

## Austin to seek OK for vaccine mandate

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Monday said he will seek President Joe Biden's permission by mid-September to require all troops receive the coronavirus vaccine regardless of whether the shots obtain full federal approval.

"I want you to know that I will seek the president's approval to make the vaccines mandatory no later than mid-September, or immediately upon the U.S. Food and Drug [Administration] licensure, whichever comes first," Austin wrote in his message. "Public reporting suggests the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could achieve full FDA licensure early next month."

Biden said last week during a news conference that he expects the FDA will approve the vaccines by the early fall.

The FDA has already authorized the vaccine for use during public health emergencies as it completes the final phases of clinical trials. The shots are "rigorously tested" on tens of thousands of study participants before reaching emergency-use authoriza-

tion, according to the FDA.

Though the military requires troops to receive many vaccinations, federal law prohibits the Pentagon from mandating those without full FDA approval. However, the president can bypass the restriction by issuing a waiver if he determines "that complying with such requirement is not in the interests of national security," according to the law governing emergency-use products and the military.

The news comes after Biden directed the Pentagon on July 29 to plan for troops to be required to get a coronavirus vaccine but stopped short of mandating the shots.

His decision allowed Austin to move forward with requiring the vaccines.

It also comes as the more contagious delta variant has surged across the country. Biden has said the U.S. is suffering a "pandemic of the unvaccinated," though it's possible vaccinated people can still contract the virus with reduced symptoms.

"We will also be keeping a close eye on infection rates — which are on the rise now due to the delta variant — and the impact

these rates might have on our readiness," Austin wrote in his Monday message.

Some troops expressed concern over receiving the vaccine when news broke that the Pentagon could issue the mandate Friday, New York attorney Greg Rincley told The Associated Press.

"A lot of U.S. troops have reached out to us saying, 'I don't want a vaccine that's untested, I'm not sure it's safe, and I don't trust the government's vaccine. What are my rights?'" said Rincley, who specializes in military law.

A group of 16 House Republicans led by Rep. Mark Green, R-Tenn., sent a letter Friday urging Austin not to issue the mandate, claiming "mandatory vaccination is illegal for military personnel prior to complete approval."

"To be clear, we believe [coronavirus] vaccines are not only a testament to American ingenuity, but are also safe and effective," the lawmakers wrote. "Despite that, it is clear that the mandate that you are considering is an unprecedented violation of federal law."

## US, S. Korea plan drills despite tensions with North

By DAVID CHOI  
AND YOO KYONG CHANG  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The U.S. and South Korean militaries, despite lingering concerns over provoking North Korea, are scheduling a joint, computer-simulated exercise, a South Korean military official said Monday.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to disclose the details, told Stars and Stripes the two countries will be holding a combined command-post training Aug. 16-26.

Staff will be conducting a preliminary crisis management training beginning Tuesday, the official added. The drill is expected to focus on computer

simulations, rather than a field exercise involving thousands of combat troops.

South Korean media outlet Yonhap News first reported news of the drill on Sunday.

Spokespersons from South Korea's Ministry of National Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Monday military officials were still consulting with their U.S. counterparts on the specifics of the exercise, including the number of troops involved.

"The two sides are currently comprehensively considering the overall condition, including support for diplomatic efforts for denuclearization and lasting peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula, the COVID-19 situation, maintaining the [South Ko-

rea]-U.S. combined defense readiness, and settling conditions for wartime operational control transfer," a defense ministry spokesman told Stars and Stripes on a customary condition of anonymity.

The Pentagon previously noted any joint exercise with South Korea will be held after extensive talks with the host country.

"We believe in proper training and readiness on the peninsula and that all the decisions that we make with respect to training and readiness is done in close consultation" with the South Korean allies, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said at a briefing on Aug. 3.

"Nothing has changed about our need to be properly trained

and ready on the Korean Peninsula to face a range of threats," he said. "And we make these decisions together."

Kim Yo Jong, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister and a senior official in the ruling Workers' Party, cautioned that any exercise would be an "undesirable prelude" that would undermine relations on the peninsula, the state-run Korean Central News Agency said in a statement earlier this month.

Over 70 South Korean lawmakers on Friday called for the postponement of drills in light of North Korea's decision to reopen its communication lines, adding that the exercises might provoke the regime and prompt it to clamp down on its diplomatic overtures.

# Del Toro OK'd as Navy secretary

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Carlos Del Toro, a Navy veteran and CEO for an engineering and consulting firm, was confirmed by the Senate as the 78th Navy secretary, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

The Senate on Saturday confirmed Del Toro as the Navy's top civilian leader two months after President Joe Biden nominated him for the position. Del Toro, who immigrated to the United States in 1962 with his family, is now the first Navy secretary born in Cuba.

Del Toro graduated from the Naval Academy, Naval Postgraduate School and Naval War College and spent 22 years on active

duty in the service, according to his biography on the academy's alumni association website. He also spent five years as a civilian employee for the Navy, including as senior military assistant to the director for programs analysis and evaluation.

Austin said in a statement issued Saturday that Del Toro's "lifelong pursuits and deep experience advancing America's national security make him well-prepared" for his new job as Navy secretary.

