

Reported Taliban killings fuel Afghans' fears

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Reports of targeted killings in areas overrun by the Taliban mounted Friday, fueling fears that they will return Afghanistan to the repressive rule they imposed when they were last in power, even as they urged imams to push a message of unity at Friday's prayers.

Terrified that the new de facto rulers would commit such abuses and despairing for their country's future, thousands have raced to Kabul's airport and border crossings following the Taliban's stunning blitz through Afghanistan. In one dramatic image, a U.S. Marine providing airport security reached over razor wire atop a barrier and plucked a baby by the arm from a crowd of people and pulled it up over the wall.

Others have taken to the streets to protest the takeover — acts of defiance that Taliban fighters have violently suppressed.

The Taliban say they have become more moderate since they last ruled Afghanistan in the late 1990s and have pledged to restore security and forgive those who fought them in the 20 years since a U.S.-led invasion. Ahead of Friday prayers, leaders urged imams to use sermons to appeal for unity and urge people not to flee the country.

But many Afghans are skeptical, fearing that the Taliban will erase the gains, especially for women, achieved in the past two

decades. An Amnesty International report provided more evidence Friday that undercut the Taliban's claims they have changed.

The rights group said that its researchers spoke to eyewitnesses in Ghazni province who recounted how the Taliban killed nine ethnic Hazara men in the village of Munda-rakht from July 4 to July 6. It said six of the men were shot, and three were tortured to death. Hazaras are Shiite Muslims who were previously persecuted by the Taliban and who made major gains in education and social status in recent years.

The brutality of the killings was "a reminder of the Taliban's past record and a horrifying indicator of what Taliban rule may bring," said Agnes Callamard, the head of Amnesty International.

The group warned that many more killings may have gone unreported because the Taliban cut cellphone services in many areas they captured.

Separately, Reporters without Borders expressed alarm at the news that Taliban fighters killed a family member of an Afghan journalist working for Germany's Deutsche Welle on Wednesday.

The broadcaster said fighters conducted house-to-house searches for their reporter, who had already relocated to Germany. It said the Taliban also raided the homes of at least three of its journalists.

Meanwhile, a Norway-based private intelligence group that provides information to the United Nations said it obtained evidence that the Taliban have rounded up Afghans on a blacklist of people they believe worked in key roles with the previous Afghan administration or with U.S.-led forces.

In an email, the executive director of the RHIPTO Norwegian Center for Global Analyses said the organization knew about several threat letters sent to Afghans, including a man who was taken from his Kabul apartment this week by the Taliban.

"We had access to hard copies of concrete letters issued and stamped by the Taliban Military Commission to this effect," said Christian Nellemann. A report from the group that was obtained by The Associated Press included a copy of one of the letters.

The AP could not independently verify the claims made by the group.

Under the Taliban's previous rule, women were largely confined to their homes, television and music were banned, and public executions were held regularly. But leaders of the movement have pledged more moderation this time.

It's not clear whether the reports of abuses indicate that Taliban leaders are saying one thing but doing another or whether they simply do not have full control over their forces.

'Chaos continues' for thousands at Kabul's airport

By ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Thousands of Afghans waited in the Kabul heat outside the capital's international airport Friday with hopes of crossing Taliban checkpoints and boarding an evacuation flight, despite enduring tear gas attacks and crackling warning shots the night before.

Tracer rounds arced in the dark sky above a large crowd outside the gates of Hamid Karzai International Airport, where women and children covered their faces to avoid the sting of the gas.

At least five people were recently injured by gunfire and were taken from the airport to the capital's surgical center run by the Italian

nonprofit Emergency, the organization said Friday on Twitter.

"The chaos continues in that area," said the facility's medical coordinator Alberto Zanin, quoted in the post.

Things appeared calmer elsewhere in the city of more than 4 million, though fear of the new Taliban regime continues to keep daily life on hold for many.

Banks and larger stores remained closed, though some smaller shops were slowly reopening, said a taxi driver who asked not to be named for safety reasons.

"It was very scary during the first two days after the Taliban took power," the driver said. "Still we are worried about the future. We don't know what's going to happen next, but

it's not as scary as it was before."

However, the closed banks have some who spoke with Stars and Stripes worried that other residents could run out of money to pay for food.

There seem to be fewer Taliban on the roads and fewer checkpoints, the taxi driver said.

"But let's see," he said. "Maybe they are in the process of organizing and soon we'll see more of them again."

Others worry about the militants making house calls, one Kabul resident said.

"The Taliban have been going door-to-door searching for people who used to work for the government," the person said. "Everyone is just waiting to see if they come to their door."

Navy uses smart watches to track sleep

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

SAN DIEGO — The Navy is asking some sailors to wear devices such as smart watches and smart rings to monitor their sleep after exhausted ship crews was found to be a leading cause behind two collisions involving destroyers that left 17 sailors dead, according to the Naval Health Research Center.

