

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Ex-Green Beret charged with espionage

Associated Press

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — A former Army Green Beret living in northern Virginia was arrested on Friday, charged with divulging military secrets about his unit's activities in former Soviet republics during more than a decade of contacts with Russian intelligence.

Peter Rafael Dzibinski Debbins, 45, told Russian intelligence he considered himself a "son of Russia," according to an indictment made public after his arrest.

"Debbins thought that the United States was too dominant in the world and needed to be cut down to size," prosecutors alleged.

The indictment also states that Debbins was motivated in part because of bitterness over

his Army career and a desire to establish business contacts in Russia.

The espionage took place from 1996 to 2011, prosecutors say.

The case against Debbins is the second Justice Department prosecution announced this week accusing a government or military official of transmitting U.S. secrets to a foreign country. The other case, in Hawaii, charged a former CIA officer with spying for China.

The two prosecutions "demonstrate that we must remain vigilant against espionage from our two most malicious adversaries — Russia and China," Assistant Attorney General John Demers, the Justice Department's top national security official, said in a statement.

Debbins' mother was born in the Soviet Union, and Debbins met his wife in the Russian city of Chelyabinsk, where they were married in 1997, according to the indictment.

Debbins, of Gainesville, periodically met Russian intelligence beginning in 1996, when he was an ROTC student at the University of Minnesota, through 2011. As far back as 1997, he was even assigned a code name by Russian intelligence agents — Ikar Lesnikov — after signing a statement saying that he wanted to serve Russia, according to prosecutors.

Debbins received nominal payments for his information, even though he initially refused the money. In one meeting with Russian intelligence, he accepted a bottle of Cognac and a Russian military uniform

as payment, according to the indictment.

"When service members collude to provide classified information to our foreign adversaries, they betray the oaths they swore to their country and their fellow service members," said G. Zachary Terwilliger, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, whose office is prosecuting the case. "As this indictment reflects, we will be steadfast and dogged in holding such individuals accountable."

Debbins will have an initial court appearance on Monday. He is charged under the Espionage Act with providing national defense information to those not entitled to receive it. He could face up to life in prison.

Russian dissident now stable in Germany

Associated Press

BERLIN — Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, who is in a coma after a suspected poisoning, arrived in Berlin on a special flight Saturday for treatment by specialists at the German capital's main hospital.

"Navalny is in Berlin," Jaka Bizilj, of the German organization Cinema For Peace, which arranged the flight, told The Associated Press. "He survived the flight, and he's stable."

He said all other information on the 44-year-old's health would have to come from his family and the German doctors now looking after him.

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, was admitted to an intensive care unit in the Siberian city of Omsk on Thursday. His supporters believe that tea he drank was laced with poison — and that the Kremlin

is behind both his illness and the delay in transferring him to a top German hospital.

When German specialists arrived aboard a plane equipped with advanced medical equipment Friday morning at his family's behest, Navalny's physicians in Omsk initially said he was too unstable to move.

Navalny's supporters denounced that as a ploy by authorities to stall until any poison in his system would no longer be traceable. The Omsk medical team relented only after a charity that had organized the medevac plane revealed that the German doctors examined the politician and said he was fit to be transported.

Deputy chief doctor of the Omsk hospital Anatoly Kalinichenko then told reporters that Navalny's condition had stabilized and that physicians "didn't mind" transferring the politician, given that his relatives were willing "to take on the risks."

The Kremlin denied that resistance to the transfer was political, with spokesman

Dmitry Peskov saying that it was purely a medical decision. However, the reversal came as international pressure on Russia's leadership mounted.

It would not be the first time a prominent, outspoken Russian was targeted in such a way.

On Thursday, leaders of France and Germany said the two countries were ready to offer Navalny and his family any and all assistance and insisted on an investigation into what happened. Navalny's team made arrangements to transfer him to Charite, a clinic in Berlin that has a history of treating famous foreign leaders and dissidents.

Dr. Yaroslav Ashikhmin, Navalny's physician in Moscow, told The Associated Press that being on a plane with specialized equipment, including a ventilator and a machine that can do the work of the heart and lungs, "can be even safer than staying in a hospital in Omsk."

SEAL appears in court on assault charge

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A San Diego-based Navy SEAL charged with a violent sexual assault against a fellow sailor in Iraq last year appeared in a Naval Base San Diego courtroom Friday for a motion hearing.

San Diego-based Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Adel Enayat is charged with sexual assault, battery and aggravated assault, according to a Navy charge sheet obtained by the Union-Tribune.

Although the charges include an accusation of intercourse without consent, under the military justice system the assault has to rise to the level of life threatening for the victim in order to become a charge of rape, said Brian O'Rourke, a Navy spokesman.

Enayat's civilian attorney, San Diego-based Jeremiah Sullivan, declined to comment on the case after court Friday but told the judge his client is the victim of sexual assault.

A spokesman for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service said in an email that the investigation into Enayat's allegation is closed.

"We can confirm NCIS opened a sexual

assault investigation based on an allegation brought by SO1 Eneyat's attorney," Jeff-Houston, an NCIS spokesman wrote. "NCIS closed the investigation after the attorney declined to let NCIS talk with SO1 Eneyat."

