

## UN watchdog concerned by N. Korea's nuke moves

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog says North Korea's nuclear activities, namely the apparent restart of a reactor used to produce weapons fuels, "continue to be a cause for serious concern."

The International Atomic Energy Agency in a report Friday found several clues, such as the "discharge of cooling water," indicating the Yongbyon nuclear power reactor may have been operating since early July.

A steam plant serving as a radiochemical laboratory is also believed to have been functioning since February, "significantly longer than that observed in the past during possible waste treatment or maintenance activities," the report said. That's enough time to reprocess irradiated fuel, whereby plutonium is separated, according to the agency.

The 5-megawatt Yongbyon complex is believed to be the hub for North Korea's production of weapons-grade plutonium. IAEA inspectors, who have not had access to the site to inspect its activities for over a decade, relied on open-source information and commercial satellite imagery for their analysis.

"[North Korea's] nuclear activities continue to be a cause for serious concern," the report states. "Furthermore, the new indications of the operation of the [Yongbyon Experimental Nuclear Power Plant] and the Radiochemical Laboratory are deeply troubling."

In January, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un announced the regime would take "a great revolutionary turn for possessing the completely new nuclear capabilities aimed at attaining

the goal of modernization," according to the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

At former President Donald Trump's second summit with Kim in 2019, the two leaders came to an impasse over sanctions relief and the closure of nuclear material production sites, including the Yongbyon complex.

Soo Kim, a policy analyst for Rand Corp. and an adjunct instructor at American University, believes "the regime had no intention of giving up its nuclear weapons from the beginning."

"The nuclear weapons program is so closely tied to the Kim family's survival; there's only the incentive to continue to build and advance their weapons capabilities to strengthen protection and ensure regime preservation," Soo told Stars and Stripes in an email Monday.

Soo added that because world leaders desire Pyongyang to surrender its nuclear weapons, the regime "understands that a small gesture towards this step goes a long way in terms of extracting concessions."

Following the completion of the White House's policy review for North Korea, press secretary Jen Psaki said during an April press briefing that the Biden administration "will not focus on achieving a grand bargain, nor will it rely on strategic patience."

"Our policy calls for a calibrated, practical approach that is open to and will explore diplomacy with [North Korea], and to make practical progress that increases the security of the United States, our allies, and deployed forces," Psaki said. Any negotiations would involve South Korea and Japan "every step along the way," she added.

## US thwarts attacks in final hours of Kabul evacuations

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces thwarted two Islamic State attacks against troops still evacuating Americans and Afghans from the Kabul airport in the final hours of its 20-year mission in Afghanistan, Army Maj. Gen. Hank Taylor said Monday.

Five rockets were launched at the airport at about 11 p.m. Sunday by ISIS-Khorasan, or ISIS-K, the Afghanistan branch of the terrorist group, said Taylor, the Joint Staff's deputy director for regional operations. Four of the rockets missed the target, with three landing outside the airport and the U.S. counter-rocket, artillery and mortar system, or C-RAM, intercepting one, he said.

Taylor said one rocket did land in the airport, however, though it did not interfere with evacuations or cause danger to personnel.

The rockets were the second publicly reported ISIS-K attack on the airport that U.S. forces thwarted Sunday.

Earlier in the day, U.S. forces conducted an airstrike on a vehicle in Kabul carrying ISIS-K fighters and explosives, Taylor said.

"This self-defense strike successfully hit the target near Kabul airport," Taylor said. "Significant secondary explosions from the targeted vehicle indicated the presence of a substantial amount of explosive material."

An Afghan official said three children were also killed in the strike, The Associated Press re-

ported Monday. The United States has not confirmed any civilian casualties connected to the strike, but chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the military is "assessing and investigating" the reports.

"Make no mistake, no military on the face of the Earth works harder to avoid civilian casualties than the United States military, and nobody wants to see innocent lives taken," Kirby said Monday. "If we have some verifiable information that we did in fact take innocent life here, then we will be transparent about that."

The U.S. was unable to stop the ISIS-K attack Thursday that killed 13 U.S. troops and wounded 20 others at the Kabul airport. In response, the U.S. on Friday killed two ISIS-K terrorists and injured a third in a drone strike, defense officials reported Saturday.