The new devices, called “wearables,” are part of a new push to develop a “digital real-time fatigue monitoring and management capability for the fleet” that can be used to optimize watch-bill scheduling and staffing decisions based on sailors’ fatigue risk, said Rachel Markwald, a sleep and human performance research physiologist at NHRC, which studies medical and psychological factors that affect sailors’ performance and readiness.

“You can’t manage what you’re not monitoring,” Markwald said.

“So, if you imagine a department head who’s looking at a dashboard with their crew and you can see who’s well rested versus who’s not, then you can basically pull out from that if someone has a high fatigue level because of sleep deprivation.”

The use of smart devices in the program will help record more accurate data than the self-reported surveys used in previous sleep studies done by the center at Naval Base Point Loma in San Diego, Markwald said.

The devices are worn as a watch or a ring and collect the user’s movement and heart rate data to determine when and for how long the person sleeps, similar to an Apple Watch.

“(Wearables) are going to get closer to the truth,” he said. “In our other sleep studies that we’ve conducted at NHRC, we see this reoccurring theme where people tend to overestimate the time that they slept or the time in bed that

they had.”

So far, the NHRC has conducted trials twice with the crew of the USS Essex, a landing helicopter dock ship, Markwald said. They also plan to use the smart devices on the guided-missile destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS Higgins and littoral combat ship USS Manchester. All of the ships are homeported in San Diego.

If the pilot program goes well, Markwald said she could foresee a time when all sailors will wear the devices so ship commanders and schedule-makers could use the daily sleep data to determine who might not be rested enough to safely drive the ship.

The Navy has been doubling down on its efforts to address sailor exhaustion after a comprehensive review published in November 2017 found fatigue played a role in two fatal collisions that year.

On June 17, 2017, the USS Fitzgerald collided with a Philippine-

flagged container ship off Japan’s southern coast, killing 7 sailors. Two months later, 10 sailors died when the USS John S. McCain collided with a Liberian tanker near the Strait of Malacca between Malaysia and Singapore.

Following the review on the deadly crashes, the Navy issued an instruction directing leaders to ensure sailors get a minimum of 7 hours of sleep per day that’s mostly uninterrupted to support better sleep cycles for restfulness.

Naval Surface Force Pacific and Naval Surface Force Atlantic then updated that policy in December, ordering “sailors must be given the opportunity to obtain a minimum of 7.5 hours of sleep per 24-hour day.”

However, Markwald co-authored a report in June using self-reported data and sleep deficiency that found sailors report getting an average of 5.5 hours of sleep per day, primarily due to their workloads.

Fred moves through North as NC searches for missing

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Authorities combing areas of North Carolina flooded by the remnants of Tropical Storm Fred said Thursday that two people have been found dead and about 20 were unaccounted for.

Meanwhile, Fred — now a post-tropical cyclone — was pushing through New York and New England with drenching rains, and Tropical Storm Henri was sending dangerous waves onto East Coast beaches. Forecasters said Henri will likely strengthen into a hurricane as it approaches the northeastern U.S. next week.

In western North Carolina, Haywood County Emergency Services announced Thursday that two people were confirmed

dead after the flooding that prompted dozens of water rescues. Their identities were not immediately released. Around 20 people remained missing. The storm that blew through the area Tuesday made roads impassible, washed out bridges and swamped homes and businesses.

Another Fred-related death was reported earlier in the week in Florida, where a driver flipped his car into a flooded ditch.

About 10 families evacuated their homes in the rural town of Western in central New York.

“I’ve got three roads that are closed and 15 that have flooding,” said Western town Supervisor Diane Butler, who noted the town is still recovering from a tornado last month.

9 national forests in Calif. to close because of fires

Associated Press

PLACERVILLE, Calif. — Millions of acres of national forest in Northern California are being closed because of dangerous fire conditions that already have sent a score of blazes raging through the area and destroyed hundreds of homes.

The U.S. Forest Service announced Thursday that beginning on Aug. 22 it will close nine national forests from near Lake Tahoe at the Nevada border on the east all the way west to Six Rivers National Forest, which stretches north to the Oregon border and contains more than 1 million acres of land alone.

The Eldorado National Forest already had been closed because of the Caldor Fire, which gutted

the Sierra Nevada town of Grizzly Flats this week. The uncontained blaze had destroyed well over 100 square miles of land.

After growing to 10 times its original size in just two days, the fire’s progress slowed a bit on Thursday and it was pushing east into less-populated forest areas. However, some 25,000 people remained under evacuation orders.

Fire managers rushed resources to the fire growing on steep slopes in a forested region southwest of Lake Tahoe. More than 650 firefighters and 13 helicopters were assigned to the blaze, and air tankers from throughout the state were flying fire suppression missions there as conditions allowed, authorities said.

Florida virus hot zone is 'bracing for the worst'

Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — As quickly as one COVID-19 patient is discharged, another waits for a bed in northeast Florida, the hot zone of the state's latest surge. But the patients at Baptist Health's five hospitals across Jacksonville are younger and getting sick from the virus faster than people did last summer.