Enayat's unit, SEAL Team 7, Foxtrot Platoon, made national headlines last year when it was kicked out of the base in Iraq after a 4th of July party.

Shortly after the platoon returned to San Diego, SEAL Team 7's command triad — its commanding officer, executive officer and command master chief — were fired for what the Navy said were "leadership failures."

The party came two days after another SEAL Team 7 member — Special Warfare Operator Chief Edward Gallagher — was acquitted on charges that he murdered an ISIS fighter and shot civilians during a separate Iraq deployment in 2017. He was convicted of posing for pictures with the corpse of the dead fighter.

Enayat's charge sheet includes few details about the allegations against him.

According to the charges, on July 4, 2019, at Al Assad Air Base in Iraq, Enayat as-

saulted a petty officer 2nd class by strangling her, biting her face and penetrating her without consent.

The Associated Press published an account of the events that night from interviews with a witness, former sailor Colleen Grace.

Grace told the AP the victim called her to her room at 1:50 a.m. after the party. She said her friend was in bed with a bruised face.

Grace said the sailor told her that what begun as a consensual sexual encounter turned violent, when the SEAL began choking her and biting her face.

In addition to saying the SEAL was the rape victim, Sullivan also bought up his concerns in court about institutional racism with the military judge during Friday's hearing. He said his client might not receive a fair trial.

Enayat, who has fair skin and reddish-blond hair, is "non-white," Sullivan said. He declined to specify Enayat's race or ethnicity when asked by the Union-Tribune after court, citing his client's privacy.

Trial is scheduled to begin Nov. 16.

Community gathers to honor those killed in Marine vehicle sinking

The Orange County Register

Evelyn Baltierra stood on Camp Pendleton's Del Mar Beach holding a burning candle.

She was next to her family and surrounded by the Marines who served with her son's unit, Battalion Landing Team 1/4. Next to her stood Aleta Bath, who like the Baltierras, lost a son when the Marines' amphibious assault vehicle sank 400 feet to the ocean floor during training off San Clemente Island. Their sons had been roommates.

As twilight fell, a lone bagpiper came onto the stage and began playing "Going Home" as quiet fell over the crowd of more than 500.

"This is a huge testament of what family looks like," Chaplain Jonathan Cooper said that

night. "I know there are a lot of differences, but there is a common denominator for each person here. We are hurting. We are here to encourage, support and love the families who are missing their boys. We thank you for these men who willingly signed up to defend their country."

Pfc. Bryan Baltierra, of Corona, was the youngest of the eight Marines and a Navy corpsman who died in the July 30 training accident — it was the first anniversary of his enlistment. The former track star was 17 when he joined the Marines.

Pfc. Evan Bath, 19, of Oak Creek, Wisc., loved military history, remembered his mother.

Other families, too, spoke of their loved ones, including Peter Ostrovsky, of Bend, Ore., who talked about his son, Pfc. Jack-Ryan Ostrovsky, 20, and

Elena Sweetwood, of San Diego, who shared stories about her grandson, Lance Cpl. Chase Sweetwood, 19, whom she said she raised as though he was her son.

The hourlong ceremony organized by six Marine wives at Camp Pendleton included stories about the lives that were lost, words of support from Cooper and ended in a rousing "Marine Corps Hymn" sung by the Marines who gathered on the beach.

"The turnout for the vigil was incredible and displayed how true of a family the Marine Corps really is," Evelyn Baltierra said. "The support from our family and friends helps us remember the short, yet beautiful life my son, Bryan, lived."

Navy employee pleads guilty in child porn case

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — A civilian employee of Naval Station Newport has pleaded guilty to storing hundreds of child pornography images on a Navy-owned computer drive, federal prosecutors say.

Donald Sly, Jr., 58, of Portsmouth, a civilian public works employee, stored a total of 487 images of child pornography in his directory on a computer drive used by Navy personnel throughout the East Coast, according to the U.S. attorney's office in Rhode Island.

Upon discovery of the images by authorities, Sly's access to the drive was suspended. He later told Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents that he knowingly possessed the images of child pornography discovered on the computer drive, prosecutors said.

He faces a maximum of 20 years in prison at sentencing scheduled for Nov. 13.

From The Associated Press

Barrage of Calif. wildfires still escalating

The Washington Post

The heat wave and lightning-sparked barrage of California wildfires continues to escalate, with one of the blazes now ranking as the second-largest fire in state history, while another also occupies a spot in the top 5.

The fires have claimed hundreds of homes and threatened tens of thousands more, forcing more than 100,000 to flee amid a coronavirus pandemic that makes evacuation decisions fraught with challenges.

Although firefighters have seen a letup in the high winds and heat that plagued central and northern California for much of the week, another round of thunderstorms that will deliver little rain but lightning discharges that could start even more blazes is anticipated as early as Sunday and lasting through Tuesday.

The fires have been blamed for at least six fatalities.

In seven days, the California blazes have charred nearly a million acres, more than tripling the area burned during a typical fire season (a little over 300,000 acres). The area of land burned is larger than Rhode Island.

