

ISIS threats force Kabul exit changes

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Potential Islamic State threats against Americans in Afghanistan are forcing the U.S. military to develop new ways to get evacuees to the airport in Kabul, a senior U.S. official said Saturday, adding a new complication to the already chaotic efforts to get people out of the country after its swift fall to the Taliban.

The official said that small groups of Americans and possibly other civilians will be given specific instructions on what to do, including movement to transit points where they can be gathered up by the military. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

The changes come as the U.S. Embassy issued a new security warning Saturday telling citizens not to travel to the Kabul airport without individual instruction from a U.S. government representative. Officials declined to provide more specifics about the ISIS threat but described it as significant,

and said there have been no confirmed attacks as yet.

Time is running out ahead of Biden's Aug. 31 deadline to withdraw most remaining U.S. troops, and the president on Friday did not commit to extending it. He faces growing criticism as videos depict pandemonium and occasional violence outside the airport, and as Afghans who fear the Taliban's retaliation send desperate pleas not to be left behind.

Crowds remain outside the Kabul airport's concrete barriers, clutching documents and sometimes stunned-looking children, blocked from flight by coils of razor wire.

Tens of thousands of translators and other Afghan wartime helpers, along with their close family members, are seeking evacuation after the Taliban's shockingly swift takeover of Afghanistan in a little over a week's time. The fall of Kabul marked the final chapter of America's longest war,

which began after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Evacuations continued, though some outgoing flights were far from full because of the airport chaos, Taliban checkpoints and bureaucratic challenges. A German flight on Friday night carried 172 evacuees, but two subsequent flights carried out just seven and eight people, respectively.

On Friday, a defense official said about 5,700 people, including about 250 Americans, were flown out of Kabul aboard 16 C-17 transport planes, guarded by a temporary U.S. military deployment that's building to 6,000 troops. On each of the previous two days, about 2,000 people were airlifted.

Officials also confirmed that U.S. military helicopters flew beyond the Kabul airport to scoop up 169 Americans seeking to evacuate. No one knows how many U.S. citizens remain in Afghanistan, but estimates have ranged as high as 15,000.

First stirrings of resistance to Taliban's rule emerge

The Washington Post

KABUL — Groups of armed Afghans on Friday attacked the Taliban, driving Afghanistan's new rulers out of three northern districts, the first assault against the Islamist militants since they swept into Kabul and seized control of the government.

Local anti-Taliban commanders claimed in interviews they had killed as many as 30 of the group's fighters and captured 20 in the takeover of the districts in Baghlan province, just over 100 miles north of the capital. Former Afghan service members were joined in the fight, they said, by local civilians. Images shared online showed celebrations as the red, green and black Afghan national flag — rather than the white flag of the Taliban — was raised

over government buildings.

"We have ignited something that is historic in Afghanistan," said Sediqullah Shuja, 28, a former Afghan soldier who took part in Friday's uprising. "Taliban fighters had armored vehicles, but people threw stones at Taliban fighters and drove them out."

"As long as we are alive," he said, "we do not accept the Taliban's rule."

Friday's attack is the latest sign of defiance toward the Taliban, ranging from Afghans refusing to fly the white Taliban flag to women protesting to preserve their rights. Together, they illuminate some of the obstacles the Taliban faces as it seeks to form a government deemed acceptable by a broad spectrum of Afghans and by the international community, espe-

cially donors.

Whether Friday's attack is a sign of an emerging new military front against the Taliban remains to be seen.

Taliban officials were not immediately available for comment Friday about events in Baghlan. But a tweet from a pro-Taliban account claimed the clashes killed 15 Taliban and wounded 15, and that the Taliban was betrayed after offering amnesty to locals.

"All those who committed this crime must be killed. The doors of conversation are closed," the tweet read.

Friday's assault to retake the three districts of Puli Hisar, Dih Salah and Bano — which was confirmed by a former defense minister — came after Taliban fighters conducted house-to-house searches in the Andarab

valley of the province, local commanders said.

As in most parts of Afghanistan, the Taliban had taken over the districts with little resistance in recent weeks. Shuja said that the local residents had told the Taliban fighters they can govern as long as they don't enter their villages and homes.

So when the Taliban came to conduct searches, former Afghan military servicemen, along with civilians, decided to rise up. They drove out the Taliban in less than a day.

Abdul Rahman, 53, a former commander at Baghlan prison, said he mobilized hundreds of local forces and pushed the Taliban out. He said that the uprising left 30 Taliban fighters dead and 20 in custody — claims that could not be independently verified.

18 students leave US Naval Academy

The Washington Post

Eighteen midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., have been expelled or resigned following an investigation into cheating on a physics exam in December 2020, officials said Friday.

More than 650 midshipmen took the final exam that month for General Physics I, which was administered through an online platform. The students were given written and verbal instructions that said they could not use outside websites or sources to complete the test, according to a statement from the academy.

