaping from water

MA WELLFLEET — As the top shark expert in Massachusetts, Greg Skomal is used to up-close and personal experiences with great whites.

But even he was a little surprised when a shark he spotted during a recent tagging trip breached the water and jumped up with its jaws open. It happened as Skomal stood on the extended bow of a research vessel.

A video posted on Facebook by the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy shows Skomal, a senior biologist with the state Division of Marine Fisheries, hopping away from the open jaws.

From wire reports

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

Reporting
World, National
and Military News

Terps place head coach Durkin on leave

Associated Press

Maryland placed head coach DJ Durkin on administrative leave Saturday while the school scrutinizes allegations of poor behavior by the football staff, apparent misdeeds that came to light following the death of a player.

In an open letter, athletic director Damon Evans wrote: "At this time, the best decision for our football program is to place Maryland head football coach DJ Durkin on leave so we can properly review the culture of the program."

Offensive coordinator Matt Canada will serve as interim coach.

Earlier Saturday, Rick Court

— head of the football team's strength and conditioning staff — was placed on paid leave while the school investigates claims he verbally abused and humiliated players, according to a person briefed on the situation.

Maryland has also placed two athletic training staffers it did not identify on leave as it investigates the death of Jordan McNair. The 19-year-old offensive lineman was hospitalized May 29 after a team workout and died June 13. Dr. Rod Walters, a former college athletic trainer, has been hired by Maryland to investigate the circumstances of the death. A report is expected by Sept. 15.

McNair's parents are being represented by Baltimore attorney Bill Murphy, whose firm is also investigating.

In his open letter, Evans wrote: "The external review into the tragic death of Jordan McNair continues, and we have committed to releasing publicly the report being prepared by an independent and national expert."

ESPN reported that head football athletic trainer Wes Robinson and director of athletic training Steve Nordwall were placed on leave by Maryland.

An ESPN story on Friday quoted unidentified players, former players and former

members of Durkin's staff, who contended Court and Durkin created a toxic culture within the program.

"The safety and well-being of our student-athletes is our highest priority," Evans wrote. "These alleged behaviors are not consistent with the values I expect all of our staff to adhere to and we must do better."

Durkin is starting his third season at Maryland. The 40-year-old former Michigan defensive coordinator is 11-15 in two seasons after receiving a five-year, contract worth \$12.5 million in December 2015.

Durkin brought Court to Maryland to lead the strength and conditioning staff in 2016.

A's MLB draft pick vying for Sooners' QB job

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray insists he hasn't changed, yet there are constant reminders that his life will never be the same.

Before June, he was merely a gifted two-sport college athlete. But once the Oakland Athletics took him with the ninth overall pick in the Major League Baseball draft and signed him for nearly \$5 million, a new level of fame followed. Murray and the A's agreed that he would come back to Oklahoma and play football, meaning he would return to campus making money on par with football coach Lincoln Riley.

The Sooners have enjoyed teasing Murray about his newly found wealth.

"They obviously make fun of having money," he said, smiling broadly. "All that stuff, they make fun of it, but it's all been good. They showed love, supported me through it all. I'm very thankful for that."

The spotlight on Murray soon could burn even more brightly. He's poised to follow Heisman winner Baker Mayfield as Oklahoma's starting quarterback. If he can beat out Austin Kendall, the 5-foot-10 speedster could be one of college football's most electrifying players. Last season, he completed 18 of 21 passes for 359 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions and ran 14 times for 142 yards as Mayfield's backup, including a 66-yard burst against West Virginia.

Though his future is in baseball, Murray is focused immediately on the gridiron and earning the starting nod for the opener

Sept. 1 against Florida Atlantic.

"I wouldn't be here right now if I wasn't hungry to play this," he said. "I think this is the most anticipated football season I've ever been ready for in my life. I'm ready to go."

For all the things around Murray that have changed, his teammates say he's remained level-headed.

"There's no change," receiver Ceedee Lamb said. "I don't feel like he needs to change. He knows he doesn't need to change to make any difference in this offense. He's always going to be the same person, and that's what I always like about him."

Murray said his family and friends have kept him grounded.

"Obviously, I've got the ability to do things that other college kids don't have the ability to do, but I'm living like a regular kid," he said. "I'm not that kind of guy to come up here and blow money. To me, I'm still broke."

It's been a challenge for Murray to get the people around him to talk about football. When the conversation drifts to baseball and bank accounts, Murray finds himself redirecting.

"I've learned how taxes go now," he joked. "That's not very fun. I'm not really focused on the money part of it. I'm focused on playing football."