The largest blaze in the state, known as the LNU Lightning Complex, had spread to a staggering 314,207 acres across Napa, Lake, Solano, and Sonoma Counties by Saturday morning. It was only 15% contained, and firefighters report that “extreme fire behavior” is making battling the blaze difficult.

The size of the blaze puts it behind only the Mendocino Complex fire of 2018, which burned about 459,000 acres, on the state’s list of largest fires on record since 1932. The fire complex, comprised of several blazes

burning in close proximity, has destroyed 480 structures and threatens 30,500 more, according to Cal Fire, the state firefighting agency.

Blazes burned through Big Basin Redwoods State Park, the state’s oldest and home to treasured redwood trees between 800 and 1,500 years old. California State Parks wrote that the park, which officials closed, suffered “extensive damage.”

A second large fire, known as the SCU Lightning Complex Fire, now ranks as the fourth-largest blaze in state history, at 274,968 acres. This beats the Rush fire of 2012, which burned about 272,000 acres.

More than 500,000 acres have been charred within a 100-mile radius of San Francisco, which is twice the land burned during the entire 2019 California fire season, according to UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain.

Loughlin, Giannulli sentenced in college bribery plot

Associated Press

BOSTON — “Full House” actor Lori Loughlin must serve two months in prison and her fashion designer husband, Mosimó Giannulli, must serve five months for paying half a million dollars in bribes to get their two daughters into the University of Southern California as rowing recruits, a federal judge ruled Friday.

U.S. District Judge Nathaniel Gorton sentenced the couple in separate hearings held via videoconference because of the coronavirus pandemic three months after they admitted to charges in the case that laid bare the lengths to which wealthy parents will go to get their kids into elite universities. Both Loughlin and Giannulli

were ordered to surrender Nov. 19.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin O’Connell said Loughlin wasn’t content with the advantages her children already had thanks to their wealth and “was focused on getting what she wanted, no matter how and no matter the cost.” He said prison time was necessary to send a message that “everyone, no matter your status, is accountable in our justice system.”

Loughlin initially appeared calm, showing little emotion as her attorney BJ Trach said she is “profoundly sorry” for her actions. But when it was Loughlin’s turn to address the judge, she forced back tears as she apologized.

“I made an awful decision. I went along

with a plan to give my daughters an unfair advantage in the college admissions process and in doing so I ignored my intuition and allowed myself to be swayed from my moral compass,” she said. “I have great faith in God and I believe in redemption, and I will do everything in my power to redeem myself and use this experience as a catalyst to do good.”

Trach said Loughlin has begun volunteering at a elementary school in LA with children with special needs.

Describing the “devastating” impact the charges have had on the 56-year-old actor’s family life and career, Trach said: “Lori lost the acting career she spent 40 years building.”

IG: Use of surveillance planes at protests was legal

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The use of National Guard reconnaissance planes in four U.S. cities to monitor the widespread protests earlier this year didn’t violate rules against the military collecting intelligence on Americans, a Pentagon report has concluded.

The investigation by the Air Force inspector general found that the planes were used to gather information about crowd size, crowd flows and fires but they did not monitor individuals. The probe was ordered by Defense Secretary Mark Esper

in response to questions within the department and Congress about whether the military illegally conducted surveillance of American citizens during the unrest after the death of George Floyd.

The flights in late May and early June came as President Donald Trump was calling for tougher measures to quell the widespread unrest. Floyd was a black man who died after a white Minneapolis policeman pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes.

National Guard troops were used to assist local law enforcement in a number of

cities around the country.

The surveillance aircraft were used in four locations. And while the report found no intelligence gathering violations, it concluded that the Defense Department doesn’t have adequate rules for the use of the RC-26 plane and that the aircraft is incorrectly considered to be a non-intelligence platform.

The plane is flown by the National Guard, and most often is used for counterdrug operations and in disasters to assess damage, help locate civilians and for other similar missions.

Texas exceeds 11K deaths, hospitalizations fall

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas surpassed 11,000 coronavirus deaths Friday and reported more than 4,600 confirmed new cases, while the number of patients hospitalized because of the virus continues to fall.

Texas earlier this week became just the fourth state to surpass 10,000 deaths, but the toll has rapidly mounted as the state has added hundreds of new deaths daily in August.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott also announced federal approval of some out-of-work Texans to receive an additional \$300 a week through President Donald Trump's offer of stripped-down unemployment benefits. People out of work had been receiving an extra federally funded \$600 a week, but the boost expired at the end of July.

Abbott previously was non-committal about whether Texas would accept the money while expressing optimism that Trump and Congress would reach a deal on a broader new coronavirus relief plan. An Associated Press survey shows at least 25 states have said they intend to pursue the money while two states, Mississippi and South Dakota, have said they won't.

California

UKIAH — Schools in one California county were forced to close this week when state officials said their coronavirus cases had been higher than previously reported, and several hundred students were sent home from class, officials said Friday.

Michelle Hutchins, superintendent of schools in Mendocino County, said she learned the county had been placed on a state monitoring list for coronavirus infections with a date retroactive to July 25, and that as a result schools should have not been allowed to open for in-person instruction after that point in time.