Baptist has over 500 COVID-19 patients, more than twice the number they had at the peak of Florida's July 2020 surge, and the onslaught isn't letting up. Hospital officials are anxiously monitoring 10 forecast models, converting empty spaces, adding over 100 beds and "bracing for the worst," said Dr. Timothy Groover, the hospitals' interim chief medical officer.

"Jacksonville is kind of the epicenter of this. They had one of the lowest vaccination rates going into July and that has probably really come back to bite them," said Justin Senior, CEO of the Florida Safety Net Hospital Alliance, which represents some of the largest hospitals in the state.

Duval County, which consists almost entirely of Jacksonville, is a racially diverse Democratic bastion, won by Joe Biden. The overwhelmingly white rural counties that surround it went firmly for Donald Trump.

But all had lower than average vaccination rates before the highly contagious delta variant swept through this corner of Florida, driving caseloads in a state that now accounts for one in five COVID-19 patients hospitalized nationwide.

Nearly one-third of Jacksonville's population is African American, and racial tensions here date back to the Civil Rights era, when 40 young Black people sat down at a whites-only department store lunch counter and were attacked with axes and baseball bats by 150 white men. That 1960 conflict was a turning point for equal rights in the city, but mistrust of government officials still lingers.

The city is just a five hour drive from the home of the infamous "Tuskegee syphilis study," in which the government used unsuspecting Black men as guinea pigs in a study of a sexually transmitted disease. Groover, who is Black, understands why people are wary, even though his hospital system promises the highest quality of care to its community, using the most advanced technologies.

The system is working overtime to get a pro-vaccine message out, but it's competing against rumors that filter through social media feeds to local BBQs and church congregations. Black leaders in the community told The Associated Press they've heard everything, including that the government is using the vaccine to implant tracking devices.

"A whole lot of rumors," said Dr. Rogers Cain, a Black primary care doctor with a predominantly Black practice, who said his elderly patients are easier to persuade to get the vaccine than his younger ones. "We've done a massive effort at educating. But it hasn't really come through."

3 senators test positive despite being vaccinated

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Three senators said Thursday they have tested positive for COVID-19 despite being vaccinated, a high-profile collection of breakthrough cases that comes as the highly infectious delta variant spreads rapidly across the United States.

Sens. Angus King, I-Maine, Roger Wicker, R-Miss., and John Hickenlooper, D-Colo., all said they have tested positive for the virus. Almost every member of the Senate spent long hours together on the chamber's floor last week in an all-night session of budget votes before leaving town for August recess.

King said he began feeling feverish Wednesday and took a COVID-19 test at his doctor's suggestion. "While I am not feeling great, I'm definitely feeling much better than I would have without the vaccine," King said.

Wicker's office said he tested positive for the virus Thursday morning.

"Senator Wicker is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, is in good health, and is being treated by his Tupelo-based physician," a statement from his staff read. "He is isolating, and everyone with whom Senator Wicker has come in close contact recently has been notified."

Hickenlooper announced his positive test a few hours later.

"I feel good but will isolate per docs instructions. I'm grateful for the vaccine (& the scientists behind it!) for limiting my symptoms," Hickenlooper tweeted. "If you haven't gotten your shot—get it today! And a booster when it's available too!"

Many worry as delta wave hits kids returning to school

Associated Press

The day before he was supposed to start fourth grade, Francisco Rosales was admitted to a Dallas hospital with COVID-19, struggling to breathe, with dangerously low oxygen levels and an uncertain outcome.

It wasn't supposed to be like this, thought his frightened mother, Yessica Gonzalez. Francisco was normally healthy and rambunctious. At 9, he was too young to get vaccinated, but most of the family had their shots. She had heard kids rarely got sick from the coronavirus.

But with the highly contagious delta vari-

ant spreading across the U.S., children are filling hospital intensive care beds instead of classrooms in record numbers, more even than at the height of the pandemic. Many are too young to get the vaccine, which is available only to those 12 and over.

The surging virus is spreading anxiety and causing turmoil and infighting among parents, administrators and politicians around the U.S., especially in states like Florida and Texas, where Republican governors have barred schools from making youngsters wear masks.

With millions of children returning to

classrooms this month, experts say the stakes are unquestionably high.

While pediatric COVID-19 hospitalization rates are lower than those for adults, they have surged in recent weeks, reaching 0.41 per 100,000 children ages 0 to 17, compared with 0.31 per 100,000, the previous high set in mid-January, according to an Aug. 13 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Dr. Francis Collins, head of the National Institutes of Health, noted that over 400 U.S. children have died of COVID-19 since the pandemic began.

Court keeps Texas abortion method ban

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A Texas law outlawing an abortion method commonly used to end second-trimester pregnancies has been upheld by a federal appeals court in New Orleans.

The 2017 law in question has never been enforced. It seeks to prohibit the use of forceps to remove a fetus from the womb without first using an injected drug or a suction procedure to ensure the fetus is dead.