Vice Adm. Sean Buck, the academy's superintendent, initiated an investigation after learning midshipmen may have used outside sources, including other websites, during the exam, officials said.

Academy leaders were also made aware that some midshipmen used an anonymous chat platform to discuss the exam after they finished.

"Character development is an ongoing process and midshipmen must make the choice to live honorably each day and earn

the trust that comes with a commission in the Navy or Marine Corps," Buck said in a statement Friday. "This incident demonstrates that we must place an increased focus on character and integrity within the entire brigade."

Despite efforts by the physics department to prevent cheating — including requiring midshipmen to submit their calculations from the test on a sheet of paper — 105 midshipmen were identified to have probably accessed unauthorized resources during the test.

Naval officials withheld the names of those involved but said 61% of them are varsity athletes and 83% are men. Five of the midshipmen were at the top quartile of their class, while 66 were at the bottom. The majority of the students were sophomores.

"The biggest vulnerability identified was inadequate proctoring," officials said in the statement. The academy now "strongly advises" instructors to use paper-based, in-person tests and use browser security programs during online exams.

Eighty-two midshipmen were found to

have violated the school's honor code, and were retained in the brigade with sanctions and entered into a five-month remediation program, according to officials. Four other students were found not in violation and one is awaiting adjudication by the Brigade Honor Board. As the investigation proceeded, some students chose to submit resignations while others were expelled.

The entire brigade of midshipmen conducted a day-long conference in April that included "intensive training and discussions on honor," officials said, adding "there will be a renewed focus on character and professional development throughout this academic year."

Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, D-Md., who chairs the Naval Academy's board of visitors, issued a statement supporting the findings of the investigation. The board oversees matters related to discipline, financial affairs and curriculum at the academy.

"The Academy's Honor Concept is clear and anyone who violates it must be held accountable," Ruppersberger said Friday.

Battle is brewing over future of seven Navy cruisers

The Daily Press

NORFOLK, Va. — To pay for the ships and unmanned vessels the Navy hopes to build over the next few years, it wants to decommission seven cruisers, a move the two Virginia representatives on the House Armed Services Committee's sea-power panel plan to contest.

Cruisers have a critical role in the U.S. Navy, says Democrat Rep. Elaine Luria, whose 2nd District includes Virginia Beach and parts of Norfolk. Luria spent some of her time in the Navy as executive officer of the cruiser USS Anzio.

Cruisers serve as the air defense center for carrier strike groups, with a team of sailors responsible for tracking aircraft and missile movements around the group. That means figuring out within minutes if a signal on radar or other sensors is a threat, and if so, how to block it.

In addition, cruisers carry more guided missiles than other ships, with 120 cells compared to 90 for guided missile destroyers and 24 for carriers, Luria said. Five

of the cruisers in question are based in Norfolk.

Cruisers' weapons include the Sea Sparrow anti-aircraft and anti-missile system and the long range Tomahawks that strike land targets, like the Syrian chemical weapons facilities the Navy took out in 2017, Luria said.

"There's really nothing that will be able to replace them in the next five years," she said.

The Navy's argument comes down to money.

The cruisers are aging — the warships slated for decommissioning were delivered between 1988 and 1993 — and Vice Adm. Jim Kilby, deputy chief of naval operations, told the sea-power subcommittee earlier this summer that it would cost nearly \$2.8 billion to retain all seven in service over the next two years.

The price tag to modernize just USS Anzio and Hue City is about \$1.5 billion, he said.

Earlier this year, repairs to Vella Gulf kept it from joining the USS Dwight D. Ei-

senhower for two and a half months, he said. The cruiser had to return to Norfolk just days after deploying with the strike group in February when crew members found a fuel oil leak while operating in heavy seas.

In mid-March, while at sea to test repairs to its fuel oil system, crew members found another leak, requiring a return to port to replace a deteriorated tank top. In early April, as the crew prepared to head out to sea again, they discovered bits of metal and welding slag in the lube oil system. Cleaning and flushing it took another two weeks.

"All that, in my mind, has to go into the mix when we factor the availability and reliability of those ships," Kilby said. "Those missile tubes will only count if they're underway alongside the carrier."

The sea-power subcommittee has formally approved the Navy budget that calls for decommissioning the seven cruisers, comprised of the Norfolk-based USS Anzio, Hue City, Monterey, San Jacinto and Vella Gulf as well as a cruiser based in San Diego and another in Pearl Harbor.

Demand for COVID-19 antibody drugs soars

Associated Press

People infected with COVID-19 were captured in a photo this week lying on the floor in pain while waiting for antibody infusions at a treatment site set up inside the library in Jacksonville, Fla.

The image has become a vivid illustration of the huge demand for the once-neglected COVID-19 drugs in the states hit hardest by a summer surge of infections being driven by the highly contagious delta variant.

"They were moaning and obviously in a lot of pain. They were miserable," said Louie Lopez, who shot the photograph as he waited for more than two hours to receive the treatment.

