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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Racial justice turns to Navy ship names

The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Statues have been toppled and flags have been lowered. America's reckoning with its history of racism has spread across the country and is now casting its eyes toward the sea.

Will the names of Navy ships be next?

Two of them have ties to the Civil War Confederacy: the guided-missile cruiser *Chancellorsville*, named after a pivotal battle won by the South, and the *Maury*, a survey ship named after pioneering oceanographer Matthew Fontaine Maury, who resigned from the U.S. Navy to join the Confederate Navy.

Two other ships, the carrier *Carl Vinson* and the carrier *John C. Stennis*, are both named after Southern U.S. congressmen who were staunch supporters of the Navy and were also in favor of continued racial segregation.

Recent media reports said

that Navy leaders privately have been discussing what to do about the ships amid a broader Department of Defense review of names and symbols that honor those who fought to preserve slavery or uphold white supremacy.

Both the U.S. Senate and House passed \$741 billion defense authorization bills last month that include language calling on the Pentagon to strip its property of ties to the Confederacy.

The House bill requires the changes to happen within one year, and the Senate bill, three. Negotiators from the two sides will meet to resolve that and other differences.

President Donald Trump has threatened to veto the legislation over the naming issue, calling it a misguided attempt to rewrite history. But both the House and Senate passed their bills with large-enough majorities to override any veto, assuming no votes change during

final tallying.

Although most of the attention so far has been on the 10 Army bases that are named after Confederate officers — including Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Fort Hood in Texas and Fort Benning in Georgia — the bills include further provisions that would also apply to ships.

If there are name changes, they would join a complicated and sometimes controversial history that dates back to America's early days, when the Continental Congress first decided, in 1775, that it wanted a Navy.

"There are periods of time when the Navy stuck resolutely to its rules about how to name ships, and times when it has varied," said Eric Wertheim, a Washington, D.C., defense consultant and author who specializes in international naval fleets.

"It is absolutely one of those things inextricably linked to

politics, culture and the way people view history at any given time."

The sensitivities that are changing this time seem especially potent, fueled by ongoing street protests about racial inequality and police misconduct. Organizations across the country are reflecting on their histories and their heroes, and adjusting monuments accordingly.

"We've seen throughout history how our views of particular leaders change," said Wertheim, the consultant and author, pointing to the up-and-down reputation of Civil War general and later president Ulysses S. Grant as one of several examples. "Battles we glamorized in the past, like those against the Indians, are no longer revered."

He added, "We see things in a different light, and what's acceptable changes with it. It's all part of the evolution. That's how history works."

Marines end search for 8 in California AAV accident

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Eight service members are presumed dead, the Marine Corps said Sunday, as it called off a search and rescue operation three days after an accident off the coast of southern California.

Nine service members — including the seven missing Marines, one missing sailor and one other Marine — died Thursday after an assault amphibious vehicle sank during training more than a half-mile from San Clemente Island, the Marines said.

"It is with a heavy heart, that I decided to conclude the search and rescue effort," said Col. Christopher Bronzi, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit commander. "The steadfast dedication of the Marines, sailors and Coast Guardsmen to the persistent rescue effort was tremendous."

All next-of-kin have been informed, the Marines said. The Defense Department has not yet named the Marines involved. The Marines said efforts are still under way to recover the bodies of the troops.

All 15 Marines aboard the vehicle at the time were assigned

to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

The 15th MEU is based at Camp Pendleton.

Search and rescue efforts were supported by the Navy and Coast Guard. The assault amphibious vehicle was operating in several hundred feet of water, which is too deep for divers, the Marines said Friday.

"Basically the adjacent assault amphibious vehicles watched it go down and, as I said, 26 tons ... the assumption is it went all the way to the bottom," Lt. Gen. Joseph Osterman, the outgoing com-

manding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force, said at a Camp Pendleton news conference Friday.

Gen. David Berger, commandant of the Marine Corps, during the news briefing said he had directed the immediate suspension of water operations for all assault amphibious vehicles as a precaution until they determine what caused Thursday's accident.

Berger also said every assault amphibious vehicle in the fleet was going to be inspected. Osterman said the Marines have more than 800 assault amphibious vehicles.

3 soldiers named Europe's best warriors

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON

Stars and Stripes

HOHENFELS, Germany — More than 30 soldiers from Army units across Europe battled it out in marksmanship, land navigation and a ruck march last week to determine the three “best warriors” in Europe.

The U.S. Army Europe's Best Warrior Competition tested battlefield and medical skills, endurance and fortitude with grueling physical challenges and a written test all crammed into a few short days.

“My favorite part is zeroing the weapons because I love firing,” said Sgt. Jason Sauer. Sauer said that during the competi-

tion he had to fire his weapon in order to adjust it, learn public affairs and throw grenades.

Pfc. Griffin Emrick, a combat medic specialist with the Joint Multinational Readiness Center, said he prepared for the event by focusing not just on physical training but also by studying material for the written test.

“My favorite part of the competition so far was interacting with the media because it is out of my comfort zone,” said Emrick. “I have never done it before, and I enjoy learning new things.”