U.S. and coalition forces have been evacuating tens of thousands of Americans and Afghans since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan on Aug. 14. Evacuations continued over the weekend, but at a slower rate as the military began its withdrawal, moving its equipment off the airport before Tuesday, the deadline for the U.S. pullout from the country. The U.S. evacuated about 1,200 people since 3 a.m. Sunday, Taylor said. Additionally, two coalition aircraft carried 50 evacuees out of Kabul. The previous week, U.S. and coalition aircraft were flying more than 10,000 people out of Kabul each day.

# Viral Marine officer who called out leaders resigns

By CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

A Marine officer who filmed a viral video calling out senior military and civilian leaders for failures in Afghanistan resigned his commission “effective immediately” in a new 10-minute video Sunday and threatened to “bring the whole [expletive] system down.”

Lt. Col. Stu Scheller was dismissed Friday from command of the Advanced Infantry Training Battalion at Camp Lejeune, N.C., over the original video. In the new one, he claims he is not currently under investigation and that he likely would be allowed to ride out his remaining three years until retirement if he chose to stay silent.

“I don’t think that’s the path I’m on,” he says in the video, shot inside an “abandoned school bus” in eastern North Carolina. “I’m resigning my commission as a United States Marine, effective now ... [and] I am forfeiting my retirement, all entitlements. I don’t want a single dollar.”

He then suggests that senior military leaders would need the money for jobs and security after what he intends to do, though he does not provide further details.

“The Marine Corps is taking appropriate action to ensure the safety and well-being of

Lt. Col. Scheller and his family,” said service spokesman Capt. Sam Stephenson in a statement. “As this is a developing situation, we cannot comment further at this time.”

In his first video, posted on social media hours after a blast in Kabul killed 13 U.S. troops, Scheller appeared in uniform and criticized the Marine commandant, defense secretary and other senior defense officials.

That nearly 5-minute clip had been viewed about 1 million times on Facebook and LinkedIn combined as of Sunday.

Some in the military community have praised his courage to challenge the brass at the risk of his career, and others criticized him for grandstanding or sowing dissent.

“Blatantly using rank does cross a line,” said Jim Golby, a 20-year Army veteran and adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security who focuses on civil-military relations. A battalion commander “just doesn’t have all the info that senior military (or civilian) leaders do.”

In his new video, he tells those offering to send him money to instead give to the families of the fallen. He thanks both his supporters and critics but singles out a remark by retired Marine Col. Thomas K. Hobbs, who he said he knew personally and loved like a father.

# Board rules for reservists, calls Army ‘unjust’

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. Army violated federal law by refusing to pay dual housing allowances to reservists on assignment in Europe and erred by taking disciplinary actions against them, a review board said in a ruling that also recoups a total of \$500,000 for seven soldiers.

The decision Friday by the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records could have ramifications for numerous other troops and cost the Army millions more.

Army finance officials’ decisions that “gave rise to the investigative and disciplinary actions ... were erroneously executed and erroneously implemented,” the board ruled.

The board said the service must start paying back the reservists no later than October, and their records are to be cleared of wrongdoing.

A federal court had ordered the board to consider the cases of the reservists, who sued the Army in 2018. Patrick Hughes, a former Air Force attorney now with the Patriots Law Group, said the Army owes about \$500,000 in compensation for the denied payments and the debts the reservists incurred.

Hughes said the next step is to obtain payouts for other soldiers who were ensnared by the Army’s faulty interpretation of regulations. He is preparing a wider class-action case against the Army that could have tens of millions of dollars at stake.

“We think there could be thousands of soldiers who were affected,” Hughes said.

For years, reservists received dual allowances when mobilized. Unlike active-duty troops, who move with their household goods, reservists are generally activated for shorter assignments and must maintain two households if the Army can’t provide base housing.

But around 2016, Army finance officials in Europe changed their interpretation of the federal Joint Travel Regulation. As a result, reservists received only one allowance.

# NSA Naples works to put end to coronavirus-era slip in standards

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

NAPLES, Italy — Grooming, uniforms, saluting and other standards of military life that may have slipped during the COVID-19 pandemic are drawing a renewed focus at Naval Support Activity Naples.

The base last week kicked off “Back to Baseline,” a five- to six-week effort designed to remind sailors of their obligations, said Command Master Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Fields. It’s time to get back to the everyday essentials of military life, he said.

Fields said the base started the program because rules such as carrying the proper

backpack, having a regulation haircut or saluting an officer weren’t always being followed as people adjusted their lives to the pandemic. The Navy gave commanders authority to relax grooming standards in March 2020, including allowing for longer hair, but rescinded the policy in June.