"Carlos rose through the ranks during the Cold War and Operation Desert Shield and Storm to serve as the first commanding officer of the destroyer USS Bulkeley and then later as a trusted aide to Pentagon leadership," he said. "As an immigrant who has

dedicated his life to public service, Carlos exemplifies the core values of honor, courage and commitment in defense of our country."

Del Toro previously served as a White House fellow and special assistant to the director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, according to his biography. He also led the procurement committee in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Council on Small Business.

He takes over for former acting Navy Secretary Thomas Harker, who served as assistant Navy secretary under former President Donald Trump. Harker was sworn in as acting Navy secretary on Jan. 20 under Biden.

## Contractors who powered US war stuck in Dubai

*Associated Press*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Some of the foreign contractors who powered the logistics of America's "forever war" in Afghanistan now find themselves stranded on an unending layover in Dubai without a way to get home.

After nearly two decades, the rapid U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has upended the lives of thousands of private security contractors from some of the world's poorest countries — not the hired guns but the hired hands who serviced the American war effort. For years, they toiled in the shadows as cleaners, cooks, construction workers, servers and technicians on sprawling American bases.

In the rushed evacuation, scores of these foreign workers trying to get home to the Philippines and other countries that restricted international travel because of the pandemic have become stuck in limbo at hotels across Dubai.

As the United States brings home its remaining troops and

abandons its bases, experts say the chaotic departure of the Pentagon's logistics army lays bare an uncomfortable truth about a privatized system long susceptible to mismanagement — one largely funded by American taxpayers but outside the purview of American law.

The U.S. military's Central Command declined to comment on private security contractors, referring all questions to their companies. The U.S. military's contracting office and the Philippines Consulate in Dubai did not respond to repeated requests for comment on the stranded Filipino contractors.

Several of the stranded Fluor contractors spent years working in construction, equipment transport, visa processing and other military logistics. Some worked at Bagram Air Base, the largest military compound in the country, and at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan. They had nothing to do with combat operations but described nonetheless facing rocket attacks and other risks of war on base.

## US military aids firefighters battling blaze in Greece

*Stars and Stripes*

ATHENS, Greece — The U.S. military has been among those helping Greek residents and firefighters as they continued to battle a vast forest fire on Greece's second-largest island for a seventh day Monday.

The smoke and ash from the fire on Evia, a rugged island of forests and coves almost touching the Greek mainland, blocked out the sun, turning the sky orange as the blaze rampaged across the northern part of the island.

Thousands of acres have burned, forcing several villages to evacuate. Other big fires have been burning forests and farmland in the southern Greek region of the Peloponnese.

The wildfires have stretched Greece's firefighting capabilities to the limit, and the government has appealed for help from abroad. More than 20 countries in Europe and the Middle East have responded, sending planes, helicopters, vehicles and manpower.

U.S. Naval Forces Europe provided a Boeing P-8 Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft from Thursday to Saturday to assist firefighting efforts, Navy spokesman Lt. Tyler Barker said Monday. The plane took off from Naval Air Station Sigonella in Sicily.

More U.S. support is being coordinated, Barker said.

Greece's foreign minister, Nikos Dendias, tweeted Monday that he had spoken to his Russian counterpart and asked whether Russia could send a second Beriev Be-200 firefighting plane to Greece. So far Greece has leased one such aircraft, the largest operating in the Greek fires.

Firefighters from Ukraine, Romania and Serbia had been sent as reinforcements to Evia, where more than 600 firefighters were operating, along with five helicopters and five water-dropping planes, the fire department said Monday.

Huge fires have also raged for more than 10 days in neighboring Turkey.

# Tokyo coronavirus cases drop below 3K

By JOSEPH DITZLER  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — Japan's capital city on Monday reported that another 2,884 people had tested positive for the coronavirus, public broadcaster NHK reported.

Monday, when reports are typically lowest, was the first day in seven that Tokyo's daily case count fell below 4,000, according to data from the metropolitan government.

On Thursday, the city recorded its highest one-day caseload of the pandemic at 5,042.

The Tokyo Olympics, which concluded Sunday after 17 days, contributed a relatively small share of 458 individuals who tested positive, 29 of whom were athletes, according to the Tokyo 2020 update on Monday.

The bulk of the Olympics' coronavirus cases were 249 contractors working at the Games, followed by 115 "Games-related personnel," meaning members of the organizing committees and affiliated associations, 27 volunteers, 26 media members and 12 employees of Tokyo 2020.

U.S. military bases in Japan reported 10 people had tested positive since Sunday.

Naval Air Facility Atsugi, 26 miles southwest of central Tokyo, identified five cases of COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, on Monday.

One individual showed symptoms of the disease and four were identified as close contacts, according to a news release from the air facility.

It has 22 active coronavirus cases.

Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, south of Hiroshima, on Monday said three people

had tested positive since Sunday, according to a news release from the base.

None tested positive while in restricted movement and all three were isolated after their tests, but the air station provided no further information.

The Marine Corps reported that two people associated with its forces on Okinawa tested positive Monday, according to a Facebook post by Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

U.S. Forces Japan reported 93 active cases as of Thursday, according to a weekly update on its homepage.

