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IG critical of Moran's use of private email

By CHAD GARLAND

Stars and Stripes

Retired Adm. Bill Moran showed poor judgment and broke Pentagon rules by using his personal email account to conduct official communications with a former officer who had been disciplined for sexual misconduct, an investigation has found.

Moran's use of his private email account to conduct Pentagon business as the vice chief of naval operations violated Pentagon policies, the Defense Department Inspector General said in a report released Wednesday.

Moran had been tapped as the next chief of naval operations earlier this year but declined the nomination and abruptly submitted his retirement in early July, shortly after his use of private email to

communicate with the former officer and other Navy personnel came to the attention of his superiors.

In response to the IG's findings, Moran said that he continued to consult with the former officer — who had previously been identified as former Cmdr. Chris Servello — because the Navy's top public affairs office "was a mess" and because Servello was a talented communicator who deserved another chance.

Investigators had previously found that Servello, dressed as Santa Claus, behaved inappropriately with three female colleagues at a December 2016 Pentagon holiday party.

Servello was removed from Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John M. Richardson's staff and sent to a position where, Richardson told Congress, he had no influence or leadership re-

sponsibilities. Richardson was concerned to learn that Moran continued to consult with Servello, he told investigators.

It was no surprise that Moran, who was a friend of Servello's, had stayed in contact, Richardson said, but a quick scan of the emails showed the ousted officer was writing speeches, offering public affairs advice and helping Moran prepare for congressional testimony.

It amounted to Pentagon business being done on private email, "done with [the Navy commander] who was very visibly disciplined and dismissed from my staff."

The IG also rebuked Richardson last year for not disciplining Servello sooner, following the holiday party.

The IG reviewed more than 570 pages of emails from Moran's Gmail account, dated from the day after the holiday

party in 2016 through June 5 of this year, days before his tenure as the second-highest Navy officer ended. Besides Servello, Moran's personal account included messages to 12 other Navy employees.

The emails came to light after a reporter filed a Freedom of Information Act request.

Moran defended his use of private email, saying he started using it for work purposes in 2013, while traveling extensively. He said personal email allowed him to "get at and read things quickly in an airport, in a car, in a train, whatever it is" because government-issued devices and systems were unreliable.

But DOD policies prohibit the use of personal email accounts for official communications, the IG report said, and "convenience is not an acceptable reason" to use such accounts.

Navy closes task force researching climate change

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

A decade-old Navy task force that researched the effects of and possible adaptations to climate change closed in March, but the news didn't break until this month.

On Aug. 7, E&E News Greenwire reported the service had "quietly" shuttered its Task Force Climate Change five months prior with little public notice.

A Navy spokesperson told the online publication, which covers energy and environmental issues, the program ended because its "functions have been transitioned to existing business processes."

Stars and Stripes' requests for comment from the Navy on the task force closure went

unanswered Tuesday and Wednesday.

Created in 2009, the task force was tasked with researching methods to adapt to security challenges caused by climate change, such as rising sea levels, harsh weather and melting icecaps.

A report, "Climate Change Road Map," sponsored by the task force shortly after its creation highlighted how "climate change is affecting, and will continue to affect, U.S. military installations and access to natural resources worldwide."

"[Climate change] will affect the type, scope and location of future Navy missions," the report said. "[T]he Navy acknowledges that climate change is a national security challenge with strategic implications for

the Navy."

The task force's closure came two months after a Jan. 10 Defense Department report on climate change effects on defense issues. In the report, the department deemed the phenomenon a "national security issue with potential impacts to DOD missions, operational places and installations."

It listed recurrent flooding, drought, desertification, wildfires and thawing permafrost as climate-caused events that Defense Department installations could be vulnerable to in the coming 20 years. In the Navy alone, the January report said 16 installations suffer from recurrent flooding, 18 from drought and seven from wildfires.

"DoD must be able to adapt

current and future operations to address the impacts of a variety of threats and conditions, including those from weather and natural events," the report said.

The report listed Navy Region Mid-Atlantic and the greater Hampton Roads, Va., area among the most vulnerable to floods.

A former director of Task Force Climate Change, retired Rear Adm. John White, told E&E News that a task force typically releases a culminating report on its accomplishments or where the group's responsibilities will be assigned before its closure. No such report was released, and the Navy's Energy, Environment and Climate Change website has been almost completely scrubbed.

Veterans await promised Iraq Commitment Medals

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Iraq War veterans tired of waiting for more than 1 million promised medals are soliciting donations to make 2,500 of their own.

The Iraq Commitment Medal is supposed to recognize the work of U.S. and coalition troops who served in Iraq following the fall of dictator Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. One was presented to Vice President Joe Biden by then-Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki during a ceremony in Baghdad in 2011.

Iraqi Defense Minister Saadoun al-Dulaimi wrote to then-Defense Secretary Leon Panetta in 2011 telling him that the medal should go to anyone who served in Iraq, its territorial waters or its airspace for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days.

"We expect that more than 1 million current or former service members may be eligible to receive the Commitment Medal," al-Dulaimi wrote in his letter.

Al-Dulaimi said Iraq authorized the United States and its coalition partners to arrange for production so it might "be readily available to the recipients."