Hutchins said Wednesday she sent home 300 to 400 students who had already started the year off in largely rural schools. It's possible elemen-

tary school students will be allowed to return under special waivers offered by the state but middle and high schoolers will remain on distance learning until virus conditions meet the state-mandated thresholds for the Northern California county to fall off the state's monitoring list, she said.

Many of the state's largest counties remain on the monitoring list due to higher rates of infection and are only offering distance learning.

Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS — A second federal judge in Louisiana has refused to block a bar closure order issued by Gov. John Bel Edwards to fight the spread of COVID-19.

U.S. District Judge Robert Summerhays in Lafayette, about 140 miles west of New Orleans, ruled in favor of the Democratic governor Friday evening in a lawsuit filed by 11 bar owners in southwest Louisiana.

A federal judge in New Orleans had ruled against 10 bar owners in southeast Louisiana on Monday.

Both judges held that the closure was legal under the broad public health emergency powers of the governor. The same attorney handled both cases and has already appealed the New Orleans ruling.

North Carolina

RALEIGH — N.C. State University officials reported four new coronavirus clusters on Friday involving 51 cases in three sorority houses and one fraternity house, while another cluster was identified at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In an email sent to students, N.C. State said one of the clusters was discovered at the Sigma Nu fraternity house, where 26 positive cases were reported. The school also said reports indicate a party was hosted at the house on Aug. 13.

The school said Delta Gamma sorority house had 15 positive cases, with six more positive cases at the Sigma Kappa so-

rority house. All three houses are located in the school's Greek Village.

In addition, seven positive cases were reported at the off-campus Zeta Tau Alpha sorority house, according to the school.

Nevada

LAS VEGAS — After decreases earlier in the week, state health officials said Friday the number of new coronavirus cases in Nevada totaled 849, including at least 13 new deaths.

A daily report by the state Department of Health and Human Services showed a decrease in hospitalizations and intensive care cases of people confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19.

The number of new cases had fallen to 389 on Tuesday and 556 on Wednesday.

The number of deaths statewide since the first fatality was reported in the state in March approached 1,200 on Friday.

The Las Vegas-based Southern Nevada Health District reported 1,015 deaths to date, or almost 86% of the state's total.

Oregon

SALEM — Coronavirus cases in Oregon have declined during the past month, but in order for schools to reopen, the average amount of new cases a day needs to decrease from 250 to 60, state health experts said Friday.

In order to reach that goal, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said residents will have to continue to follow and enforce current statewide COVID-19 safety mandates or else bars and restaurants may have to close and travel restrictions will be implemented.

"The good news is we're slowing the spread of COVID. The bad news is our infection rate is still too high for most in-person schools," Brown said Friday. "With the course we're on, meeting our goals is just going to take too long. We must do better, faster. We must work together. And we must do it now."

The Oregon Health Authority

reported 259 new cases Friday as the state's total case count rose to 24,421. The death toll is 414.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — High school athletes across Pennsylvania will be taking the field this fall, after all.

Ending weeks of uncertainty, the governing body for Pennsylvania interscholastic sports voted 25-5 on Friday to move forward with the fall season, rejecting the governor's recommendation that all youth sports be postponed until 2021.

The board of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association had delayed the start of fall sports after Gov. Tom Wolf on Aug. 6 urged that scholastic and recreational youth sports be put off until January, citing the pandemic.

The PIAA had said it was blindsided and "tremendously disappointed" by Wolf's recommendation — which was not binding — and insisted that fall sports could be held safely.

Washington

BREMERTON — More than 30 COVID-19 cases have been reported in an outbreak at a Bremerton hospital, state health officials said.

The Washington State Department of Health said Friday the outbreak has affected multiple units at St. Michael Medical Center, which is part of the CHI Franciscan system.

The outbreak involves hospital staff and employees, officials said.

The Kitsap Public Health District and state health officials say they are working with the hospital to contain the outbreak after the first case was reported late last week.

Officials said patients discharged from the impacted units have been notified.

In an update on its website, CHI Franciscan said because of the outbreak and an increase in virus activity in the Kitsap community, the hospital will restrict new admissions and limit visitors.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspect in Cessna theft injured in plane crash

WA LA PUSH — A Richland man under investigation for potentially stealing an airplane from Jefferson County International Airport was taken to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle after a Navy helicopter pilot spotted airplane wreckage in Olympic National Park, authorities said.

Chief Criminal Deputy Brian King of the Clallam County Sheriff's Office said Richard R. Jordal, 59, was in critical condition, the Peninsula Daily News reported.

Sgt. Brett Anglin of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office said the office is investigating the theft of a Cessna 150 from the airport that was tracked until its GPS signal was lost in the vicinity of the crash.

Jordal is believed to be connected to the theft, Anglin said.

Doctor loses license for amputating toe on porch

MO JEFFERSON CITY — A western Missouri doctor has lost his state medical license after amputating a patient's gangrenous toe on the porch of his rural office that doubled as a machine shed.