## Canada allows vaccinated US citizens to visit again

*Associated Press*

Canada on Monday lifted its prohibition on Americans crossing the border to shop, vacation or visit, but the United States is keeping similar restrictions in place for Canadians, part of a bumpy return to normalcy from COVID-19 travel bans.

U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents must be both fully vaccinated and test negative for COVID-19 within three days to get across one of the world's longest and busiest land borders.

Travelers must also fill out a detailed application on the arriveCAN app before crossing.

Even though travelers have to register, the Canada Border Services Agency won't say how many people they are expecting to enter Canada for the reopening. But travelers should plan for the possibility of additional processing time at the border.

"CBSA will not compromise the health and safety of Canadians for the sake of border wait times," agency spokeswoman Rebecca Purdy said in a statement.

Garnet Health, an Essex, Vt.-based company that offers same-day COVID-19 testing, has seen the number of tests it performs more than triple in recent weeks. The increase coincides with Canada's decision last month to drop a two-week quarantine requirement for its citizens when they return home from the U.S.

"I imagine once that border opens, we are going to see lots of people," said Chelsea Sweeney, the company's director of business development.

The U.S.-Canada border has been closed to nonessential travel since March 2020 to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

The U.S. has said it will extend its closure to all Canadians making nonessential trips until at least Aug. 21, which also applies to the Mexican border.

But the Biden administration is beginning to make plans for a phased reopening.

The main requirement would be that nearly all foreign visitors to the U.S. will have to be vaccinated against the coronavirus.

## Some in US getting COVID-19 booster shot without approval

*Associated Press*

DENVER — When the delta variant started spreading, Gina Welch decided not to take any chances: She got a third, booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine by going to a clinic and telling them it was her first shot.

The U.S. government has not approved booster shots against the virus, saying it has yet to see evidence they are necessary. But Welch and an untold number of other Americans have managed to get them by taking advantage of the nation's vaccine surplus and loose tracking of those who have been fully vaccinated.

Welch, a graduate student from Maine who is studying chemical engineering, said she has kept tabs on scientific studies about COVID-19 and follows several virologists and epidemiologists on social media who have advocated for boosters.

"I'm going to follow these experts and I'm going to go protect myself," said Welch, a 26-year-old with asthma and a liver condition. "I'm not going to wait another six months to a year for them to recommend a third dose."

While Pfizer has said it plans to seek U.S. Food and Drug Admin-

istration approval for booster shots, health authorities say that for now, the fully vaccinated seem well protected.

Yet health care providers in the United States have reported more than 900 instances of people getting a third dose of COVID-19 vaccines in a database run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an Associated Press review of the system's data found. Because reporting is voluntary, the full extent of people who have received third doses is unknown. It's also unknown if all of those people were actively trying to get a third dose as a booster.

"I don't think that anyone really has the tracking" in place to know how widespread it is, said Claire Hannan, executive director for the Association of Immunization Managers.

One entry in the CDC database shows that a 52-year-old man got a third dose from a California pharmacy on July 14 by saying he had never received one and by providing his passport, rather than a driver's license, as identification. But when the pharmacy contacted the patient's insurance provider, it was told he had received two doses in March.



## Aide to Gov. Cuomo details allegations

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — An aide who accused New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo of groping her said in her first televised interview that she was initially afraid to identify herself because she worried the governor's "enablers" would destroy her if she spoke up.

Brittany Commisso, an executive assistant on Cuomo's staff, detailed her interactions with the Democrat in a joint interview with CBS and The Times Union of Albany that was broadcast Monday as a key legislative committee was set to discuss possible impeachment hearings.

Commisso has spoken out before, first in an anonymous interview with the Times Union last winter, and then as one of 11 women who said they were sexually harassed by Cuomo whose allegations were detailed in a report by the state attorney general's office last week. She was also the first woman to file a criminal complaint against Cuomo, giving a report to the county sheriff Thursday.

But until now, the public hasn't heard her tell her own story.

"I was afraid that if I had to come forward and revealed my name, that the governor and his enablers, I like to call them, would viciously attack me, would smear my name, as I had seen and heard them do before to people," said Commisso, now 32.

Scores of Democrats, including President Joe Biden, have urged Cuomo to leave office.

The Assembly's judiciary committee was set to meet Monday to discuss how to wrap up an ongoing probe of Cuomo's conduct.

Cuomo will be going into the fight without top aide Melissa DeRosa, who resigned Sunday, saying the past two years had been "emotionally and mentally trying." The report made public by state Attorney General Letitia James said DeRosa played a lead role in trying to protect Cuomo from harassment claims.

In her interview on CBS, Commisso said Cuomogroped her for the first time on Dec. 31, 2019, when the governor suggested the two take a selfie together.

"He was to my left. I was on the right. With my right hand, I took the selfie. I then felt while taking the selfie, his hand go down my back on to my butt, and he started rubbing it. Not sliding it. Not, you know, quickly brushing over it — rubbing my butt."

Commisso said Cuomo groped her a second time at the governor's mansion in November. After shutting the door, "He came back to me and that's when he put his hand up my blouse and cupped my breast over my bra," she said.