"May the commitment to the bright future of Iraq, which we have shared through many difficult years, never be forgotten," the defense minister wrote.

Eight years later, the Department of Defense has yet to authorize servicemembers to wear the medals or taken steps to award them.

The Pentagon said in a statement Tuesday that it greatly appreciates the desire of the government of Iraq to recognize an estimated 1.2 million servicemembers who qualify for the medal.

"Traditionally when a foreign government authorizes a medal, that government provides the medal to eligible members as the medal is a

foreign decoration, not a Department of Defense decoration," the statement said. "At this time, the Department of Defense has not received any [commitment medals] from the Government of Iraq to approve or distribute."

The service of American military personnel in Iraq is recognized through the Defense Department's Iraq Campaign Medal. Plans and procedures for approving and distributing the Iraq Commitment Medal will be established once Iraq provides the medals, the Pentagon said.

Iraq's embassy in Washington did not respond to telephone and email messages this week.

However, some veterans are moving ahead with their own plans to produce and award the medals.

An Iraqi Commitment Medal Facebook group includes posts from people lobbying the U.S. government to authorize the decorations.

There's also an online crowdfunding campaign that, as of Wednesday, had raised nearly \$10,000 with the goal of getting \$62,500 by Oct. 12 to produce 2,500 medals for other veterans.

The campaign is the brainchild of Edward Mahoney, 35, of Springfield, Va., who said he served as a Marine Corps communications officer in Falujah and Al Asad from 2008 to 2009.

The award may not be authorized for active-duty troops, but veterans can wear it, Mahoney said.

"Most of the people who went to Iraq are out. They can wear whatever they want, and this isn't some commemorative medal. They have earned this," he said.

If the campaign reaches its goal, all the people who have contributed will get a medal. They will be minted by Kennedy Insignia. The firm is certified by the Institute of Heraldry, which furnishes insignia to the U.S. government, Mahoney said.

Major perfection in Army fitness test

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

A Texas-based officer has recorded the first perfect score on the Army's new fitness test.

Maj. Timothy Cox, who serves with the 22nd Chemical Battalion at Fort Bliss, scored a 600 on the Army Combat Fitness Test.

"There is going to be a culture change in the Army," Cox said in an Army statement about the implications of the new test. "I think it has been a long time coming and I am excited."

Cox first took the ACFT in December and registered a near-perfect 587. At the time, he set a goal to hit the 600 mark.

He boosted his score in subsequent tests before finally posting a 600 score in mid-July, the statement said.

His effort bested a previous record set in June by Spc. Ryan Sowder of the Kentucky National Guard, who scored a 597.

The ACFT will replace the Army Physical Fitness Test. It's been in the works for several years, with select units testing exercises intended to better measure for the kind of fitness required in combat.

The new test puts greater emphasis on strength exercises and includes deadlifts, standing power throws, hand-release pushups, sprint-drag-carry drills, leg tucks and a 2-mile run. The current fitness test only requires pushups, situps and a 2-mile run.

In October, soldiers will begin taking two trial tests six months apart. The results won't count, but by fall 2020 it will become the Army's official test of record.

Cox said the new test demands building up leg and core strength as well as a powerful grip.

"Embrace the change, because like it or not, it's coming," Cox said.

Afghan leaders expect update soon as peace talks progress

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghanistan's government expects the U.S. envoy negotiating with the Taliban on ending the war to visit Kabul "in one or two days" to share developments in negotiations in Qatar, a presidential spokesman said Wednesday.

Intra-Afghan talks on the country's political future are meant to follow a U.S.-Taliban deal, and spokesman Sediq Sediqqi warned that if the Taliban continue to reject discussions with the Afghan government "that would be their mistake."

A Taliban spokesman said Wednesday the insurgent group

and U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad were close to a final agreement on ending nearly 18 years of fighting. The two sides have held nine rounds of talks over the past year.

A State Department spokesperson said Khalilzad and his team have made progress on advancing a peace process and negotiations are proceeding but there was no estimate for how long it might take to "close out" remaining issues.

The uncertainty around the U.S.-Taliban talks, which focus on a troop withdrawal in exchange for Taliban guarantees that Afghanistan will no longer be a haven for global terrorist groups, have many Afghans wondering what comes next.

Mattis: I left Cabinet when advice ignored

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who resigned last year after clashing with President Donald Trump, says in a new book excerpt that “I did as well as I could for as long as I could” and warns of the dangers of a leader who is not committed to working with allies.

Mattis, who announced his resignation in December after Trump shocked American allies and overruled his advisers by announcing a withdrawal from Syria, writes in “Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead” that he decided to depart “when my concrete solutions and strategic advice, especially keeping faith with our allies, no longer resonated.”

Although Mattis’ views were no secret when he served in Trump’s Cabinet, he had resolutely maintained near total public silence since resigning eight months ago.

The immediate cause of his departure was a Trump tweet ordering an abrupt, complete military withdrawal from Syria, but Mattis was at odds with the president’s views and actions on a number of issues and offended by what he saw as Trump’s disregard of longtime U.S. alliances.

In his book excerpt, published Wednesday by The Wall Street Journal, Mattis writes about the need for leaders to appreciate the value of allies without explicitly mentioning Trump, who has made a slogan of “America First.”