Antibody treatments remain one of a handful of therapies that can blunt the worst effects of COVID-19, and they are the only option available to people with mild-to-moderate cases who aren't yet in the hospital.

They have risen in demand in states seeing a spike in infections, including Florida, Louisiana and Texas, where hospitalizations among the unvaccinated are overwhelming the health care system.

White House officials reported recently that federal shipments of the drugs increased five-fold last month to nearly 110,000 doses, with the vast majority going to states with low vaccination rates.

The main drug in use is Regeneron's dual-antibody cocktail, which has been purchased in mass quantities by the U.S. government. It's the same drug former President Donald Trump received when he was hospitalized with COVID-19 last October.

The drugs are only recommended for people at the highest risk of progressing to severe COVID-19, but regulators have slowly broadened who can qualify. The list of conditions now includes older age, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy and more than a half-dozen other issues.

Biden picks Emanuel as Japan ambassador, Burns for China post

Associated Press

President Joe Biden is nominating former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to serve as his envoy to Japan and former senior State Department official Nicholas Burns to serve as his ambassador to China.

The White House formally announced the much-anticipated nominations Friday.

Emanuel was also a former three-term congressman who served as President Barack Obama's first White House chief of staff and was a senior adviser in President Bill Clinton's administration.

If confirmed by the Senate, Emanuel will be dispatched to Tokyo at a critical point in the U.S.-Japan relationship as Biden has made strengthening relations with partners in the Pacific a priority as he increases focus on China.

Biden with his pick of Burns turns to a seasoned career foreign service officer to serve as his envoy to arguably the most difficult diplomatic mission. The president has repeatedly called China the United States' most signif-

icant economic competitor and a rising national security concern and subsequently has sought to center his foreign policy on the Pacific in the early going of his administration.

The White House also announced that Biden was tapping Michael Battle, a former diplomat, academic, and military chaplain to serve as ambassador to Tanzania.

Biden had considered naming Emanuel to serve as his transportation secretary but ultimately passed him over in the face of fierce opposition from some in the liberal wing of the Democratic Party who took issue with his record on policing and school closures in predominantly Black neighborhoods during his time as Chicago's mayor.

Burns previously served as undersecretary of state under President George W. Bush and as U.S. envoy to Greece and NATO. He also served as State Department spokesman and spent five years on the White House National Security Council, a tenure that overlapped the Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush administrations.

Ex-tour manager tells of bribery in R. Kelly trial

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A former tour manager for R. Kelly reluctantly testified Friday that he paid a \$500 bribe to a government worker to get the singer Aaliyah a fake identification card so Kelly could secretly marry her when she was 15 years old.

Demetrius Smith told a jury at Kelly's sex-trafficking trial that after he went into a Chicago-area welfare office in 1994, he brazenly approached an employee who was taking ID photos.

"Hey, want to make some money?" he said he asked the employee before handing over the cash. He was confident the bribe would work because "everybody needs some money," he added.

The welfare card was one of two fake IDs used to clear the way for the R&B legend to marry Aaliyah after he began a sexual relationship with her and believed she had become pregnant. A marriage license that was put into evidence falsely listed her age as 18; Kelly was 27 at the time.

Prosecutors say Kelly wanted to use the marriage, which was later annulled, to shield himself from criminal charges related to having sex with a minor and to prevent her from testifying against him.

Aaliyah, whose full name was Aaliyah Dana Haughton, worked with Kelly, who wrote and produced her 1994 debut album, "Age Ain't Nothing But A Number." She died in a plane crash in 2001 at age 22.

Kelly, now 54, is charged in the bribery scheme as part of a racketeering case accusing him of sexually abusing several women, girls and boys during the course of his 30-year singing career. He's vehemently denied the charges, claiming that the women were groupies who wanted to take advantage of his fame and fortune achieved through hits like "I Believe Can Fly."

Earlier Friday, another former Kelly employee, Anthony Navarro, was called by the government to describe the inner workings of the Chicago-area mansion where Kelly had a recording studio and a constant stream of female visitors.

Navarro's testimony bolstered the government's contention that Kelly controlled everything around him and created an environment where girls and women who entered the space faced strict rules that gave them little choice but to submit to the singer's sexual whims.

Henri promoted to hurricane status

Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. — The urgency of preparations for a monster storm hitting parts of the Northeast became a priority Saturday when Henri was promoted to a hurricane as the tropical system moved closer to landfall, expected to hit Long Island and Connecticut first.

Landfall was expected Sunday. Forecasters had predicted a dangerous storm surge could occur as early as late Saturday in portions of Long Island, Connecticut, Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. The storm surge and tide could cause high water in coastal New England as Henri moves in-

land, while heavy rain and wind may also produce flooding.

Henri was veering a bit further west than originally expected, and if that track holds, it would have eastern Long Island in its bullseye rather than New England, which hasn't taken a direct hit from a hurricane since Hurricane Bob in 1991, a Category 2 storm that killed at least 17 people. New York hasn't had a direct hit from a major hurricane season storm since Superstorm Sandy wreaked havoc in 2012.