Cuomo has repeatedly denied that the episode took place.

# UN on global warming: 'Code red for humanity'

Associated Press

Earth is getting so hot that temperatures in about a decade will probably blow past a level of warming that world leaders have sought to prevent, according to a report released Monday that the United Nations called a "code red for humanity."

"It's just guaranteed that it's going to get worse," said report co-author Linda Mearns, a senior climate scientist at the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research. "Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide."

But scientists also eased back a bit on the likelihood of the worst climate catastrophes.

The authoritative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, which calls climate change clearly human-caused and "unequivocal," makes more precise and warmer forecasts for the 21st century than it did last time it was issued in 2013.

Each of five scenarios for the future, based on how much carbon emissions are cut, passes the more stringent of two thresholds set in the 2015 Paris climate agreement. World leaders agreed then to try to limit warming to 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit above levels in the late 19th century because problems mount quickly after that. The world has already warmed nearly 2 degrees Fahrenheit since then.

Under each scenario, the report said, the

world will cross the 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit warming mark in the 2030s, earlier than some past predictions. Warming has ramped up in recent years, data shows.

"Our report shows that we need to be prepared for going into that level of warming in the coming decades. But we can avoid further levels of warming by acting on greenhouse gas emissions," said report co-chair Valerie Masson-Delmotte, a climate scientist at France's Laboratory of Climate and Environment Sciences at the University of Paris-Saclay.

In three scenarios, the world will also likely exceed 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit over pre-industrial times — the less stringent Paris goal — with far worse heat waves, droughts and flood-inducing downpours unless there are deep emissions cuts, the report said.

With crucial international climate negotiations coming up in November, world leaders said the report is causing them to try harder to cut carbon pollution. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken called it "a stark reminder."

The report said warming is already accelerating sea level rise and worsening extremes such as heat waves, droughts, floods and storms. Tropical cyclones are getting stronger and wetter, while Arctic sea ice is dwindling in the summer and permafrost is thawing. These trends will get worse, the report said.

## Increase in blank spaces on 2020 US census forms raise questions

Associated Press

Census Bureau statisticians and outside experts are trying to unravel a mystery: Why were so many questions about households in the 2020 census left unanswered?

Residents did not respond to a multitude of questions about sex, race, Hispanic background, family relationships and age, even when providing a count of the number of people living in the home, according to documents released by the agency. Statisticians had to fill in the gaps.

Reflecting an early stage in the number crunching, the documents show that 10% to 20% of questions were not answered in the 2020 census, depending on the question and state. According to the Census Bureau, later phases of processing show the actual rates were lower.

The rates have averaged 1% to 3% in 170 years of previous U.S. censuses, according to University of Minnesota demographer Steven Ruggles.

The information is important because data with demographic details will be used for drawing congressional and legislative districts. That data, which the Census Bureau will release Thursday, is also used to distribute \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year.

The documents, made public in response to an open records request from a Republican redistricting advocacy group, don't shed much light on why questions were left unanswered. Some observers say software used in the first census in which most Americans could respond online allowed people to skip questions. Others say the pandemic made it harder to reach people who didn't respond.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Former deputy accused in Dutch murder plot**

**MS** HATTIESBURG — A former Mississippi sheriff's deputy faces extradition to the Netherlands, where he is accused of taking part in a murder-for-hire plot in 2019.

Dutch authorities said William Lyle Johnson, who is jailed in Mississippi, could face life in prison on charges of murder, assault, kidnapping and other related crimes. The Hattiesburg American reported that Johnson, 34, was a sheriff's deputy in Forrest County from May 2017 to April 2019.

Dutch officials said Swiss businessman Lukas Fecker hired American Justin Causey to threaten Thomas Schwarz with harm if he did not pay Fecker money he said Schwarz owed him.

Officials said Causey hired Johnson and Jacob Mazeika, of Colorado, to help complete the extortion. The two flew to Germany, with officials saying they met Causey on Nov. 25, 2019, the day before Schwarz was killed.

The next morning, Johnson drove Causey and Mazeika to Schwarz's home but said only the other two men entered. Twenty minutes later, the men returned to the car with bloody clothing.

**Small plane forced to belly land at airport**

**CT** WATERBURY — A single-engine plane was damaged when it skidded to a landing on its belly at Waterbury-Oxford Airport.

State police said nobody was injured in the accident.

The plane was attempting to land when its landing gear

failed, police said.

Police said the aircraft will be inspected by the FAA, which is investigating the incident.

**City plans big mural for walkway to new arena**

**GA** SAVANNAH — Georgia's oldest city is planning a giant mural to cover a pedestrian walkway to its new arena.

City officials in Savannah are seeking proposals for the mural, which will be designed by four teams of artists and cover an area spanning 2,400 square feet.

The mural will illustrate a new walkway on the site of Savannah's historic water works pump house that ends at the Enmarket Arena.

**Man accepts plea for venomous snake escape**

**NC** RALEIGH — A snake collector whose escaped zebra cobra caused a frenzy for days this summer pleaded guilty to a charge, agreeing in turn to pay restitution and give up his snakes.