The Missouri State Board of Registration for the Healing Arts revoked John Ure's physician and surgeon license in June, the Springfield News-Leader reported.

Ure, 73, called the board's action "a travesty of justice," and explained that the amputation he performed was done to help a friend who was fearful of hospitals and had refused to go to one to have the gangrenous toe treated, putting his life in danger.

"This toe amputation ... everything was absolutely perfectly sterile, out in the bright sunshine and fresh air," he said.

Five fires in capital city 'intentionally' set

PA HARRISBURG — Investigators were searching for clues after five fires in Pennsylvania's capital city were "intentionally set."

The fires were centered in the city's South Allison Hill section.

Firefighters first responded to a small trash fire. Fires also broke out in an abandoned home, an abandoned building and an abandoned garage. Firefighters then had to extinguish flames from the upper floors of a home on Market Street.

"These fires were all intentionally set. Make no mistake. All these fires were intentionally set," said Fire Chief Brian Enterline.

Newspaper office mural to be hung in museum

LA NEW ORLEANS — A huge plaster mural that once adorned the three-story-tall lobby of a New Orleans newspaper building will return to public view at a museum.

The New Orleans Museum of Art announced that the relief mural by Mexican sculptor Enrique Alferez will be featured in its 2020 auditorium renovation. The renovation, and the recently installed mural, will be unveiled next year, a museum spokeswoman said in an email.

The mural was created for the lobby of The Times-Picayune building in 1967. It features characters and symbols from various forms of human language across diverse cultures.

Investors who bought the

building in 2016 had the mural removed and stored before the building was demolished, according to The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate. They later donated the mural to the museum.

DNA links 1 of 4 bears killed to fatal attack

AK JUNEAU — DNA from one of three black bears killed by state wildlife department employees earlier this month matched samples collected as part of an investigation into a fatal bear attack in south-central Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game said.

Earlier this month, the department said employees had killed a female brown bear and three female black bears near where Daniel Schilling of Hope died late last month. DNA samples from the scene matched one of the black bears, the department said.

DNA from the brown bear killed by department employees, however, did not match samples taken from near the attack site.

The department said it will continue collecting samples from brown bears — the type believed to have attacked Schilling — killed by hunters or killed under defense of life or property regulations.

Officials: Alligator hunter bitten on arm

FL LAKE MARY — An alligator hunter was attacked and bitten on the arm on Lake Jesup in central Florida, sheriff's officials said.

The man was flown to Orlando Regional Medical Center for treatment.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission spokesman Chad Weber told

news outlets the man's condition was not considered life-threatening. The man's name wasn't released.

The wildlife agency is investigating the incident.

A statewide alligator hunting season began Aug. 15 and runs until Nov. 1.

Police seek info on pilot who flew under bridge

MI ST. IGNACE — Authorities are seeking information about a plane that flew under the Mackinac Bridge in late June. The bridge connects Michigan's two peninsulas over the Straits of Mackinac.

"This was extremely reckless behavior on the part of the pilot, and it imperiled the safety of everyone on the bridge that day," said Det. Sgt. Gary Demers of the Michigan State Police. Reckless operation of an aircraft is a misdemeanor under state law.

A U.S. Coast Guard crew recorded the June 28 incident on video.

Dish soap foam kills hundreds of fish in river

OH HARTVILLE — Dishwashing detergent created foam that killed hundreds of fish in a northeastern Ohio waterway, according to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The fish were found in the Tuscarawas River in northern Stark and southern Summit counties.

An investigation determined that someone dumped the detergent on the ground near a storm drain in Hartville, an EPA spokesperson said. Rain then pushed it into the river. The EPA used six pumps to aerate the water.

From wire reports

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Indy 500 carrying on amid pandemic

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis 500 has been stripped almost to the bone for the 104th running of “The Greatest Spectacle in Racing.”

The iconic test of man and machine is too important to new owner Roger Penske to cancel in the year of the coronavirus pandemic. Its importance to the survival of IndyCar teams meant the race had to be staged even if the gates at Indianapolis Motor Speedway will be closed to fans for the first time in its long, storied history.

“Virtually every sponsorship you have is tied to this event. It’s the 800-pound gorilla,” said Bobby Rahal, owner of three cars entered in Sunday’s race that was rescheduled from its traditional Memorial Day weekend slot.

“I think the idea of not having the Indy 500 would have been disastrous to probably every team,” he said. “It would have been a death knell to some teams, so, yes, this race had to happen.”

Penske, the billionaire businessman who closed his purchase of the national landmark speedway and the series itself in January, will host the marquee race practically out of pocket. The Indy 500 was canceled only during World War I and World War II and Penske’s staff has gone to extreme lengths to make the race still feel like a world-class event even without fans.

It’s cachet improved when Marco Andretti won the pole, a feat not done by his famous family since Mario Andretti did it in 1987. Marco was just two months old when his grandfather won his last Indy pole and Marco’s father, uncle and cousin all failed to duplicate the effort.

Mario’s victory in 1969 is the only Indy 500 win among five Andretti drivers covering 74 starts. It was Marco, as a rookie in 2006, who last came closest to ending the “Andretti Curse” when he was beaten at the finish line.