“Nations with allies thrive, and those without them wither,” Mattis writes. “Alone, America cannot protect our people and our economy. At this time, we can see storm clouds gathering. A polemicist’s role is not sufficient for a leader. A leader must display strategic acumen that incorporates respect for those nations that have stood with us when trouble loomed.”

Mattis argues for “returning to a strategic stance that includes the interests of as many nations as we can make common cause with.”

Esper OKs more funds for wall

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Defense Secretary Mark Esper has approved spending Defense Department funds to build another 20 miles of wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, according to court documents filed Tuesday.

The increase in miles of border wall was approved after “lower than expected” contract costs for the previously approved 129 miles of border wall under former acting Defense Secretary Pat Shanahan.

Earlier this year, Shanahan approved \$2.5 billion to be

transferred to the Army Corps of Engineers to award contracts for border wall construction. The money was pulled from drug interdiction funds following plans outlined in President Donald Trump’s Feb. 15 declaration of a national emergency at the border.

The court documents, which include a memo from Esper to the Department of Homeland Security on Monday approving the expansion, were filed as part of a lawsuit to stop Pentagon funds from being used to build the wall. The American Civil Liberties Union filed the lawsuit in California on behalf of the Sierra Club and the

Southern Border Communities Coalition. The Supreme Court last month ruled against a hold on the funds related to the lawsuit, which is now in the hands of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

A defense official at the Pentagon, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, confirmed the additional miles of southern border wall, but the official did not provide further details.

The court documents state the newly approved wall will be 30-foot-tall fencing with roads and lighting. It will be built in three different areas in the Yuma and Tucson sectors of the border in Arizona.

Trump pushes border wall completion

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is so eager to complete hundreds of miles of border fence ahead of the 2020 presidential election that he has directed aides to fast-track billions of dollars’ worth of construction contracts, aggressively seize private land and disregard environmental rules, according to current and former officials involved with the project.

He also has told worried subordinates that he will pardon them of any potential wrongdoing should they have to break laws to get the barriers built quickly, those officials said.

Trump has repeatedly promised to complete 500 miles of fencing by the time voters go to the polls in November 2020, stirring chants of “Finish the Wall!” at his political rallies as he pushes for tighter border controls. But the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed just about 60 miles of “replacement” barrier during the first 2½ years of Trump’s presidency, all of it in areas that previously had border infrastructure.

The president has told senior aides that a failure to deliver on the signature promise of his 2016 campaign would be a letdown to his supporters and an embarrassing defeat. With the election 14 months away and hundreds of miles of fencing plans still in blueprint form, Trump has held regular White House meetings for progress updates and to hasten the pace, according to several people involved in the discussions.

When aides have suggested that some orders are illegal or unworkable, Trump has suggested he would pardon the officials if they would just go ahead, aides said. He has waved off worries about contracting procedures and the use of eminent domain, saying “take the land,” according to officials who attended the meetings.

“Don’t worry, I’ll pardon you,” he has told officials in meetings about the wall.

“He said people expected him to build a wall, and it had to be done by the election,” one former official said.

Asked for comment, a White House official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Trump is joking when he makes such statements about pardons.

Deputy White House press secretary Hogan Gidley said Tuesday that the president is protecting the country with the addition of new border barriers. He said internal criticisms of Trump “are just more fabrications by people who hate the fact the status quo, that has crippled this country for decades, is finally changing as President Trump is moving quicker than anyone in history to build the wall, secure the border and enact the very immigration policies the American people voted for.”

Defense Secretary Mark Esper is expected to approve a White House request to divert \$3.6 billion in Pentagon funds to the barrier project in coming weeks, money that Trump sought after lawmakers refused to allocate \$5 billion. The funds will be pulled from Defense Department projects in 26 states, according to administration officials who, like others, spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the matter.

Trump’s determination to build the barriers as quickly as possible has not diminished his interest in the aesthetic aspects of the project, particularly the requirement that the looming steel barriers be painted black and topped with sharpened tips.

In a meeting at the White House on May 23, Trump ordered the Army Corps and the Department of Homeland Security to paint the structure black, according to internal communications reviewed by The Washington Post.

Administration officials have stopped trying to talk him out of the demands.

Puerto Rico preps for Tropical Storm Dorian

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Tropical Storm Dorian threatened Puerto Rico with a direct hit at near-hurricane force on Wednesday and forecasters said it could strengthen further as it approaches the U.S. mainland.

The storm was expected to pass over or near Puerto Rico, with landslides, widespread flooding and power outages possible in what is expected to be the first major test of emergency preparedness since

Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2017. President Donald Trump declared an emergency Tuesday night and ordered federal assistance for local authorities.

“Practically the entire island will be under sustained tropical storm force winds,” Roberto Garcia, director of U.S. National Weather Service San Juan, said during a press conference late Tuesday.

However, he said the forecast could keep changing, adding that late shifts occur with storms such as Dorian that do

not have a well-defined center.

The storm earlier had been projected to brush the western part of the U.S. territory and the change in the storm’s course caught many off guard in the tiny island of Vieques just east of Puerto Rico, a popular tourist destination that now lies in Dorian’s path.