Christopher Gifford, 21, had been charged with 40 misdemeanors stemming from the venomous snake's escape. Authorities ultimately captured it in a Raleigh neighborhood in late June. The snake had actually escaped last November, according to Gifford's lawyer, but he hadn't told anyone, media outlets reported.

Gifford pleaded guilty to failing to report the missing snake. In exchange, the other 39 counts were dropped. In addition, the charge he pleaded guilty to will be dismissed if Gifford successfully completes his probation.

The deal requires no time be-

hind bars. He must pay \$13,162 in part for the emergency and police response to locating the snake.

**Residents object to pickleball game noise**

**MI** IRON MOUNTAIN — Some residents in a northern Michigan community are complaining about noise during summer nights. Rowdy teens? No. Adults playing pickleball.

Iron Mountain in the Upper Peninsula won't restrict pickleball hours at four courts. City Manager Jordan Stanchina had suggested ending games at 6 p.m., but 20 players attended a recent council meeting to object, The Daily News reported.

Roxanne Hudson, who lives next to the courts, said she and her husband "just want to move." Noise from the paddles and plastic balls goes on "hour after hour" and "just drives you nuts," Hudson told the council.

Scott McLure, speaking on behalf of players, said they might try quieter paddles.

**80 sports cars set to compete in Hillclimb**

**NH** LINCOLN — Eighty sports car competitors representing 16 states from California to Maine are racing in this year's Mount Washington Hillclimb up the 7.6-mile road to the Northeast's highest peak.

The competition, also known as the "Climb to the Clouds," is Aug. 13-15. It was first held in 1904 and is the oldest automotive Hillclimb in North America.

While a typical driver takes about 30 minutes to reach the 6,288-foot summit, the record was set in 2017 by Travis Pastrana at 5 minutes, 44 seconds.

**City to crack down on messy property owners**

**MS** VICKSBURG — A Mississippi city could end up getting tough on people who own property with dilapidated buildings and perpetually shaggy yards.

"We're going to make you take care of your property," Vicksburg Alderman Michael Mayfield said during a city board meeting, according to the Vicksburg Post. "You don't do it on your own, we're going to send you to court, we're going to fine you and if you don't do it then, then it's the discretion of the judge. We're going to have to up the ante."

The city requires property owners to keep their yards cleaned and maintain buildings. Some have refused to do so, and officials have cited the property as a public nuisance.

**Swapped stickers used to steal ride-share bikes**

**NY** NEW YORK — Citi Bike said it is aware of a scam in New York City in which thieves are switching the QR code stickers on rental bicycles in order to steal bikes unwittingly unlocked by customers.

The scammers wait for a renter to unlock a bicycle using the QR code, then ride away on the bike to which the code actually belongs, officials said.

"Citi Bike is aware of this issue and, while it has not been widespread, we have been actively working to address it in a number of ways, including upgraded QR decals," said Citi Bike spokesperson Jordan Levine told The New York Post.

— From wire reports

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# Manning, Woodson, Megatron lead Hall class

Associated Press

Peyton's Place is now in Canton, Ohio, at the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

The only five-time NFL MVP and a two-time Super Bowl winner who left the game five years ago with a slew of passing records was enshrined Sunday night with other members of the class of 2021. The stadium rocked with cheers from fans in Colts blue or Broncos orange — the two franchises he took to the top — when Manning was introduced.

The man who could spend seemingly endless moments changing plays at the line then jabbed at the time limits set by the hall because of 19 acceptance speeches this weekend. The 2020 class and a special centennial class had their enshrinements delayed a year by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The 2021 induction class wants to thank those previous inductees who gave long-winded acceptance speeches," said Manning, who was presented by his father, Ar-

chie, himself a College Football Hall of Fame member. "Forcing us to have a whopping six minutes to recap our football careers. I want to give a special thanks to my old rival Ray Lewis for being here tonight. Ray just finished giving his speech that he started in 2018."

Joining Manning in this year's class were two other first-time eligibles, defensive back Charles Woodson — who beat out Manning for the 1997 Heisman Trophy — and receiver Calvin Johnson. Also in the class were safety John Lynch, a seven-time finalist before getting in; guard Alan Faneca, a premier blocker for 13 seasons, winning a Super Bowl with Pittsburgh and making six All-Pro teams; coach Tom Flores, who led the Raiders to two titles; Cowboys wideout Drew Pearson, a 1970s NFL All-Decade player; and Steelers super scout Bill Nunn.

Manning gave a shoutout to Tom Brady, whom he invited to the ceremony, noting that it will be 2035 before Brady, now 44, will

have been retired long enough to be enshrined.

As for the NFL itself, Manning urged anyone involved in the league to "ignite the future of the sport. If not, we are not doing football justice. It is about nurturing football to live another day, another year. ... The future of this game is ours to shape."

His fellow entrants into the hall shape up pretty nicely in the pro football pantheon.

Flores, the first man to win Super Bowls as a player, assistant coach and head coach, was a backup quarterback for the Chiefs in the fourth Super Bowl, a Raiders assistant to John Madden in the 11th, and head coach when the Raiders won the 15th and 18th games.