Another issue that leads to constant redirecting is the assumption that Murray will start. Riley insists there still is a competition between Murray and Kendall, the

2016 backup. Kendall completed 16 of 22 passes for 143 yards and two touchdowns as a freshman before redshirting last year.

Kendall has heard the excitement about Murray and chooses not to dwell on it.

"Coming into it, you've just got to eliminate the noise from the outside and just go in and grind," Kendall said. "He's (Riley) told us we need to come in here every day, ready to work, come in with questions, come in ready to go and just help lead the team."

But Murray earned the hype by being dynamic last season. His gifts go beyond his arm strength and blazing speed.

"He's not a guy that needs a thousand reps to be good at something," Riley said. "There's a good natural feel and that thing that a lot of great athletes have where they always look smooth and natural, and he certainly has that."

Murray started three games as a freshman at Texas A&M in 2015 and passed for 686 yards and ran for 335 while sharing time with Kyle Allen and Jake Hubenak. He doesn't mind competing for a spot again.

"I've been doing it my whole life," he said. "Middle school, high school — my whole life. Obviously, I competed at A&M. Baker, obviously, No. 1 draft pick — we weren't competing, but for me, I showed up every day to compete. So there's no real effect on that. I come in, work hard, do my job so I'll be in a good position."

Koepka takes 2-shot lead into final round of PGA Championship

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Brooks Koepka sometimes gets ignored on television in the list of notable scores. In the gym, he gets overlooked by Dustin Johnson

There is no mistaking him in a major.

Koepka bullied rain-softened Bellerive on Saturday in the PGA Championship, building a five-shot lead until he had to scramble to avoid a slide on the back nine. He settled for a 4-under 66 and a two-shot lead over Adam Scott going into the final round of the final major of the year.

At stake is a chance to win three of the last six majors he played, and to join an elite list — Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan and Gene Sarazen — as the only players to win the U.S. Open and PGA Championship in the same year.

“You can’t hide when you’re on the top of the leaderboard,” he said. “You can’t hide my name. So just try to get to the top of the leaderboard and work from there.”

Even so, one misstep and it might be easy to get lost at this major.

Scott had a 65, despite missing three putts from 6 feet, two of them for birdie. He is struggling through his worst season since he turned pro in 2000, and now has a chance to turn it into a year he won’t forget.

Ten players were within four shots of the lead, no name bigger — no buzz bigger — than Woods. He completed his second round Saturday morning with a 66, and then had another 66 in the afternoon that was so good it was the worst he could have shot. He made nothing but pars over the last 10 holes. On seven of the last eight holes, Woods had a birdie or eagle putt of 20 feet or closer and missed them all.

He was four shots behind in a tie for sixth, the same spot he was in going in the final day at the British Open last month, when he briefly had the lead before fading.

“I just wish I could have got myself a couple more shots closer to the lead,” Woods said. “But there aren’t a lot of guys up there in front of me.”

The list included Jon Rahm (66), Rickie Fowler (69) and Gary Woodland (71), who gave himself a chance despite falling six shots behind after a triple bogey from his footprints in the sand at No. 10.

Koepka was at 12-under 198 and even with his major pedigree — the first player with back-to-back U.S. Opens in 29 years — he will play in the final group of a major for the first time. Koepka was in the penultimate group at the U.S. Opens he won.

He plans to spend Sunday morning working out, as he has done all week at a local gym. Koepka was there Saturday morning with Johnson and noticed everyone trying to get pictures of the world’s No. 1 player.

“They were like, ‘Did you see the No. 1 player in the world was here?’ I don’t know what to say to that,” Koepka laughed.

He cares only about inside the ropes, and he thrives in the majors.

“Every shot’s so important out here,” he said.

No shots were more important than a four-hole stretch he played in 2 over that turned Sunday into what could be a free-for-all.

An 8-foot par save on No. 13 gave him a five-shot lead, but then two errant drives led to consecutive bogeys — the first one from 100 feet away in a bunker, ending a streak of 43 holes without a bogey, the next one when his tee shot stopped rolling at the base of a tree and forced him to take a one-shot penalty to move it away. He had to get up-and-down to limit the damage to a bogey. And then he made a 10-foot par.

“Try to make the best out of a bad situation and keep rolling,” Koepka said.

Koepka won the U.S. Open on two different courses that required one extreme to the other in scoring — 16 under at

Erin Hills, 1 over at Shinnecock Hills. Bellerive presents a different test. It’s so soft that the average score Saturday was 69.5, and a charge can come from anywhere.