“I’m in shock,” Vilma Santana said in a phone interview, adding that she’s relieved it’s not a hurricane. “Thank God it’s a storm.”

A still-uncertain long-term forecast would have Dorian

nearing Florida at hurricane strength by Sunday or Monday.

Trump sent a tweet assuring that “We are tracking closely tropical storm Dorian as it heads, as usual, to Puerto Rico. FEMA and all others are ready, and will do a great job.”

Early Wednesday, Dorian was located about 60 miles southeast of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said it had strengthened slightly, with maximum sustained winds of 60 mph while moving northwest at 13 mph.

Reeves is GOP nominee for Miss. governor

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi second-term Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves won the Republican nomination for governor Tuesday, setting up a November general election showdown with Democrat Jim Hood, the state’s four-term attorney general.

Reeves defeated retired Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. in a Republican primary runoff.

Reeves, 45, spent more than \$6 million this year — the most of any candidate in the race, regardless of party. Waller, 67, spent about \$1.4 million. Waller is a retired brigadier general in the Mississippi National Guard and son of the late Gov. Bill Waller Sr., a moderate Democrat who

served from 1972 to 1976.

“We’ve got to work to bring the Republican Party together, and I know that the Republicans across Mississippi are going to rally behind our campaign to ensure that Mississippi does not elect a liberal Democrat to the office of governor,” Reeves told The Associated Press before he appeared at his victory party.

Jubilant supporters at the party chanted, “Tate! Tate! Tate! Tate!”

“Jim Hood will tell you that welfare and Washington are the only things we need,” Reeves told them.

After Reeves won the Republican nomination, Hood said: “They just want to throw around labels. I’m going to talk about issues.”

Hood, 57, had spent about \$1.1 million through the end of July. He said Tuesday that Waller ran a “gentlemanly race” and discussed quality-of-life issues. Hood said he hoped some Waller supporters would cross party lines to vote for him in November.

“Tate Reeves just ran a negative campaign,” Hood said. “The reason he didn’t talk about the issues is because he doesn’t have any.”

Waller told a subdued group of supporters at his party that he believes his campaign raised important issues that will continue to be debated leading into the general election, including improving highways, bolstering health care and increasing teacher pay.

Johnson’s bid to suspend UK Parliament draws outrage

Associated Press

LONDON — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson maneuvered Wednesday to give his political opponents even less time to block a no-deal Brexit before the Oct. 31 withdrawal deadline, winning Queen Elizabeth II’s approval to suspend Parliament. His critics were outraged.

Though Johnson previously had refused to rule out such a move, the timing of the decision took lawmakers — many of whom are on vacation — by surprise.

Lawmakers reacted with fury, including John Bercow, speaker of the lower House of Commons, who was not told in advance of Johnson’s plan.

“Shutting down Parliament would be

an offense against the democratic process and the rights of parliamentarians as the people’s elected representatives,” Bercow said. “Surely at this early stage in his premiership, the prime minister should be seeking to establish rather than undermine his democratic credentials and indeed his commitment to Parliamentary democracy.”

The main opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn wrote to the queen to protest “in the strongest possible terms on behalf of my party and I believe all the other opposition parties are going to join in with this.”

But the monarch declined to get involved, in keeping with her steadfast refusal to interfere in politics. As head of state, she is

politically neutral and acts on the advice of her government in political matters.

The House of Commons will convene from Sept. 3-10 and then is scheduled to go on a break until Oct. 9 — though lawmakers had suggested they might cancel that break and stay in session because of the national crisis. But Johnson said he has decided to ask the queen to give her speech that outlines the government’s legislative agenda on Oct. 14.

Since Parliament is normally suspended before her speech, the decision means opposition lawmakers would be unlikely to have enough time to pass laws blocking the U.K.’s withdrawal from the European Union without a negotiated deal on Oct. 31.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man handcuffed after his home alarm tripped

NC RALEIGH — Police in North Carolina said they're investigating the actions of officers who handcuffed a black man in his boxer shorts after his burglar alarm was accidentally tripped.

ABC 11 reported that Ka-zeem Oyeneyin, 31, is seeking an apology for the Aug. 17 incident.

He said a friend stayed over and unknowingly tripped the alarm when he left. Oyeneyin disengaged the alarm and returned to bed.

Oyeneyin said he soon heard screaming. He grabbed his gun and encountered police downstairs. He complied with orders to drop his gun, for which he had a permit.

Tranquilizer used to stop rogue pig

CA CORONA — Authorities in a California city had to use a tranquilizer dart to subdue a large pig that was menacing residents.

The Press-Enterprise reported that authorities in Corona called in a Riverside County Animal Services officer to tranquilize the 100-pound pig.

Authorities said the pig was charging at people in a residential neighborhood of the city 48 miles east of Los Angeles.

Authorities were able to corral the pig in a backyard, where it was shot with the tranquilizer.

Pregnant driver is attacked in drive-thru

DE BEAR — Delaware State Police said two women got in a fight at a Chick-fil-A drive through and one driver intentionally kicked

a pregnant woman in the stomach.

The Delaware News Journal reported Jada Blake, 19, was waiting in line at a Chick-fil-A in Bear when another vehicle pulled in front of her.