Abortion rights advocates argued that the law, known as SB8 in court records, effectively outlaws what is often the safest method of abortion for women in the second trimester of pregnancy. The procedure is medically known as dilation and evacuation.

They also argued that fetuses cannot feel pain during the gestation period affected by the law.

Texas legislators banned the procedure with a law that describes it as “dismember-

ment abortion.” Abortion rights supporters argued in court that one alternative provided in the law, using suction to remove a fetus, also results in dismemberment.

A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals blocked enforcement of the law last year. But Texas was granted a rehearing by the full court, and a majority of the 14 appellate judges who heard arguments in January (three of the court’s 17 active judges were recused) sided with Texas on Wednesday. The opinion, by judges Jennifer Walker Elrod and Don Willett, said “the record shows that doctors can safely perform D&Es and comply with SB8 using methods that are already in widespread use.”

Judge James Dennis wrote a dissent, joined by judges Carl Stewart and James Graves. A separate dissent was written by Judge Stephen Higginson, joined by Gregg Costa.

Dennis said the Texas law, “under the guise of regulation, makes it a felony to perform the most common and safe abortion procedure employed during the second trimester.”

The Center for Reproductive Rights is analyzing the decision and considering all legal options, said its president and CEO, Nancy Northup.

“Texas has been hellbent on legislating abortion out of existence, and it is galling that a federal court would uphold a law that so clearly defies decades of Supreme Court precedent,” Northup said.

“Texans celebrate today’s long-awaited victory,” Texas Right to Life Director of Media and Communication Kimberlyn Schwartz said in the release. “Anyone can see the cruelty of dismemberment abortions, ripping a child’s body apart while her heart is still beating. We’re grateful the judges recognized this horror.”

Students with severe disabilities to get debt relief

Associated Press

The Biden administration announced Thursday it will automatically erase student loan debt for more than 300,000 Americans with severe disabilities that leave them unable to earn significant incomes.

The move will wipe out more than \$5.8 billion in debt, according to the Education Department, and it marks the start of a broader overhaul of a program that has been criticized for having overly burdensome rules.

“We’ve heard loud and clear from borrowers with disabilities and advocates about the need for this change and we are excited to follow through on it,” Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said in a statement.

The federal government offers student debt relief for people who are “totally and permanently disabled” and have limited in-

comes. But the current rules require them to submit documentation of their disability and undergo a three-year monitoring period to prove they’re earning little pay.

Tens of thousands of people have been dropped from the program and had their loans reinstated simply because they failed to submit proof of their earnings, however, and critics say the complex rules deter some from applying.

Advocates have pressed the Education Department to eliminate the monitoring period entirely and to provide automatic debt relief to people who the Social Security Administration already identifies as permanently disabled.

Under the new action, both demands will be met. Starting in September, the Education Department will start erasing student

debt for 323,000 Americans identified in Social Security records as being permanently disabled.

Borrowers will be notified once they have been approved for relief. All of the loans are expected to be discharged by the end of the year.

The department also plans to eliminate the program’s three-year monitoring period, which was previously suspended during the pandemic. That change is expected to be cemented during a federal rule-making process set to start in October, the agency said.

“This is going to be a smooth process for our borrowers,” Cardona said in a call with reporters. “They’re not going to have to be applying for it or getting bogged down by paperwork.”

Richards out as ‘Jeopardy!’ host after past scrutinized

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Producer Mike Richards stepped down as host of “Jeopardy!” after a report about past misogynistic comments surfaced this week.

Richards was chosen last week as the successor to Alex Trebek, but his selection was seen as divisive from the beginning after the show embarked on a broad search that in-

cluded actors, sports figures, journalists and celebrities.

Earlier this week, a report on the website The Ringer revealed demeaning comments about women that Richards had made on a podcast. The clips were removed online after the report was posted.

“Over the last several days it has become clear that moving forward as host would be

too much of a distraction for our fans and not the right move for the show,” Richards said in a note to the “Jeopardy!” staff on Friday. “As such, I will be stepping down as host effective immediately. As a result, we will be canceling production today.”

Richards said a search for a new host will begin again. The show will resume production with guest hosts, he said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police probe photos of officers who seem asleep

DE DOVER — Dover police are investigating after photos of two officers who appear to be sleeping in their patrol vehicles were posted on social media.

Police said in a Facebook post Tuesday that the department was looking into the matter and that such “behavior is unacceptable to our agency, unfair to our citizens, and certainly outside of department policy.”

One photo shows an officer leaned back in his driver’s seat with his eyes shut and his mouth partially open, The News Journal reported. The other shows an officer leaned back in a police SUV driver’s seat facing away from the car window and toward a computer screen.

State troopers’ blood run saves life of new mother

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Five Minnesota state troopers helped save the life of a hemorrhaging new mom last month. On Tuesday, Jenaifer Blair got to personally thank them.