Regardless of its exact landfall, broad impacts were expected across a large swath of the Northeast, extending inland to Hart-

ford, Conn., and Albany, N.Y., and eastward to Cape Cod, which is teeming with tens of thousands of summer tourists. Reflecting Henri's changing track, a hurricane watch was lifted for the Cape on Saturday, though it remained under tropical storm and storm surge warnings.

The National Hurricane Center said Saturday that a hurricane warning for the southern coast of New England, including Rhode Island, was being extended eastward to west of Westport, Mass., encompassing Block Island. It said a tropical storm warning for the coast of Massachusetts had been extended eastward, including Nantucket.

High winds threaten to intensify Calif. blaze

Associated Press

PLACERVILLE, Calif. — Crews were digging in and burning out fire lines amid fears that another round of high winds Saturday would bring renewed fury to a Northern California wildfire.

The Caldor Fire in the northern Sierra Nevada already destroyed dozens of homes and on Friday authorities closed down a 46-mile stretch of Interstate 50, the main route between the state capital of Sacramento and Lake Tahoe on the Nevada border.

The highway was closed after debris from the blaze fell onto the roadway and because of red flag warnings for 20- to 30 mph winds that could gust to 40 mph at

times.

The road is a key checkpoint as crews struggle against the fire, which erupted last week and grew to 10 times its size in only a few days, fueled by winds.

"We're going to invest everything we can into holding the fire south" of the road, said Eric Schwab, an operations section chief with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Firefighters made progress on the fire's western side and burned vegetation to starve it of fuel and prevent the flames from heading into the evacuated community of Pollock Pines. On the northeast side, crews were protecting cabins in the dense

forest area, fire officials said.

The Caldor Fire had now devoured nearly 120 square miles as fire crews battled it amid heavy timber and rugged terrain.

The blaze was one of about a dozen large California wildfires that have scorched Northern California, incinerating at least 700 homes alone in and around the Sierra Nevada communities of Greenville and Grizzly Flats.

The fires, mainly in the northern part of the state, have burned nearly 1.5 million acres, or roughly 2,300 square miles and have sent smoke as far as the East Coast.

Ten national forests in the region have been closed because of the fire threat.

GM extends recall to cover all Chevy Bolts due to fire risk

Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — General Motors said Friday it is recalling all Chevrolet Bolt electric vehicles sold worldwide to fix a battery problem that could cause fires.

The recall and others raise questions about lithium ion batteries, which now are used in nearly all electric vehicles. Ford, BMW and Hyundai all have recalled batteries recently.

The GM recall announced Friday adds about 73,000 Bolts from the 2019 through 2022 model years to a previous recall of 69,000 older Bolts.

GM said that in rare cases the batteries have two manufacturing defects that can cause fires.

The Detroit-based automaker said it will re-

place battery modules in all the vehicles. In older versions, all five modules will be replaced.

The latest recall will cost the company about \$1 billion, bringing the total cost of the Bolt battery recalls to \$1.8 billion.

GM said owners should limit charging to 90% of battery capacity. The Bolts, including a new SUV, also should be parked outdoors until the modules are replaced.

The original recall was blamed on a manufacturing defect at a South Korean factory run by LG Chemical Solution, GM's battery supplier. But the company said an investigation showed that the defects are possible in batteries made at other sites. Most newer Bolt batteries are made at an LG plant in Holland, Mich.

GM issued the first Bolt recall in November after getting reports of five of them catching fire. Two people suffered smoke inhalation and a house was set ablaze.

At first the company didn't know what was causing the problem, but it determined that batteries that caught fire were near a full charge. It traced the fires to what it called a rare manufacturing defect in battery modules. It can cause a short in a cell, which can trigger a fire.

GM said it began investigating the newer Bolts after a 2019 model that was not included in the previous recall caught fire a few weeks ago in Chandler, Ariz. That fire brought the total number of Bolt blazes to 10, company spokesman Dan Flores said.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Pharmacist reunited with class ring he lost in 1987

KS TOPEKA — A Topeka pharmacist was reunited with the class ring he lost in 1987.

The Topeka Capital-Journal reported that Jim Schwartz, owner of King Pharmacy, had his class ring custom-made in 1984.

In 1987, Schwartz put his ring on a metal tray above a bathroom sink while attending a compounding conference in Minneapolis, Minn. He said it was gone when he exited the bathroom stall.

Thirty-four years later a man in Minneapolis left a message on his answering machine. He told Schwartz his ex-girlfriend of three years had purchased the ring at an estate sale before they met. The man contacted the registrar of the pharmacy school at the University of Kansas. Together, they found Schwartz.

Tagged Asian giant hornet leads state to nest

WA BLAINE — Authorities say they have found the first Asian giant hornet nest of 2021 in a rural area in Washington state, about a quarter-mile from where a resident recently reported seeing one of the hornets.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture narrowed the search area and located the nest east of Blaine, department officials said.