Police said Blake got out to confront the driver, a 21-year-old pregnant woman. Police said Blake struck the woman in the head through an open window and later kicked the woman's stomach, knowing she was pregnant.

Troopers arrested Blake as she continued to wait in line.

Hometown honors author with statue

IL WAUKEGAN — The Chicago-area hometown of the late famed science fiction writer Ray Bradbury marked his birthday with the dedication of a statue in his honor.

The 12-foot-tall stainless steel statue outside the Waukegan Public Library depicts Bradbury astride a rocket ship while holding a book.

The (Lake County) News-Sun reported artist Zachary Oxman said the statue tells the story of a man "beaming with unbridled imagination, curiosity and surprise."

Bradbury was born in Waukegan in 1920.

Unconscious, topless woman was a doll

MO KANSAS CITY — Authorities said a man reported to be dragging a topless, unconscious woman through downtown Kansas City was actually lugging around a life-size doll.

Police said in a tweet that callers reported that the man looked like he wanted to throw the woman over a bridge, that he had dropped her and that he

appeared to be trying to dress her.

Police said that when officers learned that the woman actually was a doll that the man had found in a trash bin, he was told "not to carry it around in public anymore."

Cops: Truck hauling stolen melons stuck

NC ROCKY MOUNT — Sheriff's deputies in North Carolina said they responded to a call of a possible crop theft to find a suspect stuck in the middle of a field trying to haul off a truckload of stolen watermelons.

The Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office said in a Facebook post that a deputy and a sergeant responded to a call about the possible fruit heist about 60 miles outside of Raleigh.

That's when they found Michael Anthony Bryant and his pickup stuck in the middle of a field with dozens of reportedly stolen watermelons in the back.

Bulldozer is used to break into liquor store

MI DETROIT — A bulldozer was used to break into a Detroit liquor store.

Police told WDIV-TV that someone fired up the heavy machinery and smashed the front wall of the JR Party Store.

Several bottles of liquor were stolen.

Town aims to replace replica of statue

ND FARGO — Fargo authorities are looking to replace an 8-foot-tall replica of the Statue of Liberty that was stolen last month.

Mayor Tim Mahoney told KFGO that authorities haven't

had any luck finding the statue.

The statue had about 300 pounds of metal that Mahoney thinks could have been chopped up and scrapped.

The statue was presented to the city nearly 70 years ago by the Lions Club.

Police: Child brought cocaine to school

LA NEW ORLEANS — A 5-year-old boy came to kindergarten with cocaine, and police in a New Orleans suburb arrested two adults.

Slidell police spokesman Daniel Seuzeneau said a teacher saw the boy holding a bag of white powder and a resource officer found cocaine.

Seuzeneau said the boy clearly knew nothing about the drugs. He said investigators found cocaine and marijuana at his home and believe adults tried to hide drugs in pockets of his stored clothes.

Seuzeneau said Angelica Stanley, 23, and Ellis Cousin, 51, were arrested on charges of cruelty to a juvenile, possessing drugs with intent to distribute them and possessing drug paraphernalia.

Teen registers people to vote in food line

NC CHARLOTTE — A North Carolina teen helped more than a dozen people who lined up to buy a chicken sandwich get the chance to line up at the polls.

News outlets reported David Ledbetter, 17, said he registered 16 people to vote at a Popeye's restaurant in Charlotte.

Ledbetter isn't old enough to vote but said he noticed a lack of young people involved in politics. He said he was happy to find most people in the drive-thru were already registered.

From wire reports

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Running QBs are still a trend in NFL

Associated Press

Lamar Jackson's midseason promotion to starter for the Baltimore Ravens last year helped quarterbacks set an NFL record for carries and yards rushing in a season at their position.

Even though he started only the final seven games, Jackson broke a 46-year-old league mark with 147 carries in the regular season, and the NFL had an unprecedented third straight year with at least 10 QBs registering at least 50 rushes.

With the speedy Kyler Murray set to start for the Arizona Cardinals — following Cleveland's Baker Mayfield as the second straight mobile Oklahoma quarterback drafted No. 1 overall — the question is whether the NFL is going through another phase or might be on an irreversible path to run-savvy QBs under center.

"Is it going to be the norm?" asked NFL Network analyst Steve Mariucci, the former coach in San Francisco and Detroit. "I don't know about

that. We're going to get what comes up out of the college ranks. Next year, is there an option quarterback coming up, or are there more dropback guys coming up? We take what we can get."

Even with kneel-downs at the end of games factored in, there is little question quarterbacks are running more than ever.

The 1,871 carries for 8,086 yards by quarterbacks in 2018 were records, but the most significant number was 14.1% of the league's total number of running plays being by QBs.

That percentage had never been higher than 12.3% since the merger in 1970, and last year's number was more than twice that of the percentage from the year with the most overall runs in NFL history. Of the 16,075 carries in 1978, 6.3% were by quarterbacks.

While Dak Prescott of Dallas hasn't been as prolific as others in carries and yards, he already is within two TDs rushing of Hall of Famer Roger Staubach's club career record of 20. Prescott is the NFL's first QB with at least 20 touchdowns

passing and five rushing in each of his first three seasons (six rushing each year).