Scott got into the hunt with four birdies in a six-hole stretch on the front, set up by his pure driving and iron play, and limited mistakes with the putter. His only miss was from inside 3 feet for par on the 15th hole, though he answered immediately with a tee shot to 2 feet at the par-3 16th.

He doesn’t think anything will match the joy of being the first Aussie to win the Masters in 2013. He’d like to find out how much another major feels, especially in a year in which he has registered just one top 10.

“It’s a packed leaderboard and there are going to be about 10 of us looking for that round of the year,” Scott said. “Someone will go out and do it and I’m glad I’m in that position that it could be me.”

As easy as it looks at times, Bellerive can still bite at any moment.

Jordan Spieth found that out on a hole that effectively ended his second bid for the career Grand Slam. From well right of the 12th fairway, he tried to hit through a gap and instead caromed off a tree and out-of-bounds, leading to triple bogey and falling back to 4 under for the tournament. He had to settle for a 69 and was eight shots behind, with 27 players in front of him.

No one paid more dearly than Woodland. Three shots behind at the turn, he and Kevin Kisner were in a front bunker. Woodland went over the green onto a slope at the back of another bunker, and his next shot went through the green back into the first bunker. The sand had yet to be raked, and Woodland’s ball was in his footprints. He wound up with triple bogey, and scrambled to get back in the mix.

“Really confident going into tomorrow with the way I fought the last eight holes,” he said.

Allgaier’s pit strategy pays off in Ohio

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ohio — Justin Allgaier used fresh tires to pass rookie Austin Cindric with four laps left and win the NASCAR Xfinity Series race Saturday at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Allgaier used the sixth restart of the race to squeeze by Cindric on Turn 1, then held off his challenge on the 72nd lap for his third series win of the year. He also won at Dover and Iowa for JR Motorsport.

He was seventh for the last restart on Lap 69 but had used the caution to replace all four tires.

“We needed to get up front,” Allgaier said. “We know the last restart was going to be pivotal.”

Cindric, the pole-sitter for Team Penske, finished 2.05 seconds back after leading 59 of the 75 laps on the 2.258-mile, 13-turn road course.

“It’s NASCAR racing. We knew there would be a late-race restart,” Cindric said. “Great driver on new tires, great restart. We finished second. It’s frustrating. This place means a lot to me. We just came up short.”

Daniel Hemric was third, followed by Matt Tifft and Ryan Truex. Series leader Christopher Bell was 11th.

“Justin did a great job moving through traffic,” Hemric said. “When you have new tires at some point during the run it tends to equal but he did a good job getting as far in front as he did.”

“I was sitting there watching [Allgaier and Cindric] go at it. It was a heck of a race from my viewpoint.”

Cindric built a seven-second lead before the fifth caution on the 60th lap. Cole Custer rubbed tires with Tyler Reddick, spinning him and causing a rear right flat tire for Reddick, who could not get his car off the course.

Custer also spun Allgaier during the same incident and Allgaier dropped to eighth with laps and hopes of winning quickly fading.

“I really thought that was as far as we could get,” he said.

Martinez hits 2 HRs as BoSox sweep O's

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — After letting his teammates do the heavy lifting in the first game of a doubleheader, J.D. Martinez carried the Boston Red Sox to victory in the nightcap.

Martinez hit two home runs, including a tiebreaking, two-run drive in the eighth inning, and the Red Sox beat the Baltimore Orioles 6-4 Saturday night for a sweep of the split admission twinbill.

In the opener, David Price struck out 10 over six sparkling innings, Jackie Bradley Jr. hit a pair of solo homers and Boston cruised to a 5-0 daytime victory.

Martinez leads the majors with 37 homers, 104 RBIs and 143 hits, but he did nothing to add to those numbers in the first game, going 0-for-4.

"The first game for me was rough, so I was in battle mode out there," Martinez said.

Martinez hit a solo shot in the fourth inning before connecting in the eighth off Mike Wright (3-1) to make it 5-3. It was his third multihomer game of the season, all against Baltimore.

"I really work hard at preparation," he

said. "I look at the game as an exam, like a test."

Give the man an A. He went 2-for-2 with two walks and three RBIs to keep Boston on a roll.

The Red Sox have won nine of 10 to improve their big league-best record to 84-35. The split doubleheader was caused by a rainout on July 25; before the bad weather came that night, Boston led 5-0 in the second inning.

Boston manager Alex Cora used a collection of relievers to handle the pitching in the second game, beginning with Hector Velazquez, including Joe Kelly (4-0) and concluding with Craig Kimbrel, who worked the ninth for his 34th save.