This is his time, a full 15

years later, and Andretti is up for the challenge. The family will be honored before the race as Mario Andretti drives son, Michael, around the speedway in the two-seater before Marco takes the green flag.

“I feel good and I’m not stressed out. My grandfather and I even talked about it, there’s something about our family that lives for this type of good pressure,” Andretti said. “I feel at home. I feel in my element. Feeling pressure means you are playing for something.”

His top competition seems to be his very own Andretti Autosport teammates as the Honda-powered cars trounced Chevrolet in qualifying. The Andretti camp starts four drivers in the first three rows, while Honda took all but one of the nine slots.

The front of the pack includes a pair of rookies: Alex Palou in a Honda for Dale Coyne Racing, and 19-year-old Rinus VeeKay, the lone Chevrolet driver to crack the fast nine who is men-

tored by fellow Dutchman and two-time Indy 500 winner Arie Luyendyk.

The Chevrolet contingent is mostly stuck in the back of the 33-car field — which filled up late. DragonSpeed Racing with driver Ben Hanley announced its entry just last week and missed almost two full days of practice getting a car prepared.

The back of the field includes Penske’s entire four-car fleet, which includes the last two winners in Simon Pagenaud and Will Power, defending IndyCar champion Josef Newgarden, and three-time Indy 500 winner Helio Castroneves. For Castroneves, it just might be the winding down of his 20-year relationship with Penske. The sports car arm of Team Penske is taking a pause in 2021 and it leaves Castroneves without a full-time job. He very much wants to return to IndyCar next season.

“The situations may be with another team. Who knows?” Castroneves said.

Rookies bring cosmopolitan flair to Brickyard

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Indianapolis 500 rookie Alex Palou is a bona fide polyglot, one of those exceptionally rare people who can speak three or more languages so fluently they can alternate between each in a single sentence.

In his case, the 23-year-old Spanish driver is fluid in his native Spanish along with English and Italian.

Palou will need to add a few more to his repertoire, though, if he wants to speak to the rest of the five-man rookie class taking the green flag Sunday in their native languages. Rinus VeeKay is from the Netherlands, Dalton Kellett was born and raised in Canada, Pato O’Ward is from Mexico and Oliver Askew is an American — though his mother is Swedish.

Together, they have made the always-global Indianapolis 500 even more cosmopolitan than usual.

“It’s amazing how much respect you have when you come to the speedway. It’s something you don’t really feel at other spots,” said Palou, who qualified seventh for team owner Dale Coyne. “All the crews, all the teams are talking about this race from the first day, from January, and this is the race we’re all hoping to win.”

All five rookies have more than just hope going for them.

VeeKay was the fastest in qualifying and will start fourth on Sunday. The 20-year-old from the North Holland city of Hoofddorp got off to an inauspicious start on ovals, crashing out twice during the doubleheader at Texas and again at Iowa. But VeeKay also finished

fifth on the road course at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and he’s driving for Indiana native Ed Carpenter, whose own ability to get around the 2½-mile speedway has been proven over the years.

Palou will start right behind him. He’s from the small village of Sant Antoni de Vilamajor — which means he also represents the autonomous region of Catalonia. He earned his stripes driving across Europe, becoming the first Spaniard to win a GP3 race in 2015, before a move to IndyCar that already has included a podium finish at Road America.

O’Ward failed to qualify for the Indy 500 for the Carlin team last season, but his move to Arrow McLaren SP has reaped immediate rewards. The 21-year-old from Monterey has four top-10 finishes,

including a second-place run at Iowa, and is fourth in the series standings. He will roll off 15th on Sunday after posting the fastest speed of final practice.

Askew is no stranger to moving forward at the Brickyard, winning the Indy Lights race on Carb Day a year ago. The Florida native, who also holds Swedish nationality, is coming off a doubleheader at Iowa in which he finished third and sixth.

Kellett is the final rookie in the field. The 26-year-old from the Ontario town of Stouffville grew up racing snowmobiles, though he has taken just as quickly to the high speeds of Indianapolis. Perhaps it helps to have an engineering degree from Queen’s University at Kingston, but Kellett has the No. 41 for A.J. Foyt Racing rolling off 24th.

NBA roundup

Mavs' Doncic injured in loss to Clippers

Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Kawhi Leonard had 36 points, nine rebounds and eight assists, leading the Los Angeles Clippers to a 130-122 victory over the Dallas Mavericks on Friday night for a 2-1 lead in the Western Conference first-round series.

Luka Doncic had a triple-double but also limped off the court after spraining his left ankle in the third quarter. He returned to play a little of the fourth before checking out for good and going back to the locker room area.

The Clippers had been in control for a while by then, using a

team-record, 45-point second quarter to build a big lead. And when Dallas cut it to eight midway through the fourth quarter, Leonard responded with a three-pointer and left-handed dunk on consecutive Clippers possessions to restore a comfortable lead.

Landry Shamet had 18 points for the Clippers, who bounced back from their loss in Game 2 even though Paul George shot poorly again.