"The more I talk to coaches, the more progressive coaches that I speak to, they want point guards," ESPN draft analyst Todd McShay said. "They want guys who it's like, make the read, if the second read's not there, let's go."

"And everything's so spread out that there's more opportunity and more lanes to just, all right, if I can't hit that throw, if I can't hit my second, it's not worth me sitting in the pocket and looking for the third and fourth when I can just pick up 4 to 6 yards running right up that lane."

This is one of the reasons for so much intrigue over Murray, the dynamic 5-foot-10 Heisman Trophy winner. While the player who chose football after being a top 10 pick in the baseball draft by the Oakland Athletics has been praised for his arm strength and accuracy, everyone wants to see him run.

Another factor is that Murray's coach is Kliff Kingsbury, fired at Texas Tech before get-

ting hired by the Cardinals. Kingsbury developed NFL MVP Patrick Mahomes of Kansas City while with the Red Raiders and was Johnny Manziel's offensive coordinator and QB coach at Texas A&M.

Analysts seem to like the phrase "college experiment," which relates to whether the spread offenses in the college game will continue to produce quarterbacks who can win games with their feet in the pros.

Mike Tannenbaum, an ESPN analyst and former personnel man with Miami and the New York Jets, offered the reminder that the most successful NFL and college programs in recent years — New England and Alabama — still use a fullback.

"While we see the evolution of Lamar Jackson and Kyler Murray and guys like Baker Mayfield, who operate and thrive in a spread system, I think our sport still has room for the quote-unquote more traditional, power, two-back offense," Tannenbaum said.

Undrafted players making an impression on Raiders

Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — After winning just four games last season and holding four picks in the top two rounds of the NFL Draft, the Oakland Raiders figured to have plenty of opportunities for rookies to contribute.

What's a bit surprising is how many of those rookies fighting for spots in the final week before the 90-man roster gets cut down to 53 is how many of those players entered the league as undrafted free agents.

Coach Jon Gruden said he believes five undrafted players have a chance to make the roster on Saturday, although all the contenders know their status is always tenuous after being passed over in the draft.

"Being an undrafted guy,

you can be here one day and be somewhere else the next," defensive tackle Anthony Rush said. "I've learned that. But I really feel like this'll be a good fit for me. Hopefully things work out here for me. If they don't, you know, just keep pushing. But I feel like they will."

Rush has been a find since joining the team during training camp. The former UAB player initially signed with Philadelphia, but was cut early in training camp. He then went to Detroit for a tryout and was waiting in a hotel there for the Lions to create a roster spot when the Raiders called.

With Detroit not ready to make a commitment, Rush flew to the Bay Area and signed with the Raiders, where he has made an immediate impact.

Six of his nine tackles in the preseason have come at or behind the line of scrimmage as he has been able to use his 350-pound size to control the line of scrimmage.

Rush has company among the undrafted players looking to make the roster. Punter A.J. Cole already won a competition with last year's fifth-round pick, Johnny Townsend, and looks set to make the team this season.

Local favorite receiver Keeelan Doss, cornerback Keisean Nixon, versatile offensive lineman Andre James and fullback Alec Ingold have also made a case to be included on the initial 53-man list in Oakland or get an opportunity somewhere else.

The Raiders have kept more than two undrafted rookies on

the initial 53-man roster just once in the past seven seasons, so having this many in the running so close to cut-down day is unusual.

Doss grew up in the same town as the Raiders facility in Alameda and starred in college at FCS-level UC Davis. He got on Gruden's radar with a strong performance at the Senior Bowl, but was passed over at the draft despite talk that he would be taken in the later rounds.

Doss chose to sign with his hometown team even if the receiver position was crowded following offseason additions of players such as Antonio Brown, Tyrell Williams, J.J. Nelson, Ryan Grant and fifth-round pick Hunter Renfrow.

Gauff rallies from set down at US Open

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Here's how new all of this is to Coco Gauff: She didn't quite realize she only has to play every other day at the U.S. Open.

"I'm still used to playing juniors," the American said with a chuckle, "so I forgot about the day off."

She's still just 15. She's competing in just her second Grand Slam tournament. And yet she's definitely showing she can perform like someone much older and more experienced.

With her parents jumping out of their front-row seats over and over again, and a raucous partisan crowd backing her at Louis Armstrong Stadium, Gauff trailed by a set and a break, then again by a break in the third set, before coming up big down the stretch to get past Anastasia Potapova of Russia 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 in her debut at Flushing Meadows.

"Honestly, I mean, I really don't remember the match too well," Gauff said, "because everything is still a blur."

Here is what is clear: She displayed the same sort of gumption she did while saving match points in a Centre Court comeback at Wimbledon during her

captivating run to the fourth round there last month.

Gauff simply does not give in or give up.

As strong as her serve and other strokes are, she's already showing an ability to make adjustments during a match and figure out ways to win, time and again. Gauff was ranked 313th when she got a wild-card invitation into qualifying at Wimbledon, then became the youngest player in history to make it through those preliminary rounds at that prestigious tournament.

After beating Venus Williams in the first round, then a 2017 Wimbledon semifinalist in the second, Gauff got to Week 2 before her surprising showing there ended with a loss to eventual champion Simona Halep.