This year's U.S. Army Europe winners

are Spc. Justin Rivard, for soldier of the year; Staff Sgt. William McLain, for non-commissioned officer of the year; and 1st Lt. Quinn Guterrez, for officer of the year.

Rivard, McLain and Guterrez will advance to represent U.S. Army Europe in the Army Best Warrior Competition at Fort Lee, Va.

“It is good to have my soldiers teach me some things because it is that circle leadership we instill across the Army,” said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Lahn, a health services officer with the 30th Medical Brigade who helped soldiers train for the event and also competed.

Leader calls out soldiers for partying in off-limits areas

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Coronavirus rule breakers will face “quick and appropriate action,” the commander of U.S. Army Garrison Japan said in a video message Thursday after people from the garrison were seen partying in off-limits parts of Tokyo.

“It seems like a few members of our team are starting to lose focus,” Col. Thomas Matelski, who oversees Camp Zama and Sagami General Depot in Kanagawa prefecture, said in his message on the garrison's Facebook page.

U.S. Army Japan, which has been in an elevated health protection status since late February, increased its coronavirus risk level to “substantial” Thursday after discovering three new cases in its community. The Army reported five other infections earlier in the week.

Maj. Gen. Viet X. Luong, commander of U.S. Army Japan, in his own video message Thursday cited a “recent spike” in violations of coronavirus restrictions as one reason for returning to Health Protection Condition-Charlie. A record-breaking number of new cases daily in nearby Tokyo

was another reason.

Luong did not elaborate on the spike in violations; Matelski omitted details but filled in some gaps in his video address to the garrison.

“Recently we have seen situations with our youth and soldiers in off-limits party areas in Tokyo,” Matelski said. “Some seem to think that rules are there to be broken. I can assure you that that is not the case.”

Central Tokyo is home to several popular entertainment and nightlife districts, including Roppongi, Shinjuku and Shibuya, which are off-limits to U.S. personnel because of coronavirus concerns.

Leadership will take quick appropriate action when situations like this occur, Matelski said in his video.

Penalties can range from an immediate 14-day restriction of movement to action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, early return to the U.S. of dependents or being banned from military facilities in Japan, he said.

“I can't emphasize how important individual decisions are and the impact that your decisions have on others in the community,” he said.

Lima Company Marines mark grim anniversary

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Jason Dominguez vividly remembers his last conversation with David Kreuter, as they were doing an overnight security watch from a rooftop in western Iraq.

Marine Cpl. Dominguez and Sgt. Kreuter usually joked around, but this night 15 years ago was different. Kreuter proudly showed him a photo of his 7-week-old son.

“Wow, you're a father!” Dominguez exclaimed.

“Yeah, I am,” replied Kreuter, 26, who then talked excitedly about getting to see and hold baby Christian for the first time.

“His priorities in life had just shifted,” recalled Dominguez, who, like the rest of the Lima Company Marines, also looked forward to the end of their tour.

The next day, Aug. 3, Kreuter was among 15 people killed by a roadside bomb near the town of Haditha. Eleven of them were Lima Company Marines.

The Columbus, Ohio-based Reserve unit was among the hardest-hit of the war in Iraq, losing 23 men after 180 deployed in early 2005. They held a reunion in 2015, and another

was planned this month but had to be canceled amid coronavirus restrictions.

The first day of the reunion would have included a Marines-only workshop on coping with their painful memories and trauma all these years later, said Bryan Hillberg, a survivor who lives near the village of Waynesville in southwest Ohio.

“Some stuff is seared into your brain and some of it is just fuzzy,” said Hillberg, 39.

On Aug. 3, Hillberg's head and shoulders were out of his amphibious assault vehicle as the lance corporal served as gunner for the second vehicle in the convoy, just ahead of the one hit by the bomb.

“When it blew, it shook everything,” he said. “I remember looking back and it flipped it and split it in a way that with all the dust and everything, the shape looked normal. I looked at my buddy and said ‘Thank God, they missed.’”

He quickly realized he was wrong.

Dominguez was two vehicles back from the exploded one.

“You saw the orange ball of fire and you just knew,” Dominguez said.

As school begins, parents see few positive options

Associated Press

WOODSTOCK, Ga. — John Barrett plans to keep his daughter home from elementary school this year in suburban Atlanta, but he wishes she was going. Molly Ball is sending her teenage sons to school in the same district Monday, but not without feelings of regret.

As the academic year begins in many places across the country this week, parents are faced with the difficult choice of whether to send their children to school or keep them home for remote learning because of the coronavirus pandemic. Many are unhappy with either option.

"I definitely think it's healthy for a child to go back to school," said Ball, who feels her sons, William and Henry, both at River Ridge High School in Georgia's Cherokee County district, suffered through enough instability in the spring. "At the same time, I wish they weren't going back to school right now. It's very scary."

But the number of families with a choice has dwindled as the virus's spread has prompted school districts to scrap in-person classes — at least to start the academic year — in cities including Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Washington, as well as parts of the South and Midwest where school is starting this week.

President Donald Trump has insisted that schools reopen so students can go back to their classrooms, but the Maryland private school where his son Barron is enrolled is among those under county orders to stay closed.

Montgomery County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles said his order to stay closed for in-person instruction through Oct.

1 and to conduct online classes will only be reevaluated before Oct. 1 to determine whether it should be extended, terminated or amended.