Each week, the base will send information to personnel through emails, Facebook posts or other media about a particular topic, such as haircuts or military courtesy and customs, with links and other references.

Sailors who aren’t following regulations by early October could face added scrutiny from leadership or their peers, Fields said.

# Classrooms at 6 DODEA schools closed

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMPFOSTER, Okinawa—A week into the new school year, many classrooms are shuttered and an entire grade must get tested after COVID-19 spread to six of Okinawa's 13 Defense Department schools.

School principals shared the information with parents, students and staff in letters disseminated over the weekend. They were also posted on the Facebook page for the Marine Corps Community Services Okinawa School Liaison Officer.

The spokeswoman for Department of Defense Education Activity-Pacific did not respond to emails or phone calls Monday seeking further information, including how many people within the Okinawa schools tested positive for the coronavirus respiratory disease.

The Marine Corps, which operates the Joint COVID-19 Response Center at Camp Foster, al-

so did not respond on Monday afternoon.

Letters from school principals posted online said several people within the school community have been infected.

All sixth-grade classrooms at Lester Middle School on Camp Lester will be closed until quarantine and testing requirements are met, according to Principal Nedra Jones' letter on Sunday.

Contact tracing is underway, her letter states, and sixth-grade students contacted by the tracing team must quarantine for 14 days. All other sixth-graders must test negative for the virus before returning to school. Proof must be provided to the school nurse.

Testing began Monday morning at the U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa drive-through on Camp Foster, according to the letter.

Kadena Elementary School and Amelia Earhart Intermediate School, both on Kadena Air Base, reported multiple coronavirus cases, according to those

principals' letters. Neither gave an exact number.

E.C. Killin Elementary, Kubasaki High School, both on Camp Foster, and Kadena High School reported one case each, those principals stated.

Kubasaki High closed eight classrooms on Monday and asked the students to stay home until "quarantine and testing requirements" are met, according to a letter Sunday from Principal James Strait.

E.C. Killin kept Mr. McCarty's classroom shuttered, Principal Gordon LynCook wrote. Amelia Earhart Intermediate School closed Ms. Korkowski's fourth-grade classroom, Principal Jason Federico said.

Contacts are being traced, according to the letters. Students identified as close contacts will be notified by public health officials. Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should stay home.

Okinawa prefecture is experiencing an unprecedented num-

ber of coronavirus cases, as the delta variant moves swiftly through a primarily unvaccinated population. U.S. military bases on the island are also reporting relatively high numbers of infections.

As of Sunday, Okinawa had the lowest vaccination rate of Japan's 47 prefectures, according to the National IT Strategy Office website. About 41% of the population is fully vaccinated and nearly 32% has received the first of a two-shot vaccine regimen. By contrast, more than 70% of the U.S. military population on Kadena was fully vaccinated by late July.

The island prefecture hit a pandemic high on Wednesday with 809 new cases, public broadcaster NHK reported. Seven people died last week of COVID-19 complications.

Okinawa's weekly incident rate of 304.76 per 100,000 people is the highest in all of Japan, according to public health department data.

## Boats, utility crews part of La.'s recovery from Ida

*Associated Press*

NEW ORLEANS — Rescuers set out in hundreds of boats and helicopters to reach people trapped by floodwaters and utility crews mobilized Monday after a furious Hurricane Ida swamped the Louisiana coast and made a mess of the electrical grid in New Orleans and beyond in the sweltering, late-summer heat.

One of the most powerful hurricanes ever to hit the U.S. mainland weakened into a tropical storm overnight as it pushed inland over Mississippi with torrential rain and shrieking winds, its danger far from over.

Ida was blamed for at least one death — someone hit by a falling tree outside Baton Rouge — but with many roads impass-

able and cellphone service knocked out in places, the full extent of its fury was still coming into focus.

Officials warned it could be weeks before power is fully restored.

The hurricane "came in and did everything that was advertised, unfortunately," Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards said.

All of New Orleans lost power right around sunset Sunday as the hurricane blew ashore on the 16th anniversary of Katrina, leading to an uneasy night of pouring rain and howling wind.

When daylight came, streets were littered with tree branches and some roads were blocked. While it was still early, there were no immediate reports of the catastrophic flooding city officials had feared.

## Yokosuka ramps up on-base recreation for Vinson sailors

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Though sailors on liberty from the USS Carl Vinson are restricted to this naval base south of Tokyo, leaders are doing what they can to provide them with rest and recreation.