It was a struggle until Martinez sent a 1-0 pitch into the left-field seats.

"In the eighth, we were worried about how we were going to put together these 27, 30 outs, whatever we needed to win," Cora said. "Then he put a great at-bat together."

Joey Rickard and Trey Mancini homered for the Orioles, who will try to avoid a four-game sweep on Sunday. Baltimore is 2-13 against the Red Sox this season.

The Orioles stranded 10 and went 2-for-9 with runners in scoring position.

"We had some opportunities with some people on base that we didn't cash in on," manager Buck Showalter said.

The Orioles (35-83) were officially eliminated from contention in the AL East on Friday night and on Saturday clinched a second straight losing season.

In the first game, Price (12-6) scattered five hits and walked none to win his sixth straight start against Baltimore. The lefty had at least one strikeout in every inning and did not allow a runner past second base.

Three relievers followed Price with three hitless innings. With a dozen shutouts, the Red Sox are tied with the Cubs, Indians and Pirates for the major league lead.

After the Red Sox won 19-12 on Friday night, both teams were quiet offensively until Boston broke through with a flourish against rookie Jimmy Yacabonis (0-1) in the fifth inning.

Xander Bogaerts led off with a single and Eduardo Nunez hit a 3-0 pitch inside the left-field foul pole for a home run. One out later, Bradley lined an opposite-field drive to right.

That was all the offense the Red Sox required with Price in peak form.

Roundup

Giants honor home run king Bonds before loss to Pirates

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Trevor Williams and two relievers combined on a six-hitter, and the Pittsburgh Pirates blanked the San Francisco Giants 4-0 on Saturday night.

Josh Bell homered for the second time in three days. Elias Diaz added two hits for the Pirates after coming in as an injury replacement for Francisco Cervelli.

The start of the game was delayed for a ceremony honoring home run king Barry Bonds, who became the 10th player in Giants history to have his jersey retired. Several of his former teammates and managers, including Dusty Baker and Jim Leyland, were on hand.

Buster Posey and Evan Longoria had two hits apiece for San Francisco. Ty Blach (6-7) allowed four runs over four innings.

Rockies 3, Dodgers 2: Ryan McMahon hit a three-run homer with two out in the ninth inning, lifting host Colorado to the win.

Bryan Shaw (4-5) picked up the victory with an inning of scoreless relief for the Rockies, who moved within 1½ games of their NL West rivals. The Dodgers are tied with the Diamondbacks for the division lead.

Athletics 7, Angels 0: Marcus Semien homered twice and Edwin Jackson pitched three-hit ball into the eighth, leading visiting Oakland to the win.

Nationals 9, Cubs 4: At Chicago, Ryan Zimmerman hit two home runs off a shaky Jon Lester and tied a career high with six RBIs, powering Washington to the win.

Indians 3, White Sox 1: Trevor Bauer pitched two-hit ball into the seventh inning for visiting Cleveland before get-

ting struck in the right leg by a line drive, ending another dominant start. Bauer is 5-0 with a 1.72 ERA in his past eight outings.

Yankees 5, Rangers 3: Rain pouring off his hat, Aroldis Chapman struck out Jurickson Profar with the bases loaded in a steady storm, preserving host New York's win.

Brewers 4, Braves 2: Mike Moustakas hit a two-run double in the eighth inning for visiting Milwaukee, and Josh Hader recorded a two-inning save.

The Brewers stopped a two-game slide to pull within two games of the NL Central lead.

Cardinals 8, Royals 3: At Kansas City, Mo., Jack Flaherty struck out nine in seven innings, and St. Louis earned its fourth straight win.

Phillies 5, Padres 1: Visiting Philadelphia ace Aaron Nola pitched six scoreless in-

nings, and Maikel Franco and Cesar Hernandez homered.

Nola (13-3) gave up four hits and lowered his ERA to 2.28 as the Phillies moved one game ahead of second-place Atlanta in the NL East.

Reds 6, Diamondbacks 3: Pinch-hitter Tucker Barnhart's two-run double highlighted host Cincinnati's four-run rally in the eighth inning.

Rays 3, Blue Jays 1: Willy Adames had two hits and drove in the decisive run, helping visiting Tampa Bay to its seventh win in eight meetings with Toronto this season.

Marlins 4, Mets 3 (11): Bryan Holaday delivered a pinch-hit RBI single with one out in the 11th inning, giving host Miami the win.

Twins 4, Tigers 3: Tyler Austin hit a two-run homer in his Minnesota debut, helping the visiting Twins to the win.