Gayles noted increases in transmission rates for COVID-19 — the disease caused by the virus — in Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia, particularly in younger age groups.

"Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have based our decisions on science and data," Gayles said in a release announcing the decision Friday. "At this point, the data does not suggest that in-person instruction is safe for students or teachers."

Barron, 14, is due to enter ninth grade at St. Andrew's Episcopal School in Potomac, Md., which is located in Montgomery County. The 2020-21 school year is slated to begin Sept. 8.

St. Andrews has been preparing for two different options: distance learning or a hybrid model with students learning both on and off campus. The school had planned to make a final decision the week of Aug. 10.

Parents are not the only ones who are struggling. Districts that offer two modes of instruction create new challenges for teachers as well, especially those in smaller districts who are being asked to educate students in person and online at the same time.

"The key is going to be the complexity, how they handle it," said Allen Pratt, executive director of the National Rural Education Association. "Is it going to be standards-driven, what students need to move to the next grade level? Is it going to be equal to face-to-face or better than face-to-face?"

Isaias downgraded to tropical storm

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Bands of heavy rain from Isaias lashed Florida's east coast Sunday while officials dealing with surging cases of the coronavirus kept a close watch on the weakened tropical storm.

Isaias was downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm Saturday afternoon, but was still expected to bring heavy rain and flooding as it crawled just off Florida's Atlantic coast.

"Don't be fooled by the downgrade," Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis warned at a news conference after the storm — pronounced ees-ah-EE-ahs — spent hours roughing up the Bahamas.

Upper-level winds took much of the strength out of Isaias, said Stacy Stewart, senior hurricane specialist at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. The storm also slowed down considerably.

"We were expecting a hurricane to develop and it didn't," Stewart said Sunday. "It's a tale of two storms. If you live on the west side of the storm, you didn't get much. If you live

east of the storm, there's a lot of nasty weather there."

Authorities closed beaches, parks and virus testing sites, lashing signs to palm trees so they wouldn't blow away. DeSantis said the state is anticipating power outages and asked residents to have a week's supply of water, food and medicine on hand.

Officials wrestled with how to prepare shelters where people can seek refuge from the storm if necessary, while also safely social distancing to prevent the spread of the virus.

Isaias put another burden on communities already hit by other storms and sickness.

In Palm Beach County, about 150 people were in shelters, said emergency management spokeswoman Lisa De La Rionda. The county has a voluntary evacuation order for those living in mobile or manufactured homes, or those who feel their home can't withstand winds.

"We don't anticipate many more evacuations," she said, adding that the evacuees are physically distant from each other and are wearing masks, due to the virus.

S. Korean tries to wash money over virus fears

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Money laundering is not a good idea, as a South Korean found out when he or she put banknotes in a washing machine to remove possible traces of the coronavirus.

Officials say the loss was considerable.

The person living in Ansan city, near Seoul, placed an unspecified amount of 50,000-won (\$42) bills in a washing machine earlier this year. Some of the money was seriously damaged, and the person reached out to the Bank of Korea to find

whether it could be exchanged for new bills.

Under bank rules on the exchange of damaged, mutilated and contaminated banknotes, the person was provided with the new currency totaling about \$19,320, the Bank of Korea said in a statement.

Bank official Seo Jee Woun said the number of 50,000-won bills the bank exchanged at half value was 507. She said the bank doesn't count the number of bills that it cannot exchange because the damage is too big.

She said bank officials didn't know exactly how much money the person tried to wash.

Flare-up in cases traced back to young partygoers

Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. — A flare-up of coronavirus cases in Greenwich is being partly blamed on a series of parties involving young people, whose families are not cooperating with efforts to conduct contact tracing, local officials said.

There were 41 new cases from July 19-25. Barbara Heins, an aide to Greenwich First Selectman Fred Camillo, told the Hartford Courant that half of those were individuals aged 10 to 19, mostly teens who attended many of the same parties.

“Many of the individuals they are contacting, including the young people and their families, they are not cooperating,” Heins said.

A Connecticut Department of Public Health spokesman said the agency was aware of the situation in Greenwich and was working with local contact tracers to track how far the virus has spread.

Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont, whose private home is in Greenwich, has warned about the pitfalls of young people not social distancing. Several days ago, he and Acting Public Health Commissioner Dr. Deidre S. Gifford issued a public statement expressing concern about coronavirus cases among teens and young adults in Connecticut. Statistics from Connecticut and elsewhere show that 18- to 29-year-olds represent substantial numbers of new COVID-19 infections in recent weeks.

Nearly half of all Connecticut residents who’ve tested positive for COVID-19 from July 19 to 25 were under age 30, according to state data.

Alabama

CLANTON — An Alabama school system is using a new cleaning tool to combat the coronavirus, without having to scrub desks, chairs and chalkboards.

WBRC-TV reports that Chilton County School custodians will be armed with 18 backpack decontamination foggers for the 16 school buildings. The custodians will be trained on how to use them this week.

“The foggers are a game changer as far as sanitizing,” Chilton County School Maintenance Director Freddy Smith said.

Smith said the foggers usually are used in agriculture farming but are safe to use around students. He plans for custodians to spray bathrooms, common areas and door handles after every class change.