The Star Tribune reported that Blair had just given birth to her third child on July 21. She started hemorrhaging and her only chance to survive was to have a blood transfusion.

But the hospital didn’t have enough blood on hand and the nearest supply was 80 miles away.

Five state troopers jumped in to save the day. The first trooper relayed four units of blood from the American Red Cross in St. Paul to a nearby airport, then two others flew it by helicopter to the Hutchinson Municipal

Airport and handed the blood off to two troopers on the ground who sped to the hospital. It all happened in just over an hour. On Tuesday, a Blair met the troopers responsible for saving her life.

Man charged with 47 counts of animal cruelty

MD LEONARDTOWN — Maryland prosecutors have charged a northern Virginia man with animal cruelty after the discovery of a suspected dog fighting arena earlier this year.

The St. Mary’s County State’s Attorney’s Office charged Damien Terrell Wilson, 48, of Woodbridge, Va., with 47 counts of animal cruelty last week, WTOP-FM reported.

St. Mary’s County sheriff’s deputies got a tip about a suspected dog fighting arena on a power line cut-through in February and found evidence of dog fighting at the location. Investigators found paraphernalia tied to dog fighting and 11 dogs, but officials said three dogs were euthanized when behavioral evaluations determined that rehabilitation would be too dangerous.

Water restrictions imposed amid drought

MN MINNEAPOLIS — The drought in Minnesota continues to get worse, exposing rocks, riverbeds and islands in the St. Croix and Minnesota rivers drying up entire channels in the mighty Mississippi.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has imposed water restrictions for much of the state. Utilities are to

limit water use to no more than 25% above January levels.

The restrictions apply to about 300 communities within three major watersheds which include the Mississippi River Headwaters and the Rainy River and Red River.

That covers the Twin Cities, nearly all of central Minnesota and much of northern Minnesota.

Boy, 14, killed when vehicle strikes go-kart

AL MIDFIELD — An Alabama teenager has been killed in a go-kart crash, authorities said.

The 14-year-old boy died Wednesday evening, as he rode the go-kart on a street in Midfield and was struck by a vehicle, Al.com reported.

The driver stayed at the crash site and was cooperating with police, Midfield Police Chief Jesse Bell said.

The boy was taken to Children’s of Alabama, where he was pronounced dead.

School officials identified the teen as Josiah Scott, an eighth-grader at Rutledge Middle School. Grief counselors were to be at the school Thursday, they said.

Kids lead effort to pardon wrongly convicted ‘witch’

MA BOSTON — More than three centuries after a Massachusetts woman was wrongly convicted of witchcraft and sentenced to death, she’s finally on the verge of being exonerated — thanks to a curious eighth-grade civics class.

State Sen. Diana DiZoglio, a Democrat from Methuen, has

introduced legislation to clear the name of Elizabeth Johnson Jr., who was condemned in 1693 at the height of the Salem Witch Trials but never executed.

DiZoglio said she was inspired by sleuthing done by a group of 13- and 14-year-olds at North Andover Middle School. Civics teacher Carrie LaPierre’s students painstakingly researched Johnson and the steps that would need to be taken to make sure she was formally pardoned.

If lawmakers approve the measure, Johnson will be the last accused witch to be cleared, according to Witches of Massachusetts Bay, a group devoted to the history and lore of the 17th-century witch hunts.

Suit against 3 ‘ghost gun’ makers is announced

CA SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco’s district attorney said Wednesday he is suing three California companies that make and distribute “ghost guns,” the untraceable, build-it-yourself weaponry that accounted for nearly half the firearms recovered in gun killings in the city last year.

District Attorney Chesa Boudin announced the lawsuit at a news conference, alongside advocates of tougher gun laws.

The suit names Blackhawk Manufacturing Group, GS Performance and MDX Corp., three companies that are not based in San Francisco but are responsible for producing a large share of the firearms found in the city and elsewhere in the state, Boudin said.

“Guns are flooding our streets. Enough is enough,” Boudin said.

— From wire reports

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Alabama QB Young undaunted by hype, high expectations

Associated Press

Alabama quarterback Bryce Young has made lucrative deals before starting his first college game, but he doesn't think that or the preseason hype surrounding him will be a distraction.

To Young, the "culture" that Nick Saban has created for the program won't allow it.

"I think really it says a lot about Alabama, and it's honestly not too hard with the coaching that we have," Young said Thursday. "Coach Saban from Day 1 when all the external stuff started to pop up—and it's been going on for a while with there being whatever distractions there may be—that's something we preach a lot about making sure we keep the main thing the main thing."

"We've talked a lot about that in-house, and that's something that we live by."

Young spoke via Zoom in his first interview with reporters since arriving in Tuscaloosa as the country's top dual-threat quarterback prospect in the class of 2020.

Saban said in July that Young already had received nearly seven figures' worth of name, image and likeness deals. The California sophomore is set to replace Heisman Trophy finalist Mac Jones at quarterback when the Crimson Tide open Sept. 4 against Miami in Atlanta.