Crews found the nest after they followed a hornet that was equipped with a tracking device, KOMO reported. Crews were able to net and tag three hornets between Aug. 11-17.

Officers charged with painting swastika in car

CA LOS ANGELES — Two former Torrance police officers were charged with spray-painting a swastika inside of a resident's car, and prosecutors are now reviewing hundreds of cases involving the ex-cops, officials said.

Former officers Cody Weldin, 28, and Christopher Tomsic, 29, were each charged with conspiracy and vandalism in connection with the January 2020 incident, prosecutors announced. The two men pleaded not guilty during a brief appearance in a downtown courtroom, officials said.

According to a news release issued by the district attorney's office, Weldin and Tomsic were part of a group of officers who responded to a report of mail theft in January 2020. A car that was potentially involved in the alleged crime was towed from the scene, prosecutors said.

The two officers allegedly spray-painted a swastika on the vehicle's rear seat and a happy face on the front passenger seat, according to a criminal complaint.

Woman seriously injured in cow moose attack

CO GLENWOOD SPRINGS — An elderly woman is recovering from severe injuries after she was attacked by a cow moose outside a home in western Colorado.

The woman, whose name was not released, was taking a dog out on a leash when she was attacked outside a home south of Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Parks and Wildlife officials said. She was flown by helicopter to a hospital on the Front Range due to the extent of her injuries and the care required.

Tropical stork sighting in borough rare for species

NY NEW YORK — A wood stork typically seen in tropical and subtropical regions migrated to New York City but died 10 days after it was first spotted on Staten Island, apparently after eating a large piece of hardened foam, researchers said.

The juvenile wood stork was first seen by bird researcher Anthony Ciancimino in a salt-water marsh near Staten Island's Amazon warehouse, the Staten Island Advance reported.

Wood storks typically breed in Florida, Georgia and coastal South Carolina and are rarely seen as far north as New York. The species is the only stork breeding in the United States and was put on the federal endangered species list in 1984, but its status was changed to threatened in 2014.

Child in car stolen from gas station found safe

MO KANSAS CITY — A toddler who was in a car stolen from a Kansas City gas station was found safe, police said.

Police said the girl, 2, was found after a woman called them to say a young child was in her backyard.

Police said the girl was unharmed, and officers in Kansas City drove the mother to her child. The stolen car was found

abandoned several blocks away.

Parents Taser student who attacked officer

UT SALT LAKE CITY — A high school student who attacked a school resource officer and tried to take her gun was taken into custody after parents used the officer's Taser on the student, police said.

The student was meeting with a counselor about returning to school when the officer was called to help deal with a "commotion," said Lt. Dan Bartlett with the Cottonwood Heights Police Department.

The student then attacked the officer, biting and strangling her as she tried to hold the student down, KSL-TV reported.

Parents at the school ran to help the officer, who told them to use her stun gun. Both the officer and the student were hospitalized for evaluation.

Restaurant chain closes store, cites rising crime

GA ATLANTA — Citing rising crime rates, an Atlanta restaurant chain is closing one of its locations in Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood.

Taco Mac announced that the restaurant has been shut down permanently after being open for 15 years, WSB-TV reported. Restaurant officials said the location is no longer safe for its employees.

The company will provide immediate placements for all managers and team members in other Taco Mac restaurants, officials said.

— From wire reports

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Packers have surplus of wide receivers

Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Green Bay Packers wideout Davante Adams says the addition of veteran Randall Cobb has made it easier to provide leadership to the team's younger receivers.

But it's also made it tougher for those receivers to crack the 53-man roster.

Adams said much of what he learned came from watching Cobb and Jordy Nelson earlier in his career. Adams noted that he doesn't have to be the only veteran offering advice to teammates such as Marquez Valdes-Scantling, Allen Lazard or rookie Amari Rodgers because Cobb can make similar points.

"A lot of times I don't have to even say that much because he's saying the same thing," the All-Pro receiver said. "Sometimes I'll look over to him and we'll be like, 'You want to say it or me?' And he'll jump in and give his two cents about Amari's route or something 'Quez could have done better, Allen could have done better.'"

Cobb, who previously played for the Packers from 2011-18, returned to Green Bay at the start of training camp in a trade that sent an undisclosed draft pick to the Houston Texans.

Adams believes the arrival of another veteran has raised the level of intensity among receivers in training camp. He said "this year has been the most competitive that room has been probably since I first got here."

Indeed, Cobb's addition meant there was one fewer available spot for a receiver on the roster, creating one of the Packers' most intriguing position battles heading into their second preseason game, a weekend matchup against the New York Jets.

Adams is the clear-cut No. 1 receiver after becoming the first player in NFL history to collect at least 100 overall catches and 18 touchdown receptions in the same season last year. Valdes-Scantling is back after leading the NFL in yards per catch last season. Cobb joins a group that also features

Lazard and Rodgers.