“Anytime that you take a chemical and atomize it out of a fogger, it’s more effective and doesn’t take near as much chemical,” Smith said.

The school system bought the foggers at \$500 each using federal coronavirus aid dollars.

Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Lawmakers on the Navajo Nation have approved a massive spending bill to respond to the coronavirus pandemic that includes money for water projects, power lines, broadband and casino employees who have been laid off.

The Navajo Nation Council passed the nearly \$651 million in spending late Friday after discussing it for more than 28 hours in a special session over three days. The money comes from the Navajo Nation’s share of \$8 billion federal coronavirus relief funding that was set aside for tribes.

“This legislation begins to directly address those obstacles we face, as Navajo people, in protecting the health of our own homes and communities,” council Speaker Seth Damon said Saturday.

Navajo President Jonathan Nez has 10 days to act on the measure once it reaches him.

Florida

FORT LAUDERDALE — Parents hoping to send their children to an actual school campus this fall may have to shell out money for a private school.

Despite pressure from the state and federal governments to open their campuses for the new year, most South Florida public schools plan to start off online only due to the continued surge of COVID-19 cases and deaths in South Florida. A few charter schools plan to offer in-person instruction, but most say they will begin online until conditions improve.

For private schools, it’s a different story. “Most of the private schools we’ve heard from or about in recent weeks said they were planning to open for in-person learning at the beginning of the school year,” said Ron Matus, director of policy and public affairs for Step Up For Students, which offers scholarships for private school tuition.

Matus said applications in South Florida during the past month are up by a third. This comes as Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade school districts have each announced they planned to offer all or most of their instruction online for at least the first few weeks of school.

Georgia

ATLANTA — COVID-19 spread quickly among unmasked youth at YMCA camp, the CDC finds.

About 260 cases of the coronavirus have been tied to attendees and staff at a North Georgia YMCA children’s camp in June, according to a report released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one of the largest known super-spreading events in the state.

The report details how COVID-19 spread rapidly among children and teens within the camp and raises questions about the effectiveness of safety protocols as school districts and colleges contemplate reopening for in-person instruction this fall.

YMCA Camp High Harbour, identified in the report as Camp A, suffered an outbreak at its Lake Burton location in late June. As of July 10, about 85 cases of the virus had been linked to the camp, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution had reported, a figure that has since tripled.

Montana

HELENA — Montana set aside \$50 million in federal coronavirus relief funding to help people make their rent or mortgage payments during the economic upheaval caused by coronavirus. But through the end of July the program has paid out just over \$1.2 million, about 2.4% of the available funds, state figures show.

So far, about 750 Montana residents have submitted valid applications for the funding, a fraction of the 131,000 who have applied for unemployment at some point since mid-March as the pandemic ravaged the global economy.

Officials can’t pinpoint exactly why the program isn’t being used more, though Montana Department of Commerce spokeswoman Emilie Ritter Saunders said one of the holdups is that a few landlords are not providing information the state needs to process the claims. John Sinrud, a lobbyist for the Montana Landlords Association, countered that some tenants who could use the help aren’t seeking the assistance, and that state policies put up roadblocks.

New Hampshire

CONCORD — The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department says the coronavirus pandemic is contributing to an increase in problems with bears.

Bear project leader Andrew Timmins says complaints have increased in part because dry weather in spring and early summer reduced natural food sources for bears, driving them into residential areas. But the pandemic also is playing a role in several ways: More people are staying home, which means more garbage bins full of food waste to attract bears. And bird watchers kept their feeders up longer.

Timmins is reminding residents to secure trash receptacles and garbage cans and take down bird feeders.

“Bears have an extremely acute sense of smell and long memories, so we really need the cooperation of residents and visitors this summer and fall to prevent bears from returning to locations where they previously found food,” he said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man pleads guilty to transporting drugs

KS WICHITA— A California man pleaded guilty to transporting 9 pounds of fentanyl and 8 pounds of heroin across Kansas on his way to delivering the drugs in New York.

Mauricio Canas of Bermuda Dunes, Calif., pleaded guilty in a federal court in Wichita to interstate transportation in furtherance of drug trafficking and using a phone in furtherance of drug trafficking, the U.S. attorney's office said. Sentencing is set for Oct. 22.

The drugs were found when Canas was stopped on Aug. 21, 2019, in Thomas County for a traffic violation.

Firefighter delivers baby on 1st overnight shift

CT NEW HAVEN— A Connecticut firefighter on her first overnight shift delivered a baby at the home of a family who called for emergency assistance.

When a team from the Guilford Fire Department responded to the call, firefighter and paramedic Ashley Vargoshe, 28, handled the delivery of the baby boy, the New Haven Register reported.

Vargoshe of Madison started with the Guilford Fire Department in July, the department said on its website. She is a licensed paramedic and told the newspaper she was working her first 24 hour shift since starting with the department.

For sale: 36K acres in Adirondacks for \$180M

NY LONG LAKE— A 36,000-acre tract of lakes and forest in the Adirondacks is on the market for \$180 million.