Jazz 124, Nuggets 87: Mike Conley made a career playoff-high seven three-pointers and scored 27 points in his return from quarantine, helping Utah rout Denver for a 2-1 series lead.

The 37-point loss tied the third-worst in Denver's playoff history. The record is 44 against the Los Angeles Lakers on May 22, 1985.

Conley left the NBA bubble for the birth of his son and returned Monday night. He went through a four-day quarantine that ended Friday. He was 7-for-8 from three-point range and had four assists.

Rudy Gobert had a career playoff-high 24 points courtesy of numerous easy dunks and layups. He also had 14 rebounds.

Raptors 117, Nets 92: Pascal Siakam scored 26 points and Toronto beat Brooklyn to take the first 3-0 lead in franchise history. The defending champs

can eliminate the patchwork Nets Sunday.

Fred VanVleet scored 22 points, shooting 6-for-10 from three-point range. Serge Ibaka added 20 points and 13 rebounds, and Kyle Lowry had 11 points and 10 rebounds.

Celtics 102, 76ers 94: Kemba Walker scored 24 points and the Boston Celtics closed with a 10-0 run to beat Philadelphia for a 3-0 lead in the first-round series.

Jaylen Brown had 21 points and Jason Tatum added 15 for the Celtics.

Joel Embiid had 30 points and 13 rebounds to lead the 76ers. They shot 29.5% from the field.

NHL roundup

Canucks blitz Binnington, eliminate defending champ Blues

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The Vancouver Canucks brought a bright, young team to the Western Conference bubble, lacking in postseason experience but boasting several budding stars.

They're playing like they're planning to stay a while.

The Canucks sent St. Louis goalie Jordan Binnington to the bench early with three scores in a span of 6:03 in the second period, eliminating the defending champion Blues with a 6-2 victory in Game 6 of their first-round series on Friday night.

"It always feels good when you play like that and it pays off," said Jay Beagle, who scored just 3:45 into the game to get the Canucks going.

Blues coach Craig Berube put Binnington, the rookie star of last season's out-of-nowhere run to the franchise's first Stanley Cup, back in the net after winning two of the last three with Jake Allen.

"He had some practice there and worked on his game," Berube said, "and it's a gut

feeling."

Binnington gave up four goals on 18 shots and was pulled for Allen at the 8:06 mark of the second period after Brock Boeser's power-play goal gave the Canucks a commanding 4-0 lead.

"After the whole pandemic, everyone came back to camp in shape and worked extremely hard," Boeser said. "We're all super committed, and I think you can see that on the ice."

Antoine Roussel and Troy Stecher also scored on Binnington, who went 0-5 in the Edmonton bubble, including three losses in this series. After Berube emptied the net with about eight minutes left, Tyler Motte tacked on two more goals after a two-goal effort in Game 5.

Brandon Sutter had three assists, Elias Pettersson had two assists and Jacob Markstrom made 34 saves for the Canucks, who are the only one of the seven Canadian clubs among the final eight teams still alive in the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Vancouver advanced to play the Vegas Golden Knights in the second round.

Pettersson, an integral part of the talented young core, matched Colorado's Nathan MacKinnon with a league-high 13 points in this most unusual postseason.

"His overall game has been unreal. What makes him special is just his compete," Beagle said.

Jaden Schwartz had two goals in the third period for the Blues, who went 2-6-1 in the Western Conference bubble while missing several key players to injuries. They were 0-2-1 in seeding games.

The Canucks took an aggressive tack from the opening faceoff. The Blues were about to escape their zone after a heavy forecheck by Vancouver, but left wing Jacob de la Rose accidentally stepped on the puck as he tried to start a rush the other way.

Beagle snagged it, pivoted toward the slot and snapped a shot that clipped Binnington's

left shoulder on the way into the upper corner of the net. The Canucks scored first in all but one game in the series.

Flyers 3, Canadiens 2: Flyers goalie Carter Hart grew up rooting for Carey Price and was thrilled to meet his goalie idol this season. Beating the Canadiens and getting congratulated by Price in the handshake line felt so much better for Hart.

"He said, 'Helluva series' and he'll be watching," Hart said. "Pretty special and definitely something I won't forget."

Ivan Provorov, Kevin Hayes and Michael Raffl scored to lead the Philadelphia Flyers into the second round for the first time in eight years with a 3-2 win over the Montreal Canadiens in Game 6 on Friday night in Toronto.

The Flyers won the series 4-2 and are on to the second round in the Eastern Conference for the first time since 2012. The Flyers have not played in the Stanley Cup Final since 2010 or won the championship since 1975.

MLB roundup

Piscotty drives in 3 runs as A's top Angels

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Oakland Athletics love to swing their way to early leads, and then pile up more runs whenever they can.

Marcus Semien homered to give Mike Fiers a quick cushion, Stephen Piscotty drove in all three of his runs with two outs, and the AL-best A's beat the Los Angeles Angels 5-3 on Friday night to run their home winning streak to nine games.

The A's (19-8) moved a season-best 11 games over .500 and had their best 27-game start since beginning 21-6 in 1990.