That leaves Devin Funchess, Equanimeous St. Brown, Malik Taylor, Juwann Winfree, Reggie Begelton and Chris Blair potentially competing for just one open roster spot. The Packers added one more player to the mix Friday by signing Damon Hazelton, an undrafted rookie free agent from Missouri who was released by the Houston Texans last week.

"As you guys have probably documented, there's five guys who probably have a spot sewn up," quarterback Aaron Rodgers told reporters this week. "I'm not sure if we're going to keep six, keep seven. Do we keep two quarterbacks, three quarterbacks? It allows for extra spots at some of those places. If it is six, there's a lot of guys in the mix."

Funchess is the most experienced receiver outside that top five after catching 21 touchdown passes for Carolina from 2015-18, but he fractured his collarbone while playing for Indianapolis in the 2019 opener

and hasn't played a regular-season game since. He caught six passes for 70 yards in the Packers' 26-7 preseason loss to Houston last week but injured his hamstring in practice Wednesday.

St. Brown caught 21 passes as a rookie in 2018, missed the 2019 season with an ankle injury and had seven receptions plus a touchdown last year. Taylor caught five passes and scored one touchdown last season.

Taylor had five receptions for 50 yards against Houston while St. Brown and Winfree were out with injuries.

"Obviously Funch had a big night the other night," Aaron Rodgers said. "Malik was on the active roster last year. EQ was on the active roster last year. Reggie did a nice job on the (practice) squad most of the year and has come back and been a better player. Juwann Winfree has had one of the better offseasons, one of the most improved guys. There's a lot of opportunity for those spots."

Rahm up 1 shot after 2 rounds of Northern Trust

Associated Press

JERSEY CITY, N.J. — Jon Rahm is young enough at 26 that the FedEx Cup has been a big part of the PGA Tour as long as he has been chasing his dreams, and winning the trophy would mean a lot to him.

He just doesn't like the way it works, and building a one-shot lead Friday in The Northern Trust was only a reminder that great golf doesn't really mean much without a great finish.

"I don't like it. I don't think it's fair," Rahm said Friday after another bogey-free round at Liberty National, this one a 4-under 67 for a one-shot lead over Tony Finau.

What never made sense to him was someone who could win the all the post-season tournaments and then finish with a dud at the Tour Championship and "you can end up with a really bad finish."

The PGA Tour was trying to create dra-

ma among more than a few players at the final event. This is the postseason, and the example often cited was the New England Patriots going undefeated until losing the Super Bowl.

Rahm had an answer for that, too.

"They still finished second," he said.

For now, Rahm can only worry about the tournament at hand, and while he has produced a mixture of great shots and great saves to reach 12-under 130, he still has his hands full.

"Believe it or not, hit my fair share of bad shots today," Rahm said. "Much like yesterday, I was able to save a couple of good ones. ... Coming into the weekend, I'm definitely going to have to clean a couple of those mistakes up."

Finau had a 64 with a bogey on the final hole as he tries to secure another spot among the 30 who make it to the season-ending Tour Championship, along with boosting his bid to play his way onto an-

other Ryder Cup team.

Olympic gold medalist Xander Schauffele tied his personal best on the PGA Tour and the course record at Liberty National with a 62 and was in the group at 10-under 132 along with Justin Thomas (69) and Keith Mitchell (64).

Thomas, who shared the 18-hole lead with Rahm, couldn't figure out which way the ball was going in making four bogeys in eight holes, only to play his last five holes in 5 under — that included an eagle at the par-5 eighth — to stay in the mix.

Mitchell did his work at the start of his round by running off six straight birdies, a streak that ended on the 18th hole as he made the turn. He took two shots to get out of a longer bunker and made double bogey on No. 7, only to close with two birdies.

More is at stake for Mitchell, who is No. 101 in the FedEx Cup and needs a high finish to be among the top 70 who advance to next week at the BMW Championship.

Minority coalition putting words to action

Associated Press

Maryland coach Mike Locksley launched the National Coalition for Minority Football Coaches a little more than a year ago, during a tumultuous summer of racial reckoning in the United States.

The timing wasn't necessarily part of Locksley's plan.

Long before the death of George Floyd sparked protests across the country, the veteran coach had envisioned an organization that could address a problem that has plagued college football for decades: A dearth of Black and other minority head coaches.

While the spotlight has dimmed somewhat amid the pandemic, the coalition is showing signs it was built to last and do more than just talk about the need for change.

Locksley said the coalition was regularly engaged during the last hiring cycle by colleges and NFL teams looking for candidates. A year later, the coalition has created a mentorship program, matching rising coaches with influential administrators, and is building a bank of analytics-based profiles that can be used to match potential candidates with specific openings.

"I think the first thing you have to establish is the credibility as an organization to where people know and understand

who you are, what the goal, what the mission is," Locksley said. "And I think we did a really good job of branding ourselves as an entity that has the ability to be a resource for hiring and diversity in hiring."