The tract known as Whitney Park was owned by Saratoga Springs philanthropist and thoroughbred racing owner Marylou Whitney, who died last year. Her widower, John Hendrickson, told the Wall Street Journal he plans to sell the estate, which includes the great camp Deerlands on Little Forked Lake near Long Lake.

Environmental groups have urged the state to acquire the land and add it to the permanently protected Forest Preserve.

Orca pregnant again after death of calf

WA SEATTLE— An orca known as Tahlequah, who raised worldwide concern when she carried her dead calf for 17 days and more than 1,000 miles almost two years ago, is pregnant, scientists said.

John Durban, senior scientist of Southall Environmental Associates, and Holly Fearnbach, marine mammal research director for the nonprofit SR3, recently finished recording drone images of the endangered southern residents and discovered pregnancies amid the J, K and L pods, The Seattle Times reported.

Tahlequah's pregnancy carries special meaning for a region that grieved the death of her calf with her.

The southern residents frequent Puget Sound and are struggling to survive. Tahlequah's baby was the first for the whales in three years. The southern residents have since had two more calves. Both are still alive.

Woman sentenced on animal cruelty charges

MD WESTMINSTER— A Maryland woman was sentenced to prison

for animal cruelty charges after 27 dogs were found dead, and another 27 were discovered in poor condition, inside a home she rented with her husband.

Laura Filler was sentenced to 33 years, with all but seven years suspended, the Carroll County Times reported.

The sentencing comes more than a year after she and her husband were arrested following a search of the home by animal control officers. The couple had been operating an unlicensed breeding operation, according to the county's state's attorney office.

Filler's husband, John J. Roberts, pleaded guilty to 11 counts of aggravated animal cruelty in October. He was sentenced to 33 years, with all but 11 years suspended.

African lion companions euthanized at zoo

CA LOS ANGELES — Two African lions that were inseparable companions at the Los Angeles Zoo were euthanized due to declining health and age-related illness, officials said.

The male, Hubert, and female, Kalisa, both 21, had lived at the LA Zoo for six years.

The zoo said in a statement that the lions' quality of life had diminished.

Alisa Behar, curator of mammals, said the pair had lived longer than most lions do.

The average life expectancy for African lions in the wild is the mid-teens and 17 years in zoos.

Norwegian flag removed over mistaken origins

MI ST. JOHNS— Owners of a Michigan bed and breakfast removed a Norwegian flag outside of their business after being accused of

promoting racism from people who thought that was a Confederate flag.

Kjersten and Greg Offenbecker, owners of The Nordic Pineapple, hung the flag opposite the American flag after they moved into the Civil War-era mansion in 2018, the Lansing State Journal reported.

The red flag, with a blue cross superimposed on a white cross, is a nod to Kjersten Offenbecker's grandfather, who was born in Norway. The Norwegian flag has the same colors as the Confederate flag, but the patterns and symbols are different.

Several community members urged the couple to put the Norwegian flag back up, but the Offenbeckers say they won't until they can figure out a way to make sure it is not mistaken for the Confederate flag.

Man mauled by grizzly in abandoned barn

MT GREAT FALLS — A Montana man was hospitalized after being mauled by a grizzly bear in an abandoned barn, officials said.

Teton County Sheriff Keith Van Setten confirmed the attack on Shannun Rammell, 50, of the Choteau area.

Family friend Julie Brantley told the Great Falls Tribune that Rammell was looking for a bear after a neighbor reported seeing grizzly tracks in the area.

The family drove to a nearby unoccupied farm and saw no signs of the animal until Rammell decided to check a barn, Brantley said.

Rammell startled the bear, which threw him up in the air, Brantley said. He suffered bites and scratch marks on his shoulder and arms that required stitches.

From wire reports

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Reporting
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and Military News

No lack of intensity for NHL's restart

Associated Press

TORONTO — Players watching the opening minutes of the first NHL game in several months marveled at the familiar feeling from half a continent away.

"Not necessarily laughing but just (noticing) how intense it was right away," Vancouver's Tyler Toffoli said.

If the first game is any indication, hockey hasn't missed a beat.

The most unusual playoffs in league history got underway Saturday with games in the Canadian cities of Toronto and Edmonton, Alberta. The dynamics are far different than usual: It's the middle of summer and all games are being played in empty arenas. But the big hits and fight from Game 1 provided ample evidence the Stanley Cup is still on the line.

"It was a boxing match back and forth," New York Rangers goaltender Henrik Lundqvist said after a 3-2 loss to the Carolina Hurricanes in Toronto in the NHL's first game since March 11.

Carolina's Jaccob Slavin carved his name into history 61 seconds in with the first NHL goal ever scored in August. Teammate Justin Williams fought Ryan Strome a couple of minutes later, and the Hurricanes took a big step by taking a 1-0 lead in their best-of-five qualifying round series.

The Oilers and Chicago Blackhawks picked right up with five goals in the first 13 minutes of their Game 1 in Edmonton. The New York Islanders didn't lose a stingy step in keeping the high-scoring Florida Panthers in check with a 2-1 win.

The wall-to-wall hockey on opening day also had the Montreal Canadiens against the Pittsburgh Penguins, and Winnipeg Jets against the Calgary Flames.

At Scotiabank Arena, the first dozen or so rows are covered in grey and white tarp, with the NHL shield on four of them and Toronto in all capital letters on another four.