Flores, of Mexican descent, long ago became a hero to the Latino community, a symbol of success on and off the field.

"You don't get there alone," he said. "It doesn't happen in a vacuum. A lot of people helped me ... Raider Nation is everywhere."

## Jags counting on help from first-round flame-outs

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Jacksonville Jaguars seemingly have the NFL market cornered on first-round flops.

Coach Urban Meyer has as many as eight (depending on the evaluator) of them on his 90-man roster and would have another had Pittsburgh defensive tackle Tyson Alualu not changed his mind after agreeing to a deal with Jacksonville during free agency. Nonetheless, those remaining are trying to turn around careers that have fallen short of outside expectations.

The list includes 2007 Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Tim Tebow and four more from the powerhouse Southeastern Conference, where Meyer coached at Florida for six seasons (2005-10).

The Jaguars also have three first-rounders who bounced around the league in recent years: former Indianapolis receiver Phillip Dorsett, ex-New England nose tackle Malcom Brown and newly signed wide-

out Tavon Austin.

Here's a look at the castoffs and disappointments who are trying to land roster spots and/or starting jobs on a rebuilding team in need of playmakers:

**Tavon Austin:** Jacksonville signed Austin off the street Friday to help bolster a position that was down six guys for various reasons. The 31-year-old Austin was the eighth overall pick in 2013. He had more than 4,700 all-purpose yards and 24 touchdowns in five seasons with the Rams. Not bad, but not what the team expected from a top-10 pick.

Austin was traded to Dallas in April 2018, spent two seasons with the Cowboys and played four games for Green Bay last year.

**Malcom Brown:** Brown is the most accomplished player on this list. The 330-pound run-stuffer was a four-year starter and two-time Super Bowl champion with New England, which selected him 32nd overall in 2015. But the Patriots declined the fifth-year option in his roo-

kie deal, a clear indication of first-round evaluations. He landed in New Orleans, where he spent the last two seasons before getting traded to Jacksonville for a seventh-round pick.

**Taven Bryan:** A big bust in Jacksonville, which chose him with the 29th pick in 2018, the defensive lineman from nearby Florida has 71 tackles and 3 1/2 sacks in three seasons. He's yet to get on the field in training camp.

**K'Lavon Chaisson:** Chaisson was supposed to replace Bryan last season. But the former LSU outside linebacker and 20th pick in 2020 managed just 19 tackles and a sack while playing every game as a rookie. After skipping most of voluntary offseason workouts, Chaisson is still trying to impress coaches. Rookie left tackle Walter Little has made that tougher by mostly dominating their one-on-one matchups.

**Phillip Dorsett:** Dorsett looked like he might be a free-agent steal early in camp, but he's missed several days since because of an injury. His speed

is what drew Meyer to the 29th overall pick in 2015.

**CJ Henderson:** The ninth overall pick in 2020 looked like he would help Jags fans forget about Pro Bowl cornerback Jalen Ramsey after an impressive opener. But the former Florida speedster dealt with injuries and other issues the rest of his rookie season.

**Tim Tebow:** Tebow is trying to return to the NFL — as a tight end. He's been better than expected in camp, and Meyer's only critique has been that he needs to do a better job catching passes with his hands instead of his body.

**Laquon Treadwell:** Treadwell has been one of the biggest surprises of camp, a surehanded receiver who looks nothing like the guy run out of Minnesota four years after being drafted 23rd overall in 2016. Treadwell was on the street in June and landed with the Jags following a mini-camp tryout. The former Ole Miss standout moved to the slot for Jacksonville and could be a factor this fall.



# Ericsson soars to victory in first Music City Grand Prix

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Marcus Ericsson used the slowed car in front of him as a launching ramp and shot up and over — with a dangling wing — Sebastien Bourdais' Chevrolet.

"I thought my race was over there," Ericsson said.

Not in this wreckfest. Call the latest IndyCar race winner Marcus Ericsson.

Ericsson stuck the landing on his early race flight and avoided further disaster on the perilous city streets of Nashville on Sunday to win the inaugural Music City Grand Prix.

"I'm just trying to figure out how I ended up winning the race after flying and seeing the sky," he said.

Ericsson conserved fuel and survived hard-charging runs from Colton Herta and Scott Dixon and won his second race of the season. He moved to fifth in the IndyCar points race with five race left — 79 points back of leader Alex Palou.

Ericsson doesn't have a deal with Chip Ganassi Racing for 2022 and said "I hope Chip was watching today."

"My biggest wish is continue here in the 8 car," Ericsson said.

He made the IndyCar highlight reel long before the checkered flag when he jumped the backside of Bourdais' Chevy and knocked the Frenchman out of the race. Ericsson's airborne Honda needed a new front wing only five laps into the race and said he thought the car was going to snap in half.

The 30-year-old Swede won as darkness fell in Nashville with Dixon, the six-time IndyCar champion, making a late run.

Ericsson caught a break when Herta clobbered his car into the tire barriers with five laps left, ending his dominant weekend for Andretti Autosport. Herta topped the first two practice sessions, won the pole and his team was in "a league of our own." He was gaining on Ericsson and had a potential go-ahead pass on the horizon when he crushed his car. Herta buried his head in his hands in stunned disbelief.