"Always good to get off to a good start," Piscotty said, noting two-out hits, "those are big at-bats. A lot of us, including myself, have usually struggled a little bit there, but it was only a matter of time before that started to turn."

Fiers (3-1) allowed three runs and seven hits in 5¹/₃ innings.

Semien notched his third career leadoff home run and second this season as Oakland jumped on Andrew Heaney from the start, also getting Piscotty's two-run double in the first. Matt Olson added an

RBI double in the fifth to chase Heaney (1-2) before Piscotty's run-scoring single.

"I've pitched against this lineup and it's not fun," Fiers said. "They burn you in so many ways."

Angels star Mike Trout hit a broken-bat, two-run single in the sixth that glanced off first baseman Matt Olson's glove and then got past a lunging Chad Pinder.

Joakim Soria threw a 76 mph slider to retire Trout on a called third strike to end an eight-pitch at-bat and the eighth inning. Liam Hendriks finished for his ninth save.

Angels slugger Albert Pujols went 1-for-5 with a double and remained stuck at 659 home runs, one from tying Hall of Famer Willie Mays for fifth all-time.

Anthony Rendon had four more hits for an 11-game hitting streak for the Angels.

Heaney, who took a no-decision against the A's on opening day, hasn't beat Oakland since 2017.

Los Angeles lost its fourth straight and eighth in nine.

Tigers 10, Indians 5: Rookie Isaac Paredes hit a grand slam for his first major league homer

and visiting Detroit snapped a 20-game losing streak to Cleveland.

Padres 4, Astros 3: Manny Machado hit a pair of RBI singles and scored a run, helping the Padres stop visiting Houston's eight-game winning streak.

White Sox 10, Cubs 1: Jose Abreu hit two home runs and the surging White Sox went deep six times to back Dallas Keuchel in a romp at Wrigley Field.

Blue Jays 6, Rays 5 (10): Cavan Biggio and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. each drove in a run during the 10th inning to help visiting Toronto win its sixth consecutive game.

Dodgers 5, Rockies 1: At Los Angeles, right-hander Walker Buehler struck out 11 over six sharp innings in his best outing of the shortened season.

Giants 6, Diamondbacks 2: Evan Longoria hit his 300th home run and Wilmer Flores added a two-run shot, powering host San Francisco to the victory.

Braves 11, Phillies 2: Marcell Ozuna homered twice and drove in four runs as host Atlanta roughed up Aaron Nola.

Red Sox 8, Orioles 5: At Baltimore, Xander Bogaerts, J.D. Martinez and Rafael Devers homered as Boston won its season-high third in a row.

Marlins 3, Nationals 2: Miguel Rojas hit a three-run homer in his first at-bat after being activated from the COVID-19 injured list, and visiting Miami snapped a five-game skid.

Reds 4, Cardinals 2: Matt Davidson delivered a go-ahead grand slam in the sixth inning, helping Cincinnati to the road win.

Mariners 7, Rangers 4: Rookie Kyle Lewis hit a solo home run and Nick Margevicius matched his career high with seven strikeouts to lead host Seattle.

Royals 7, Twins 2: Jorge Soler hit a three-run homer in the first inning, and host Kansas City beat Minnesota to open the third straight weekend series between the AL Central rivals.

Pirates 7, Brewers 2: Chad Kuhl pitched five effective innings for his first win in more than two years, and host Pittsburgh rolled to the victory.

Sports briefs

Scheffler's 59 at Northern Trust leaves him 2 shots back

Associated Press

NORTON, Mass. — It took a disappointing par for Scottie Scheffler to realize he was making enough birdies to have a shot at 59, and he seized on the chance Friday with four birdies over his last five holes to post the 12th sub-60 round in PGA Tour history.

For the longest time, it looked like his 59 might not even be the best of the day at The Northern Trust.

As Scheffler was signing his card, Dustin Johnson had al-

ready set off on an explosive start that put some buzz into the TPC Boston even without any spectators on the course.

Birdie. Eagle. Birdie. Eagle. Birdie.

He was 9 under through eight holes, and with two birdies to start the back nine, Johnson was 11 under through 11 holes.

Johnson shot a 60 for a two-shot lead. He was at 15-under 127, two shots ahead of Scheffler and Cameron Davis (66). Scheffler finished with two putts from across the 18th green for his 12th birdie, knocking in

his last putt from 4 feet.

Smith earns 2nd Truck victory in 3 races

DOVER, Del. — Zane Smith won the NASCAR Truck Series race at Dover International Speedway on Friday night.

Smith pulled away in the No. 21 Chevrolet on a late restart to win for the second time in three races. The 21-year-old Smith won at Michigan to earn one of the 10 spots in the playoff field.

Smith held off Matt Craf-

ton and Brett Moffitt to take the checkered flag in front of empty stands. The Monster Mile was set to host an Xfinity Series and Cup Series race on both Saturday and Sunday.

Todd Gilliland and Ben Rhodes rounded out the top five. Gilliland had his fourth top-five finish of the season and held the 10th and final playoff spot based on points.

Smith fist-bumped the official and waved the checkered flag before he stuck it in the back of the truck to celebrate his second win in just 14 starts.