NCMFC executive director Raj Kudchadkar, a civil rights attorney with extensive experience promoting diversity in businesses and schools, said the coalition wants to make sure the best candidates are selected, but noted it exists "because we want to diversify those applicant pools."

"We always hear there's not enough qualified minority coaches out there. And quite honestly, there are," Kudchadkar said.

An NCAA report released in March showed that when it comes to the hiring of minority coaches at the highest levels of college football there has been some progress over the last decade among coordinators and assistants.

At the Power Five conference level, the percentage of minority head football coaches rose from 12% in 2011-12 to 21% in 2019-20. The percentage of minority head coaches in non-Power Five FBS conferences dropped from 21% to 9% over that same span.

There was a total of 20 minority head coaches in FBS during the 2019 season, 13 of

them Black, according to the NCAA. Heading into this season, there are 21 minority head coaches, 13 of them Black, among 130 FBS schools.

Meanwhile, the percentage of minority players in FBS has grown from about 60% to more than 65% over the nine years covered by the NCAA's report.

Locksley said he hopes the coalition can break through a structure where media hype, booster influence and pre-existing relationships often determine who ends up being hired.

To that end, the first of what the coalition hopes will be numerous data-driven studies it has commissioned is expected to be released in coming weeks. Kudchadkar declined to share details of the first report, but did say it will be goal oriented.

"It's not going to be a 30,000-foot view that says, 'Hey, we have an issue here.' We already know that there's an issue," Kudchadkar said. "This is going to be a report that says: 'This is the trajectory that we're on. We need to change that trajectory and these are things that we need to look at.'"

Annual dues to join the coalition ranges from \$50 to \$250 for NFL coaches and membership has grown to more than 700. Illinois defensive coordinator Ryan Walters said it's been money well spent.

"Obviously, you have to be an expert at your craft, but it is an networking community," Walters said. "So to get in front of and get around ADs and people who are making decisions on the hiring process is huge."

Walters is part of the coaches' academy the coalition started in April. The coalition matched 12 college and NFL coaches with current and former athletic directors. Walters was paired with Notre Dame athletic director Jack Swarbrick.

Walters said what he has learned should help him advance in his career.

"The pros and cons of the interview process," he explained. "Things that guys did well and things that guys didn't do well. What you need to be prepared for. What kind of questions you have to be able to answer. And sort of what turns off ADs in the hiring process."

The broader conversation about racial inequities may be quieter than it was last year, but the 51-year Locksley knows this issue is evergreen.

"As I moved to what I call the back nine of my career and my give-a-crap gauge was on E, if I can create a pathway or something that makes it easier for the next group of Mike Locksleys coming through this profession, then I want to do that," he said.

Oregon, Oregon State to require vaccination proof by fans

Associated Press

EUGENE, Ore. — Oregon and Oregon State became the first Power Five schools to announce they will require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test for people over the age of 12 to attend football games.

In its announcement Friday, Oregon said the decision was made with public health authorities and "peer institutions in the state."

The mandate goes into effect Monday and comes at the end of a week when state offi-

cials warned of rapidly filling hospitals as daily reported cases reached record numbers.

Oregon is one of several Pac-12 schools that is requiring students and employees to be vaccinated or apply for an exemption.

The Oregon football team opens its season at 54,000-seat Autzen Stadium in Eugene on Sept. 4 against Fresno State. Oregon State begins its home schedule at Reser Stadium on Sept. 11 against Hawaii.

Earlier in the day, Hawaii became the first major college football school to say it

would have no fans in attendance for its opening sports events of the season because of a recent COVID-19 surge. Hawaii's first home football game is Sept. 5 against Portland State.

The moves come about a week after Tulane in New Orleans became the first school that plays football at the NCAA's highest subdivision to require proof of vaccine or negative test to attend sporting events.

Tulane's decision followed a mandate set by city officials that also impacts the NFL's Saints.

Braves beat O's, extend winning streak to seven

Associated Press

Travis d'Arnaud celebrated his new contract with a two-run homer, Jorge Soler also went deep and the Atlanta Braves beat Baltimore 3-0 Friday night, extending their winning streak to seven games while handing the Orioles their 16th straight defeat.

Max Fried (11-7) allowed four hits in his first career nine-inning complete game, and the NL East-leading Braves matched a modern-era, single-season franchise record with their 11th consecutive road win. The last time that happened was in 1956, when the team was based in Milwaukee.

Baltimore's losing streak is its second-longest since moving from St. Louis in 1954, topped only by the 1988 team's 0-21 start.

Yankees 10, Twins 2: Luke Voit finished with a homer, four hits and four RBIs, and surging New York beat visiting Minnesota for its season-high eighth straight win.

Voit tied a career high with his third four-hit game.