Other than mop-up duties, Young hadn't been seen all that much by Alabama fans before the spring game.

Then he showed off his athleticism and arm, passing for 333 yards and a 59-yard touchdown to tight end Cameron Latu.

The next game he suits up for will be real. Despite the Tide losing four other first-round

NFL Draft picks from the offense—Young will lead a team picked preseason No. 1 and favored to repeat as national champion.

He's OK with those expectations after leading high school powerhouse Mater Dei in Santa Ana, Calif., where he took over for current Georgia starter JT Daniels.

"There obviously are expectations, but regardless of what happened in high school or any past experiences I've had, coming to Bama is where you come for pressure and come for expectations," Young said. "Everyone here when they signed on the dotted line and decided to come here, we knew it was going to come with expectations."

"Saban sets that standard for us immediately during recruiting and when we step into the building, so it's not something I was blindsided by."

Burglary charges for six Wildcats

Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Six University of Kentucky football players have been charged with first-degree burglary, with one also accused of first degree wanton endangerment, following the investigation of an incident last March at a private party.

The Lexington Police Department said in a release Thursday that offensive lineman Reuben Adams, running back Robert McClain, defensive back Andru Phillips, receiver Earnest Sanders IV, safety Devito Tisdale and defensive back Joel Williams were charged with first-degree burglary. Tisdale also was charged with wanton endangerment for allegedly pointing a gun at one of the victims.

The players face arraignment Friday in Fayette County District Court.

Wildcats coach Mark Stoops said in a statement that he was aware of the current situation and that the program had been aware of the matter since March.

"We are evaluating the current situation as we receive more information," Stoops added.

The release stated that on March 6 three individuals entered a private party uninvited at a residence and were asked to leave. They became upset and threatened to return, the release added, and came back later with additional individuals.

They forced their way inside and one suspect was observed pointing a firearm at a victim, the release stated.

Kentucky's athletic department said in a statement that: "The institution and athletics department take these matters very seriously. We are closely evaluating this issue before determining next steps."

All six players were part of the 2020 recruiting class with McClain, Tisdale and Williams seeing action in many of Kentucky's games last fall.

Arrest made 15 years after Miami Hurricanes player's fatal shooting

Associated Press

MIAMI—A former University of Miami football player was arrested Thursday in connection with the 2006 fatal shooting of his teammate Bryan Pata.

Rashaun Jones, 35, of Lake City, was arrested in Marion County on a first-degree murder warrant by Miami-Dade police and the U.S. Marshals Service, police spokesperson Alvaro Zabala said.

"The Pata family has waited a long time to see the individual they had believed involved in Brian's death arrested and charged," Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said in a statement. "While the time needed to build sufficient evidence to ethically

charge in a homicide can sometimes feel endless, families should know that the passion and determination of police and prosecutors to resolve unsolved cases does not diminish."

Pata was expected to be an early pick in the 2007 NFL Draft following his fourth season with the Hurricanes. The 22-year-old, 6-foot-4, 280-pound defensive lineman was shot several times outside of his Kendall apartment on Nov. 7, 2006. Pata had been returning from campus in his black Infiniti. Some witnesses claimed to hear arguing and then gunshots. Despite having hundreds of dollars in his wallet, neither the car nor the cash were taken.

Investigators said they learned through interviews that Pata and

Jones, who played three seasons with the Hurricanes, had experienced confrontations before the shooting. Pata previously beat his teammate during a physical altercation, officials said. And Pata's brother told investigators that Jones had threatened to shoot Pata two months before his death. Despite the urging of his brother, Pata never reported the threat.

During two interviews with detectives, Jones told investigators that he was at his own home and never left on the night of Pata's death. But records show that Jones' cellphone was using different cell towers around the time of the shooting, and an eyewitness in the area at the time of the shooting identified Jones in a photo lineup, police said.

Brawl ends Raiders-Rams practice

Associated Press

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — The Los Angeles Rams' second joint practice with the Las Vegas Raiders ended early when the teams had a prolonged brawl Thursday.

The fight began during special teams work, and it started and stopped several times before coaches Sean McVay and Jon Gruden decided to scrap the remaining periods of practice, which had been scheduled to last for another 45 minutes.

"Everybody knows better," Gruden said. "It wasn't everybody fighting. It'll be on TV. You'll see a bunch of guys screaming and yelling, but it was two guys in a special teams period, and then it was a lot of trash talking that just escalated. Just sickening, really, it's just stupidity, but I'm done with that. It's just child's play to me."

The culprits weren't easily identified in the mass of players working on punt blocking and punt coverage outside the Rams' training complex, but punches appeared to be thrown by both teams.

Gruden and McVay weren't pleased by the disruption to the practice plan for the Raiders and the Rams, who will meet again in a preseason game Saturday night at SoFi Stadium. When the fight finally calmed, Gruden could be heard ordering his players off the field: "To the bus!"