Above them are electronic banners with NHL logos on them and a TV viewing platform at center ice, all of them limited to the benches side of the ice. These electronic banners will feature team logos, as well as videos of each team's fans chanting.

In each of the end zones are NHL Eastern Conference banners book-ending a banner that reads "Stanley Cup Qualifiers 2020."

The remainder of the arena is as is, with the 19 Maple Leafs player banners, from Frank Mahovlich in the west end to Doug Gilmour in the east, and Turk Broda smack dab in the middle.

Behind them are the Raptors banners, including the 2019 NBA championship, and beyond the row of Maple Leafs Stanley Cup banners.

Outside the arena, the streets are generally bare of people, with Maple Leaf Square fenced off and with security personnel at each entrance. The largest crowd was the line of about eight people awaiting entry into the provincial liquor store in the shopping plaza across the street from the arena.

Inside, there were reminders of the pandemic: the ice crew wearing masks, disinfection of benches at intermission and the

din of piped-in crowd noise filling the air.

On the top banner of the video scoreboard at center, are the words: "#WeSkate-ForBLACKLIVES." Minnesota's Mathew Dumba made a pregame speech in Edmonton on behalf of the Hockey Diversity Alliance he and several other Black players started recently.

"Racism is everywhere, and we need to fight against it," Dumba said. "We will fight against injustice and fight for what is right. I hope this inspires a new generation of hockey players and hockey fans because Black lives matter, Breonna Taylor's life matters. Hockey is a great game, but it could be a whole lot greater, and it starts with all of us."

Dumba kneeled during the U.S. anthem, with Black players Malcolm Subban and Darnell Nurse standing with a hand on each of his shoulders.

In Toronto, the NHL debuted a video honoring those involved in racial justice issues front-line healthcare workers, which was broadcast just before the anthems of the game between Montreal and Pittsburgh.

With teams lined up at the blue line and at their benches, the video narrator particularly addressed the Black Lives Matter movement.

"When an issue is bigger than the game, we must speak out starting with three words we need to get comfortable saying: Black Lives Matter," the narrator said. "We must be clear about what we skate for. We skate for black lives. And even in an empty arena, we never skate alone. Together, we must be part of the movement to end racism."

NHL roundup

Canadiens beat Penguins in OT of Game 1

Associated Press

TORONTO — Jeff Petry scored at 13:57 of overtime, Carey Price made 39 saves and the Montreal Canadiens beat the Pittsburgh Penguins 3-2 on Saturday night in Game 1 of their best-of-five qualifying round series.

Petry picked up a loose puck in the right faceoff circle and ripped a shot past goalie Matt Murray.

The game was played at empty Scotiabank Arena in the NHL's return following a 142-

day absence after COVID-19 ground the sport to a halt.

Blackhawks 6, Oilers 4: Rookie winger Dominik Kubalik had two goals and three assists to help Chicago beat host Edmonton in Game 1 of the best-of-five qualifying round series.

The game was played in front of tarps, massive video screens, and empty seats at Rogers Place, which is hosting the 12 Western Conference teams as the NHL completes the 2019-20 season.

Islanders 2, Panthers 1: Semyon Varlamov stopped 27 shots and New York opened the series in Toronto with a victory over Florida.

Anthony Beauvillier scored on a power play at 3:39 of the second period. The goal came a little over a minute after Florida's Mike Matheson was penalized for a hit to the head on defenseman Johnny Boychuk, who did not return.

Hurricanes 3, Rangers 2: Sebastian Aho had a goal and an assist in Carolina's open-

ing victory over New York in Toronto.

Jaccob Slavin scored 1:01 seconds in on Carolina's first shot on goal.

Flames 4, Jets 1: Johnny Gaudreau and Mikael Backlund scored power-play goals to lead Calgary past Winnipeg in the opener of their qualifying round series in Edmonton, Alberta.

Tobias Rieder had a short-handed goal and Andrew Mangiapane added an empty-netter for Calgary.

Manfred expects complete season

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred says he's confident his sport can get through the regular season and postseason without being stopped by the coronavirus, though not every club might play all 60 games and winning percentage could be used to determine playoff teams.

During an interview Saturday with The Associated Press, Manfred said Major League Baseball knows which player introduced COVID-19 into the clubhouse of the Miami Marlins. Miami and Philadelphia both postponed games for an entire week.

"I think that if everybody does what they are supposed to do, we can continue to play, have a credible season and get through the postseason," Manfred said.

Just 1½ weeks into a pandemic-delayed season shortened from 162 games per team to 60, the coronavirus has forced 19 postponements in 11 days, including St. Louis' three-game weekend series at Milwaukee.

The virus also prompted at least two more players to opt out Saturday: Brewers All-Star outfielder Lorenzo Cain and Miami second baseman Isan Diaz.

At least 18 Marlins players have been infected along with three St. Louis Cardinals. One St. Louis player has an inconclusive test.

Manfred had what he said was a constructive conversation Friday with union head Tony Clark, and expects stepped-up efforts by players and teams to adhere to special virus protocols put in place by MLB and the players' association.

"I don't think it's realistic to think that we're not going to have any more positive tests," Manfred said. "We're going to be fluid. We think it's manageable."