It was enough to persuade the U.S. Tennis Association to provide a wild card into its event, a special entry she needed because her ranking is 140th.

Four top-10 men's seeds all tumbled out: No. 4 Dominic Thiem, No. 8 Stefanos Tsitsipas, No. 9 Karen Khachanov and No. 10 Roberto Bautista Agut. The biggest beneficiary could be three-time champion Rafael Nadal, the No. 2 seed, who found

no such trouble, easily putting together a 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 victory at night over John Millman.

The last match of the schedule didn't begin until after 11 p.m. and ended after 1 a.m. Wednesday, with the volatile Nick Kyrgios delighting the crowd with some trick shots — one particularly outrageous on-the-run passing shot forehand 'tweener landed in the net, alas, but a full-sprint, slide-into-the-doubles-alley forehand winner was celebrated with a dance — while beating Steve Johnson 6-3, 7-6 (1), 6-4.

In women's action, 2017 U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens was stunned 6-3, 6-4 by Anna Kalinskaya, a 20-year-old Russian qualifier ranked 127th.

Stephens, seeded 11th, finished with 33 unforced errors, more than twice as many as Kalinskaya, who had been 0-5 at Slams and 0-4 against top-20 opponents.

"I was playing one good point, one bad point, one good point," Stephens said. "The inconsistency doesn't help me at all."

Svetlana Kuznetsova, the 2004 champion, and two-time finalist Viktoria Azarenka also

lost at night. Earlier, defending champion and No. 1 seed Naomi Osaka dropped her first five games against 84th-ranked Anna Blinkova, wasted a match point in the second set, then finally put together a 6-4, 6-7 (5), 6-2 victory.

A couple of years ago, when Gauff was 13, she got a chance to practice with Osaka.

"Her dad and my dad are actually quite cool," Osaka said Tuesday. "She seems to be doing great."

Gauff's father and mother were kind of quiet in the early going at Armstrong, until their daughter waved to her guest box after falling behind 3-0 early.

"I was telling them to get hyped up more. I needed more positive energy. I was nervous. Just looking at them when they're giving me a fist pump gives me a little reassurance," Gauff explained. "I think they were nervous. They wanted to stay more reserved, too. I was like, 'No, I need you guys to come on, stand up.'"

They obliged, yelling and clapping after what seemed to be each point Coco won. Dad also pounded a fist on his chest repeatedly.

Top-ranked Clemson has new faces on defensive line

Associated Press

CLEMSON, S.C. — Clemson fans should get used to seeing several new faces on defense this season, especially up front.

Tigers coach Dabo Swinney said some of the competition to replace the seven vacancies from last year's national championship squad is so tight "we don't know who's going to run out there first."

Swinney will have to figure it out soon since No. 1 Clemson opens defense of its title Thursday night at home against Georgia Tech. Two starters are listed at three of the four defensive line positions on the team's opening depth chart with only

senior Nyles Pinckney locked into place at defensive tackle.

Jordan Williams, a third-year sophomore, had carried the other starting tackle spot into fall camp, but has been pressured by Tyler Davis, a 6-foot-2, 295-pound freshman who arrived in January. Both end positions are in flux, too, with junior Justin Foster and sophomores Xavier Thomas and Logan Rudolph battling for the two starting spots.

"We've still got a couple of more days of practice and meetings," Swinney said. "I do know this. We're going to play a lot of guys. We've got a bunch of guys who are just like a big, ole pack."

Clemson didn't have such

problems the past few years with ends Clelin Ferrell and Austin Bryant and tackles Christian Wilkins and Dexter Lawrence controlling the middle as the Tigers' defense gave up only 13.1 points a game, the fewest total in the Football Bowl Subdivision last year.

Ferrell and Wilkins, both All-Americans, and Bryant chose to return for their senior seasons and join Lawrence for one more chance at a national championship, which they helped the Tigers accomplish last fall.

Since the victory parade in January, much focus at Clemson has been on who Swinney and defensive coordinator Brent Venables had groomed to

take over after those rock-solid players had gone.

"It's definitely different," said Clemson center Sean Polard who for several seasons had been pounded in practice by last season's defensive veterans.

Rudolph, the younger brother of ex-Oklahoma State and current Steelers quarterback Mason Rudolph, played 141 snaps over 14 games a year ago. Rudolph has brought an intensity, Swinney said, to his off-season practices and work habits that moved him to the top.

Thomas is a quick, 6-2, 265-pound player who came into the program last year as the country's top defensive end prospect.

Astros' Verlander gets victory, ejection

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Houston's Justin Verlander was bracing for a pitcher's duel as he prepared to face former teammate Charlie Morton and the Tampa Bay Rays on Tuesday night.

Turned out quite differently than Verlander had imagined.

Rookie Yordan Alvarez homered twice as Houston jumped on Morton to build a big lead before Verlander was ejected in the sixth inning of the Astros' 15-1 win.

"It was the last thing I ex-

pected with Charlie on the mound," Verlander said. "But it was a pleasant surprise. At that point I was just trying to get as deep as I could in the ballgame. Unfortunately that didn't happen."

The Astros honored Morton (13-6) with a pregame video recounting the highlights of his two-year stint with the team. Morton, who won Game 7 of the AL Championship Series and Game 7 of the World Series in 2017 to help Houston to its first title, tipped his cap after receiving a standing ovation

following the tribute.