McVay, Gruden's employee in Tampa Bay 13 seasons ago, called the skirmish "unfortunate." The Rams finished up the practice against themselves while the Raiders boarded buses back to their hotel.

"I did think that there was a lot of good work that we were getting in," McVay said. "We only had a little bit left, and it felt like the best decision, just based on kind of the temperature of the situation, was (to) bag the last eight plays in the team period that we had."

All-Pro Aaron Donald took a rest day for the Rams, but he wasn't surprised to see what happened from the sideline.

"It's football, man," Donald said. "Honestly, every joint practice I've ever been a part of, there's always a fight. The way things happened yesterday, how physical it was, I was pretty sure it was going to come back and be a lot of BS."

The teams had a few minor scraps in Wednesday's first practice, but nothing that significantly interrupted the flow. The Raiders' defense was the biggest winner from the opening practice, putting together a solid performance against the Rams' reconfigured offense under quarterback Matthew Stafford.

One brouhaha Wednesday started after Raiders running back Josh Jacobs received a zealous hit from All-Pro Rams

cornerback Jalen Ramsey. Jacobs later tweeted: "Love this team."

"(It was) definitely about how the whole situation was handled," Jacobs said when asked what his tweet meant. "If you look at our guys and see how we reacted, and see their guys and how they just let some things happen ... I mean, I like the fact our team got the fighting spirit, and not only that, but they had each other's back."

Although the fight wasn't caused by the historic rivalry between these two venerable franchises, it was somewhat of a reflection of that tension. The Rams and Raiders play in different divisions, but they have a joint history with Los Angeles that continues even today, 27 years after the Raiders left town.

The Raiders are still probably the most popular team in the metropolitan area because of their Generation X and early millennial fans from the franchise's mostly successful 13-year run at the Coliseum while the Rams were based in Anaheim.

The Rams are the most popular team located in the LA market since they returned home five years ago, but overtaking the Raiders could require a generational shift.

The Rams and Raiders only have to wait until Saturday for the next chapter of their rivalry. Thousands of Raiders fans are expected at SoFi.

Thomas, Rahm tied for lead at Northern Trust

Associated Press

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — Jon Rahm returned from a month off and played like he was never gone. Justin Thomas took the advice of a 15-year-old and had his lowest score of the year.

Both opened with an 8-under 63 on Thursday at The Northern Trust as the PGA Tour's postseason began with no shortage of bizarre developments.

Rahm, who missed his chance at the Olympics because of what amounts to a false positive test result for COVID-19, expected a little rust in his game. It just didn't show on his card. He chipped in for birdie, saved par on the next two holes and was on his way.

Thomas had benched his putter for bad behavior after he spent too much of the year not seeing putts go in the hole. But during his junior event last week, a teenager asked why he wasn't using his old putter.

"And I found myself defending myself to this 15-year-old," he said. "I was like, 'Why am I not using this thing?' It's not like I'm making a lot of putts with what I have. If you're putting well, any of us can go out and putt with anything."

He didn't hole all of them, but enough to record nine birdies for his lowest round since a 62 last November in Mexico.

Bryson DeChambeau also made nine birdies. He was eight shots behind. His round of 71 was noteworthy because of the pars he made on Nos. 4 and 10. Those were the only pars he made all day. The nine birdies were offset by five bogeys and two double bogeys.

It was the first time in 10 years someone shot par or better with two pars or fewer.

Not to be overlooked was Dustin Johnson, one of the most stress-free players in golf — at least he looks that way — who uttered words rarely heard: "Threw me for

a loop."

He was hitting drivers on the range, and hitting them well, right before teeing off when a few of them came off the club funny and another one sounded funny. His driver cracked, and Johnson headed to the first tee with 13 clubs and one head cover for his 5-wood.

He had a spare 3-wood in the car — but no driver — and got that on the third hole. He also decided on a putter switch at the last minute. He still managed a 70.

Otherwise, there was a range of good golf in surprisingly strong wind off the Hudson River across from the Manhattan skyline.

Harold Varner III had a 66 in the morning, boosting his postseason chances. He is No. 72 in the FedEx Cup standings, and only the top 70 after this week advance to the next tournament. With the points at quadruple value, some big movements are expected.

Stassi helps Angels rally past Tigers

Associated Press

DETROIT — Max Stassi hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the eighth inning and the Los Angeles Angels overcame an eight-run deficit to beat the Detroit Tigers 13-10 on Thursday.

Miguel Cabrera drove in four runs to help Detroit open a 10-2 lead after five innings. He had multiple hits for the first time since Aug. 11, when he hit homer No. 499. He grounded out with a chance to reach the milestone and pull the Tigers within a run in the eighth, finishing the day 2-for-5.

Shohei Ohtani went 2-for-3 with two walks, two runs scored and a sacrifice fly for the Angels.

Mike Mayers (4-4) pitched a perfect seventh and Austin Warren earned his first save with two perfect innings.

Michael Fulmer (5-5) took the loss, giving up three runs on three hits and a walk in the pivotal eighth inning.