MLB roundup

Acuna breaks out with first HR

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Ronald Acuna Jr. shook off a slow start by driving in two runs with two hits, including his first homer, and the Atlanta Braves beat Michael Wacha and the New York Mets 7-1 on Saturday night for their fourth straight win.

The Mets have lost four straight, including the first two games of the four-game series between the NL East rivals.

Marcell Ozuna hit a two-run homer, his third, off Wacha (1-1) in the first inning.

Acuna led off the game with his 18th strikeout, the most in the majors, before emerging from his funk. He doubled in a run in the second for his first RBI as the Braves stretched the lead to 5-0.

Acuna lined his first homer into the left-field seats in the sixth off right-hander Franklyn Kilome, who gave up two runs in his major league debut.

Following the homer and fake high fives with teammates in the dugout, he emerged for a curtain call, raising both arms to the fan cardboard cutouts in the stands.

Acuna hit 41 homers and had 37 stolen bases in 2019. He struggled during the first eight games, but manager Brian Snitker said he saw signs a breakout was coming.

"I could feel it the last few days, here and there there were signs," Snitker said. "He's been working hard, I know that. He's been here early every day."

Orioles 5, Rays 4 (11): Pinch-hitter Pat Valaika singled in the winning run in the 11th inning, and host Baltimore handed Tampa Bay its fourth straight loss.

Newcomer Brian Holaday scored the deciding run after making a sensational diving catch in the top of the 11th to start an inning-ending double play. Holaday was added to the roster to replace Richard Bleier, who was traded after midnight on Saturday.

Holaday advanced from second to third on a sacrifice bunt

off Oliver Drake (0-2), and with two outs came home on Valaika's opposite-field liner to right off Chaz Roe.

Yankees 5, Red Sox 2: Gio Urshela hit his first big league grand slam, Aaron Judge homered for a career-high fourth straight game and host New York won its fifth straight.

Nick Nelson (1-0) pitched three hitless innings to win his major league debut. At 6-1, the Yankees are off to their best start since 2003.

Judge homered in the first inning off Zack Godley (0-1), a 455-foot drive to left-center. Urshela hit his second homer of the season an inning later for a 5-0 lead.

Twins 3, Indians 0: Miguel Sano homered twice and Kenta Maeda pitched six scoreless innings in his home debut for Minnesota.

Eddie Rosario added a solo homer for the Twins, who got another strong start from a veteran newcomer to its rotation. Maeda (2-0) retired 13 of the first 14 batters he faced and didn't allow a hit until Bradley Zimmer beat out a weak ground ball to second base in the fifth inning.

White Sox 11, Royals 5: Gio Gonzalez made his first start for hot-hitting Chicago more than 16 years after it drafted him, and the veteran responded by holding host Kansas City scoreless into the fourth inning.

Eloy Jimenez hit a three-run homer and finished with a career-high four hits, and rookie Luis Robert had four hits while finishing a triple shy of the cycle, leading a White Sox barrage of 21 hits in all.

Rockies 6, Padres 1: Kyle Freeland pitched six innings of two-hit ball and was backed by the superb defense of Trevor Story and Nolan Arenado as host Colorado beat San Diego.

Freeland (2-0) allowed a two-out single to Tommy Pham in the first and then retired 13 in a row before Francisco Mejia's double in the sixth. The left-hander struck out four and walked one in throwing an eco-

nomical 83 pitches.

Story contributed at the plate as well with a solo shot in the fourth.

Dodgers 11, Diamondbacks 2: Chris Taylor hit a three-run homer, A.J. Pollock and Edwin Rios added two-run shots and visiting Los Angeles rolled past Arizona.

The bottom of the Dodgers' order showed big power in the fourth inning when Rios — who was hitting seventh — smashed a two-run homer over the 413-foot sign in center field. Two batters later, Matt Beaty ripped another homer that barely stayed fair down the right-field line.

Cubs 4, Pirates 3: Tyler Chatwood matched a career high with 11 strikeouts in another terrific performance, and host Chicago used the long ball to beat Pittsburgh.

Javier Baez, Kyle Schwarber and Ian Happ hit home runs as the Cubs won for the fifth time in six games. Chicago has homered in each of its first eight games for the first time since 1958. Schwarber's two-run shot in the eighth made it 4-0.

The Pirates got three in the ninth on Colin Moran's two-run homer off Kyle Ryan and Gregory Polanco's run-scoring groundout.

Athletics 3, Mariners 2 (10): Pinch-hitter Robbie Grossman lined an RBI double to score Tony Kemp in the top of the 10th inning to lift visiting Oakland.

The A's snapped a three-game losing streak, escaping a major jam in the bottom of the ninth inning before Grossman came through in the 10th. Hitting for Ryan Murphy, Grossman lined a pitch from Dan Altavilla (1-1) into the right-center field gap to easily score Kemp.

Giants 7, Rangers 3: Donovan Solano hit a two-run single for an early lead and host San Francisco overcame an injury to starting pitcher Drew Smyly.

Smyly experienced discomfort in his left index finger while pitching to Rob Refsnyder leading off the fifth.