Houston's hitters didn't give Morton nearly as warm of a reception in his first trip to Minute Maid Park since signing with the Rays. The Astros tagged him for seven hits and a season-high six runs in four innings, which tied his shortest start this season.

"They got me with that one, and then they took it to me on the mound," Morton said with a laugh, referring to the video.

Verlander's ejection came with the Astros up 9-0 when he thought he struck out Tommy

Pham. Instead the pitch was called a ball, and the right-hander yelled something to home plate umpire Pat Hoberg. Pham then doubled to center on Verlander's next pitch. Verlander then yelled at Hoberg at least three times before he threw him out just as Pham reached second base. Verlander continued to jaw at Hoberg while he walked off the field and after he reached the dugout.

Verlander (16-5) allowed four hits and struck out four in 5¹/₃ innings while lowering his ERA to an AL-leading 2.69.

MLB roundup

Darvish, Baez help Cubs take opener of pivotal series

Associated Press

NEW YORK — The only frustration for Yu Darvish during his longest outing with the Chicago Cubs was that one uncharacteristic walk.

Darvish pitched eight masterful innings, Javier Baez homered and drove in three runs, and the Cubs topped the New York Mets 5-2 Tuesday night to take the opener of a pivotal three-game series in the National League wild-card race.

The pinpoint right-hander from Japan issued his first walk in six starts since July 23. Todd Frazier drew a free pass leading off the fifth, ending a streak of 142 batters without a base on balls for Darvish.

"Sad about the walk. Four-pitch walk," Darvish said, shaking his head.

"I tried to throw a strike, but I couldn't throw a strike," he added later. "So I feel like, embarrassed."

Baez and Addison Russell each hit a two-run homer off Marcus Stroman, helping the Cubs improve to 26-39 away from home. Both middle infielders finished with three hits, and Baez had an eventful game all over the field.

The flashy shortstop made a

snow-cone grab to thwart a potential rally, contributed three extra-base hits and a walk on a perfect night at the plate — and was thrown out twice being overaggressive on the bases.

Pete Alonso hit his 42nd home run for the Mets.

Athletics 2, Royals 1: Marcus Semien provided just enough early offense and Mike Fiers (13-3) and three Oakland relievers combined to shut down host Kansas City.

Pirates 5, Phillies 4: Rhys Hoskins kept Philadelphia fans booing when he inexplicably dropped a routine throw at first base in the ninth, turning what appeared to be an inning-ending double play into the go-ahead run for visiting Pittsburgh.

After a pair of one-out walks by Hector Neris (2-5), Kevin Newman hit a grounder to second baseman Cesar Hernandez that could've let the Phillies escape. Jean Segura's relay throw should have finishing the inning, but the struggling Hoskins seemed to close his mitt too early and the ball smacked off the leather and rolled away. Adam Frazier scrambled home to score the tiebreaking run.

Yankees 7, Mariners 0: Aaron Judge became the third-

fastest player in baseball history to reach 100 home runs, Masahiro Tanaka (10-7) threw seven sharp innings and out-pitched Yusei Kikuchi in a showdown of Japanese starters, and visiting New York beat Seattle.

Judge joined elite company on the first pitch he saw from Kikuchi (5-9), hitting a two-run homer off the batter's eye in center field in the first inning. Judge reached the 100-homer mark in his 371st game. Only Ryan Howard (325) and Yankees teammate Gary Sanchez (355) got to 100 faster.

Orioles 2, Nationals 0: Aaron Brooks (4-7) came up with an unexpected pitching gem, throwing six innings of two-hit ball to help visiting Baltimore end Washington's five-game winning streak.

Blue Jays 3, Braves 1: Justin Smoak homered and drove in two runs, leading host Toronto past Atlanta.

Reds 8, Marlins 5: Curt Casali homered and drove in three runs, helping Cincinnati beat host Miami.

Red Sox 10, Rockies 6: Jackie Bradley Jr. opened visiting Boston's three-homer night with a solo shot into the third deck.

Diamondbacks 3, Giants 2:

Mike Leake (10-10) pitched into the eighth inning in his first win since joining host Arizona in a trade.

Cardinals 6, Brewers 3: Yadier Molina homered twice and NL Central-leading St. Louis matched a season high with its sixth straight win in a rain-delayed game at Milwaukee.

Twins 3, White Sox 1: Marwin Gonzalez and Jonathan Schoop hit solo homers in the second inning, and Michael Pineda (10-5) pitched five sharp innings to lead visiting Minnesota.

Indians 10, Tigers 1: Frammil Reyes hit a three-run homer to highlight a six-run seventh inning, and visiting Cleveland beat Detroit for the 12th straight time and 13th in 14 matchups this season.

Angels 5, Rangers 2: Kole Calhoun hit a two-run double and pinch-hitter Brian Goodwin added a two-run single in the seventh inning, helping host Los Angeles snap its five-game skid.

Dodgers 9, Padres 0: Walker Buehler (11-3) dominated host San Diego again, striking out 11 and allowing only four hits in six innings, and Joc Pederson homered to lead NL West-leading Los Angeles.