Mariners 9, Rangers 8 (11): Ty France hit a two-run homer in the 11th inning and visiting Seattle completed a three-game

sweep after Texas forced extra innings with five runs in the ninth.

France went deep off Joe Barlow (0-1), who would have given up another homer if not for a spectacular inning-ending, leaping catch by Adolis Garcia.

Yankees 7, Twins 5: Luke Voit had a two-run double in his team's four-run third inning and host New York beat Minnesota for its season-high seventh straight victory.

Voit gave the Yankees a 3-0 lead with a double down the left-field line off John Gant (0-1) and then scored on a sacrifice fly by Anthony Rizzo. Voit's clutch hit came two nights after he drove in the decisive runs in a double-header sweep of Boston.

Dodgers 4, Mets 1: Trea Turner went 2-for-4 and drove in a run to lead host Los Angeles past New York for its seventh straight win.

The Dodgers moved within 2 ½ games of the NL West-leading San Francisco Giants, who were idle. The defending World Series champions haven't been in first place since the end of

April.

Athletics 5, White Sox 4: Matt Olson slugged a go-ahead two-run homer, Matt Chapman added a solo shot and visiting Oakland rallied past Chicago.

Sean Murphy also homered as the A's avoided a sweep in their four-game series with AL Central-leading Chicago. Oakland ended a four-game skid and maintained its grip on the second AL wild-card spot.

Rays 7, Orioles 2: Brandon Lowe hit his career-high 29th homer, Shane McCann won his fourth straight start, and AL East-leading Tampa Bay handed visiting Baltimore its 15th consecutive loss.

The Orioles also dropped 14 in a row from May 18-31. The team record losing streak is 21 games, set at the beginning of the 1988 season.

Astros 6, Royals 3 (10): Aledys Díaz singled in the go-ahead run in the 10th inning and Houston avoided a four-game sweep at Kansas City.

Díaz finished 3-for-4 with a double and two RBIs for the AL West leaders.

Cardinals 8, Brewers 4: Tyler O'Neill and Lars Nootbaar hit back-to-back home runs in a five-run fifth inning to help host St. Louis beat Milwaukee.

Nolan Arenado also drove in a pair of runs as St. Louis erased a three-run deficit to avoid a three-game sweep.

Diamondbacks 6, Phillies 2: Madison Bumgarner held visiting Philadelphia to one hit in the first seven innings and Arizona completed a three-game sweep.

Bumgarner (7-7) went eight innings, giving up three hits and one run to help NL-worst Arizona finish 6-1 on its homestand. He walked one, struck out five and hit two batters, throwing 105 pitches.

Reds 6, Marlins 1: Joey Votto hit a three-run homer, Luis Castillo pitched seven innings of one-run ball and host Cincinnati beat Miami.

Votto's 428-foot shot into the seats in right-center — his team-leading 27th homer — highlighted the Reds' four-run fourth after Miami right-hander Nick Neidert (1-2) faced the minimum in the first three innings.

Nadal pulls out of US Open, citing injured foot

Associated Press

MADRID — Rafael Nadal joined Roger Federer in sitting out the U.S. Open, citing a chronic foot injury that will force him to miss the rest of the season.

Nadal announced his decision in a video on social media Friday, saying the injury to his left foot will keep him from the year's last major tournament.

"I am very sorry to announce that I won't be able to keep playing tennis during the 2021 season," Nadal said. "But, as you know, I have been suffering too much with my foot for the last year now and I missed a lot of important events for me."

Federer, who needs knee surgery, said last weekend he would not play in New York.

Also missing from the field at Flushing Meadows will be reigning champion Dominic Thiem, who said this week he is end-

ing his season after injuring his right wrist in June.

Nadal and Federer share the men's record of 20 Grand Slam singles titles with Novak Djokovic, who will be trying to not only to move ahead of his rivals but also complete a calendar-year Grand Slam at the U.S. Open.

Djokovic won the Australian Open in February, the French Open in June and Wimbledon in July.

Jets lose Lawson, Lewis to injury

GREEN BAY, Wis. — New York Jets defensive end Carl Lawson will miss the season after rupturing his Achilles tendon in practice Thursday, a devastating loss for a team seeking to turn the corner under new coach Robert Saleh.

Backup safety Zane Lewis also suffered a season-ending knee injury.

Both players were carted off the field during Thursday's joint practice session with the Green Bay Packers.

The Jets announced later in the day that Lawson had ruptured his Achilles tendon while Lewis had torn his patella tendon and sprained his medial collateral ligament.

The 23-year-old Lewis was entering his second season with the Jets and was making the switch from cornerback, the position he has played most of his career, to safety. He was having a solid transition with a good camp, intercepting three passes in team drills during camp.

Lewis played at the Air Force Academy and was the first Air Force senior to apply for — and receive — deferred service time. He went undrafted last year, but signed with Arizona and spent last summer with the Cardinals before getting cut late in camp. The Jets claimed him the next day.