NBA roundup

Raptors win 11th straight over Lakers

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Kyle Lowry had 33 points and 14 rebounds and the defending NBA champion Toronto Raptors restarted their season by beating the slow-starting Los Angeles Lakers for the 11th straight time, 107-92 on Saturday night.

OG Anunoby scored 23 points for the Raptors, the second-place team in the Eastern Conference, who haven't lost to Los Angeles since the 2014-15 season.

Lowry had a strong second half to help turn back a surge by the Lakers, the Western Conference leaders who are 1-1 in the restart. The Lakers' magic number for clinching the top seed in the West remains at one.

Lowry's biggest shot was a three-pointer from the right wing for a 97-86 lead with 3:01 to play.

"He was vintage Kyle tonight," coach Nick Nurse said.

"He was scoring and flying around and taking charges and competing and getting us some critical buckets. He was great."

Lowry was all for a full-speed reentry.

"Nick says he's going to kind of ease us back in and use it as an exhibition," Lowry said. "We've got too many competitive guys that want to go out there and play and hoop and win games, especially against the guys like the Lakers and with the team that's No. 1 in the West. The competitive juices get going."

LeBron James had 20 points and 10 rebounds, and Anthony Davis had just 14 points after he scored 34 in a win against the Los Angeles Clippers in their first game back on Thursday night.

Clippers 126, Pelicans 103: Paul George made three straight three-pointers in the

opening minutes and scored 28 points for Los Angeles against New Orleans.

Los Angeles broke a franchise record by making 25 of 47 three-pointers, with George making 8 of 11.

Pacers 127, 76ers 121: T.J. Warren scored a career-high 53 points, Victor Oladipo added 15 after reversing course on opting out of the NBA restart and Indiana beat Philadelphia.

A sixth-year player acquired from Phoenix in an offseason trade, Warren was 20-for-29 from the field and 9-for-12 from three-point range in his first game with at least 50 points.

The Pacers took control of the fifth seed in the Eastern Conference by breaking a tie with the 76ers and winning the season series. Both teams have clinched playoff spots.

Joel Embiid had 41 points and 21 rebounds for the 76ers.

Thunder 110, Jazz 94: Shai

Gilgeous-Alexander scored 19 points, Chris Paul added 18 and Oklahoma City rolled past Utah in their first game of the restart.

The teams were to meet on March 11 in Oklahoma City, but everything changed when Utah center Rudy Gobert's COVID-19 test came up positive right before the tip. That night, the NBA announced it would shut down indefinitely.

Heat 125, Nuggets 104: Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo each scored 22 points to help Miami beat Denver in the first restart game for both teams.

Heat center Meyers Leonard stood during the national anthem, saying it was out of respect for the U.S. military, while all the coaches and players around him knelt. His brother, Bailey Leonard, served two tours in Afghanistan with the Marines.

Pac-12 players urge opt-out amid virus concerns

Associated Press

A group of Pac-12 football players say they will not practice or play until their concerns about playing during the COVID-19 pandemic and other racial and economic issues in college sports are addressed.

The players posted a statement Sunday on The Players' Tribune website and social media with the hashtag #WeAreUnited and sent out a press release. The release listed the names of 12 Pac-12 players from nine schools, including Oregon star safety Jevon Holland, and provided a statement from each one.

It says hundreds of players throughout the Pac-12 are concerned about the risks of COVID-19 and that the conference and NCAA lack transparency, uniformity and adequate enforcement infrastructure.

The Pac-12 on Friday re-

leased a revised football schedule for the upcoming season, which because of the pandemic is not guaranteed to be played. The new schedule pushes the start of the season back three weeks to Sept. 26 and includes only 10 conference games. Officials across college football anticipate disruptions this season related to COVID-19. The Atlantic Coast Conference and Southeastern Conference also announced last week plans to play truncated football seasons with delayed starts.

"We believe a football season under these conditions would be reckless and put us at needless risk," the players said in their news release. "We will not play until there is real change that is acceptable to us."

The Pac-12 also announced Friday that 20 hours per week of mandatory team activities for football, including weight training, meetings and unpadding

walk-throughs, would be permitted to begin Monday. Preseason practice can begin Aug. 17.

The states of Arizona and California, home to half the Pac-12 schools, have been hit by some of the most severe surges in COVID-19 cases over the last month. California-Berkeley has announced the fall semester will begin with all classes being taught online. USC said most of its classes will be online for the coming semester.

"Since the system is willing to risk our health and safety in the midst of the global pandemic, we must look out for each other," Oregon State defensive back Jaydon Grant said in a statement. "With so much uncertainty around COVID, we cannot wait until it strikes the world of college football. We must act now to ensure our safety playing the game we all love, and that is why we are united."

The players' list of demands addresses health and safety protections related to COVID-19; protection for all college sports programs from being eliminated by budget cuts; racial injustice in college sports; and economic rights and compensation for college athletes.

Among the specifics are:

- Player-approved health and safety standards enforced by a third party selected by players to address COVID-19 and serious injury, abuse and death.

- 50% of a sport's revenue distributed evenly to athletes.

- Medical insurance for six years after college.

- Reduced pay of Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott, coaches, administrators.

- 2% of revenue to support financial aid for low-income Black students and community initiatives.