"We had the car all weekend to win," Herta said. "I just threw it away."

Dixon was second to give Chip Ganassi Racing a 1-2 finish. James Hinchcliffe, Ryan Hunter-Reay and Graham Rahal rounded out the top five.

The Grand Prix was the first new street

course race added to the schedule in 10 years and enough fans to fill Nissan Stadium packed grandstands, partied near live music stages, and lined fences 10 rows deep with cameras raised to snap a picture of the fastest newcomers in town.

"If there's enough alcohol out there, it's going to be a good show no matter what," Dixon said.

The best seat in the house might have come without one, when fans stood high on the stadium concourse for a bird's-eye view of one of the 11 turns on the track.

The 2.17-mile course weaved through the stadium parking lot and over a 3,500-foot straightway that spanned over the Korean War Veterans Memorial Bridge and suspended 80 feet over the Cumberland River.

"The track going downtown was so cool to race on," Ericsson said.

Better safe than sorry, dive teams and boats were on standby in case of emergency.

The chaos was contained to the asphalt streets.

Team Penske drivers brought the race to a halt only a few laps after Ericsson went airborne when Will Power dipped inside Simon Pagenaud and drove his teammate into the wall. That led to a massive 10-race pileup and the red flag was out for roughly 20 minutes.

There were nine cautions and two red flags in the race.

"There was no flow to the race. It was like we had six races," Dixon said.

## Points standings

Palou holds a 42-point lead in the standings over Dixon.

## Jimmie's day

Jimmie Johnson continues to hit bumps in the road — or in his case, on a bridge — in his rookie season in IndyCar. The seven-time NASCAR Cup Series champion destroyed his car in the morning practice session for his second wreck of the weekend and was forced to use a backup car. He used a backup car shared by teammate Palou. He was collected in the Penske crash and was disqualified when the No. 48 crew worked on his Honda — Johnson even helped carry spare parts — under the red flag. Johnson was 26th.

"I'm having a blast, I'm learning a ton and every week I'm getting better and better," Johnson said.

# Larson wins at Watkins Glen, eyes season title

Associated Press

WATKINS GLEN, N.Y. — Kyle Larson took another step toward a regular-season NASCAR Cup title. Chase Elliott lamented a race that he let get away.

Larson gained the lead from Martin Truex Jr. during green flag pit stops in the final stage Sunday, built a big lead and kept his hard-charging Hendrick Motorsports teammate at bay over the final laps to win at Watkins Glen International.

"I knew my car was good and the strategy worked out," said Larson, who was constantly reminded by his crew that his lead was quickly shrinking over Elliott in the No. 9 Chevrolet. "We were able to maintain that gap for a while and eventually start to pull away. Good thing the nine wasn't close enough. He was really, really fast. He's the guy to judge off of. I was definitely worried about him all day. He was so fast."

Elliott was seeking his eighth road course victory and third in a row at The Glen, which would have tied Jeff Gordon and Mark Martin for the Cup record at the historic road course in upstate New York's Finger Lakes.

Elliott was relegated to the back of the field before the race when his car failed inspection twice and crew chief Alan Gustafson was ejected. But just as he did at Road America a month earlier when he won from 34th on the starting grid, Elliott made a gallant charge. He couldn't overcome Larson's lead and finished 2.45 seconds behind.

"I just hate it. I made too many mistakes to win," Elliott said. "It was too late in the race to recover from it. That's what cost us."

Truex, Kyle Busch and Denny Hamlin rounded out the top five.

Larson also held off Elliott in overtime to win on the road course at Sonoma in June and leaves Watkins Glen tied with Denny Hamlin with 917 points for the series lead.

"It's fun racing him," Larson said after his series-leading fifth victory of the season. "I look forward to the next few weeks and even into the playoffs. There's still a lot of racing left. It's going to be fun. I'm glad there's a fun little points battle. I feel like in years past it's kind of been a blowout."

It was the first Cup race after a two-week break for the Tokyo Olympics and there was no practice or qualifying.

Larson and Truex were together at the front of the field with 20 laps to go in the 90-lap race around the seven-turn, the 2.45-mile layout. Busch in third was nearly 10 seconds behind and just ahead of Elliott.

# Pujols homers as Dodgers top Angels

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Albert Pujols hit his first home run against the Los Angeles Angels since they released him in May, sending Walker Buehler and the Los Angeles Dodgers to an 8-2 win Sunday.

Cody Bellinger, the former NL MVP who has struggled mightily this season, homered for the second straight game, helping the World Series champions take two of three at Dodger Stadium.

Trea Turner, making his second start as the leadoff batter for the Dodgers since being acquired with Max Scherzer in a trade with Washington, scored twice.

Pujols hit a two-run homer in the second inning, connecting as a pinch-hitter for Justin Turner, who exited with left groin discomfort. Turner will be out for a few days, according to Dave Roberts.

Pujols admired the 418-foot drive for a bit, then had a jubilant celebration with teammates in the dugout. It was the third pinch-hit home run of Pujols' career, the 14th

home run of the season — nine in a Dodgers uniform — and 676th in his storied career.