White Sox 7, Rays 5: Tim Anderson had a game-tying homer in the ninth and a tie-breaking RBI single in the 11th as Chicago beat Tampa Bay in a matchup of AL division leaders.

After Tampa Bay's Andrew Kittredge (8-2) worked a perfect 10th, Anderson opened the 11th with a hit and scored on a fielder's choice grounder by Jose Abreu to make it 7-5.

Athletics 4, Giants 1: Josh Harrison hit a two-run single, Starling Marte added an RBI double, and host Oakland dealt San Francis-

co its first consecutive losses since late July.

James Kaprielian pitched three-hit ball over five innings to remain unbeaten in three starts since coming off the injured list.

Dodgers 3, Mets 2: Trea Turner had two hits and two runs, Walker Buehler pitched two-run ball into the eighth inning and Los Angeles won its eighth straight by beating visiting New York.

Pete Alonso hit his 27th home run and had an RBI infield single in the eighth as New York lost for the seventh time in eight games.

Red Sox 6, Rangers 0: Chris Sale pitched five shut-out innings in his second outing since Tommy John surgery to help host Boston beat Texas.

Sale (2-0) threw 71 pitches, allowing five hits and a walk while striking out five for his second win in two starts since returning from elbow ligament replacement surgery.

Royals 6, Cubs 2: Salvador Perez hit two of Kansas City's five home runs in a win over Chicago, which has lost 11 straight home games.

The Royals, who have won four of five, are last in the American League in home runs with 124.

Reds 5, Marlins 3: Sonny Gray pitched one-hit ball through seven scoreless innings, Tyler Naquin and Joey Votto homered in the fifth, and host Cincinnati beat Miami.

Gray (5-6) retired Miami in order in five of his seven innings and exited after throwing 89 pitches. He struck out five.

Indians 9, Angels 1:

Franmil Reyes hit a towering three-run homer and tied his career high with five RBIs, powering host Cleveland past Los Angeles.

Jose Ramirez hit a solo homer in the eighth for his team-high 28th of the season.

Tigers 4, Blue Jays 1 (10): Pinch-hitter Harold Castro singled home the go-ahead run in the 10th inning and visiting Detroit beat Toronto.

Detroit slugger Miguel Cabrera remained at 499 career home runs after going 0-for-5 with three strikeouts.

Astros 12, Mariners 3: Yordan Alvarez homered and had four RBIs as host Houston jumped on Yusei Kikuchi early and cruised to a win over Seattle.

Pirates 4, Cardinals 0: Mitch Keller struck out six over five solid innings, Gregory Polanco drove in two runs and Pittsburgh topped host St. Louis to snap a five-game skid.

Nationals 4, Brewers 1: Patrick Corbin pitched three-hit ball into the seventh inning and visiting Washington topped Milwaukee.

Rockies 9, Diamondbacks 4: At Denver, Pinch-hitter Sam Hilliard hit a go-ahead RBI triple in the sixth inning, Garrett Hampson homered and Colorado defeated Arizona.

Phillies 4, Padres 3: Bryce Harper hit a two-run homer and visiting Philadelphia snapped a four-game losing streak with a win over San Diego in a matchup of struggling teams.

Fitzgerald says he doesn't have 'urge to play'

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. — Arizona Cardinals 11-time Pro Bowl receiver Larry Fitzgerald says he currently doesn't have the desire to play an 18th NFL season, though he left the possibility open that he might resume his career.

In an interview on SiriusXM Radio with Jim Gray on Mad Dog Sports Radio — set to air Friday afternoon — Fitzgerald said he's currently focused on being a radio broadcaster.

"To be honest with you I just don't have the urge to play right now," Fitzgerald said in the interview. "I don't know how I'll feel in September, October, November moving forward but I just, today, I just don't have that urge. And I think I have to be respectful of that. Football is not one of those games you want to walk out there and play and not be fully engaged and ready to prepare and do the things necessary that you need to do."

The 37-year-old has put together 17 of the most consistent and productive seasons for a wide receiver in NFL history.

He hasn't been at the Cardinals' preseason camp in Glendale, Ariz., over the past month. Coach Kliff Kingsbury and teammates have consistently said they're not sure of Fitzgerald's football plans. The Cardinals signed veteran receiver A.J. Green during the offseason.

Creed wins Truck playoff opener

MADISON, Ill. — Defending series champion Sheldon Creed won the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series playoff opener Friday night with a dominating run at Gateway.

In a race interrupted by a power outage that knocked out the lights for about an hour early in the second stage, Creed swept the stages and led 142 of 163 laps on the 1.25-mile oval.

The 23-year-old California driver wrapped up an automatic spot in the next three-race round of the playoffs, winning for the second time this year and seventh in two seasons.

After a caution set up an overtime shootout, Creed kept the No. 2 GMS Racing Chevrolet ahead of Matt Crafton and Ben Rhodes — with three-time series champion Crafton passing ThorSport teammate Ben Rhodes for second.

Creed beat Crafton by 0.292 seconds.