"It's not the first home run I've hit against the Angels," Pujols said. "To me, I'm just glad to be able to contribute to the ballclub and help win the series. I didn't put too much thought into it. It can be looked at a different way since it's a former team, but I don't look at it like that."

The 41-year-old Pujols connected off rookie Reid Detmers and gave the Dodgers a 5-0 lead.

Pujols chatted with his former teammates before the series, then he said it was all about winning games.

"It's the first time I've seen some of these guys since I got released," Pujols said. "I still have a great relationship with 95% of those guys."

Buehler (12-2) pitched six strong innings, allowing one run on four hits and striking out eight. He worked around four walks.

The Dodgers scored twice before Detmers (0-2), who made his second career start,

had recorded an out. The Dodgers had three hits, including a pair of doubles, and executed a double steal.

"Last week I was obviously a little nervous but this week I felt more calm," Detmers said. "I felt good. I executed most of my pitches. I got unlucky a couple times. I need to execute a little better and things will work out in my favor."

Angels reliever Patrick Naughton made his big league debut in the sixth inning. He allowed one run on two hits and withstood a delay while a fan ran onto the field and sprinted around for a while before being apprehended.

But the day belonged to Pujols.

"It was great for him and to be ready when called upon since he wasn't in (the starting lineup) today," Roberts said. "Player comes in the game. He's five hitters away, takes an at-bat and hits a homer. I tip my cap. As far as hitting against a former team, he's happy to help the Dodgers win a ballgame."

## La Stella's hit in 8th paces Giants past Brewers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Pinch-hitter Tommy La Stella singled in the go-ahead run in the eighth inning and San Francisco beat Milwaukee 5-4 on Sunday to take two of three in the series between division leaders.

Brandon Belt had tied it in the seventh with a two-run pinch-hit homer off Daniel Norris. Darin Ruf also homered for the Brewers.

Tony Watson (4-3) was the winner and Zack Littell earned his first save of the season. Brad Boxberger (4-3) was the loser.

**Phillies 3, Mets 0:** Zack Wheeler pitched a two-hitter and struck out 11, Bryce Harper homered and first-place Philadelphia finished off a three-game sweep at home over the fading Mets for their eighth straight victory.

Jean Segura and J.T. Realmuto also homered to help the Phillies move 2½ games ahead of New York in the NL East. The streak is Philadelphia's longest

since winning eight straight in July 2010.

**Mariners 2, Yankees 0:** Yusei Kikuchi and the Seattle bullpen combined on a six-hitter, Kyle Seager doubled to break a scoreless tie in the eighth inning and the Mariners won at New York to avoid a four-game sweep.

The Yankees had won five in a row. They lost for only the third time in 13 games, ending a tightly contested series between playoff contenders.

**Blue Jays 9, Red Sox 8:** George Springer hit a go-ahead three-run home run in the eighth inning and host Toronto overcame a five-run deficit to beat Boston.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. added a two-run drive to help the Blue Jays finish 9-2 on their first homestand in Canada since September 2019. Guerrero has 35 homers.

**Reds 3, Pirates 2:** Tyler Mahle struck out 10, Kyle Farmer had another key hit and host Cincinnati beat Pittsburgh for a four-game sweep.

Nick Castellanos added a double and scored as the playoff-chasing Reds continued their dominance of the Pirates, improving to 9-1 against them this season.

**Rays 9, Orioles 6:** Brett Phillips capped his first career two-homer game with a tiebreaking grand slam in the eighth inning and Tampa Bay won at Baltimore for a three-game sweep.

**Braves 5, Nationals 4:** Ozzie Albies and Adam Duvall hit two-run homers off Patrick Corbin, Max Fried pitched six strong innings and host Atlanta beat Washington.

**Twins 7, Astros 5:** Jorge Polanco homered twice and drove in four runs, Miguel Sanó also hit a home run and Minnesota won at Houston.

**Indians 7, Tigers 5:** Miguel Cabrera got a planned day off in pursuit of his 500th career home run, and Cleveland, sparked by Bradley Zimmer's tie-breaking home run in the seventh, beat visiting Detroit.

**White Sox 9, Cubs 3:** Eloy Ji-

ménez drove in five runs with two homers and a double and the White Sox beat the crosstown Cubs for their first sweep of a three-game series at Wrigley Field since May 2012.

**Athletics 6, Rangers 3:** Starling Marte went 4-for-5 with an RBI, Seth Brown homered and host Oakland beat Texas to complete a three-game sweep.

**Padres 2, Diamondbacks 0:** Blake Snell struck out 13 over seven sharp innings, Jake Cronenworth homered and drove in both runs and host San Diego beat Madison Bumgarner and Arizona.

**Rockies 13, Marlins 8:** C.J. Cron hit two home runs, including a grand slam, and finished with a career-best seven RBIs to help host Colorado beat Miami for a three-game sweep.

**Royals 6, Cardinals 5:** Nicky Lopez hit a tiebreaking single in the ninth inning after a long rain delay and Kansas City won at St. Louis to avert a three-game sweep.