The San Diego-based aircraft carrier pulled into Yokosuka, south of Tokyo, on Saturday, for its first visit in nearly two decades. Although sailors are unable to leave base due to COVID-19 restrictions, the installation has planned several events to offer as much entertainment as possible, base spokesman Randall Baucom told Stars and Stripes by phone Monday.

"We've set up a few different activities for sailors to enjoy their time here at Yokosuka," he said. "We hosted a softball tour-

nament yesterday and today, we had a 5K fun run this morning and we've also opened the Green Beach outdoor swimming pool just for the Vinson sailors."

Both base movie theaters, including Yokosuka's Fleet Theater, which typically doesn't operate on weekdays, are open for the visiting sailors, Baucom said.

Some of the Carl Vinson's crew members are playing in a golf tournament at Naval Air Facility Atsugi, according to Naval Forces Japan spokeswoman Cmdr. Katie Cerezo. Those sailors will be driven directly to Atsugi to maintain coronavirus safety protocols.

Kanagawa prefecture, where the naval base is located, and neighboring Tokyo and Chiba prefectures are under a public-health emergency until Sept. 12.



# Records rebut rioters' claims on treatment

Associated Press

It's a common refrain from some of those charged in the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol and their Republican allies: The Justice Department is treating them harshly because of their political views, while those arrested during last year's protests over racial injustice were given leniency.

Court records tell a different story.

An Associated Press review of documents in more than 300 federal cases stemming from the protests sparked by George Floyd's death last year shows that dozens of people charged

have been convicted of serious crimes and sent to prison.

The AP found that more than 120 defendants across the United States have pleaded guilty or were convicted at trial of federal crimes including rioting, arson and conspiracy. More than 70 defendants sentenced so far have gotten an average of about 27 months behind bars. At least 10 received prison terms of five years or more.

The dissonance between the rhetoric of the rioters and their supporters and the record established by courts highlights both the racial tension inherent in their arguments — the pro-

Donald Trump rioters were largely white and last summer's protesters were more diverse — and the flawed assessment at the heart of their claims.

"The property damage or accusations of arson and looting from last year, those were serious and they were dealt with seriously, but they weren't an attack on the very core constitutional processes that we rely on in a democracy, nor were they an attack on the United States Congress," said Kent Greenfield, a professor at Boston College Law School.

To be sure, some have received lenient deals.

At least 19 defendants who have been sentenced across the country got no prison time or time served, according to the AP's review. Many pleaded guilty to lower-level offenses, such as misdemeanor assault, but some were convicted of more serious charges, including civil disorder.

In Portland, Ore. — where demonstrations, many turning violent, occurred nightly for months after a white Minneapolis police officer killed Floyd — more than 60 of the roughly 100 cases that were brought have been dismissed, court records show.

## Iran and Syria vow to confront US sanctions

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Iran and Syria vowed on Sunday to take "mighty steps" to confront U.S. sanctions imposed on the two regional allies, saying their relations will strengthen under Iran's new leadership.

The announcement was made by Iran's new Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was received at the airport a visit to Damascus by his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Mekdad.

Iran has been one of Syrian President Bashar Assad's strongest backers, sending thousands of fighters from around the region to help his troops in Syria's 10-year conflict that has killed half a million and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million.

With the help of Russia and Iran, Syrian government forces now control much of the country. But Syria has been suffering for years under American and European Union sanctions.

U.S. Treasury sanctions have targeted a network that spans Syria, Iran and Russia, and which is responsible for shipping oil to the

Syrian government.

American sanctions were imposed on Tehran after former President Donald Trump pulled America out of a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in 2018. The sanctions have caused fuel shortages in Syria, which has been relying mostly on Iranian oil shipments that have been subjected to mysterious attacks over the past two years. Syria has blamed Israel for the attacks.

"The leadership of the two countries will together take mighty steps to confront economic terrorism and reduce pressure on our people," Amir-Abdollahian said at the airport. He did not say how the two countries will fight the sanctions.

Amir-Abdollahian's visit to Syria comes a day after he represented Iran in a conference attended by officials from around the Middle East aimed at easing regional tensions.

Amir-Abdollahian described Syria as the "land of resistance," adding that Damascus and Tehran had worked together "on the ground and achieved joint victories."

## Expedition finds island felt to be world's northernmost

Associated Press

HELSINKI — A team of Arctic researchers from Denmark say they accidentally discovered what they believe is the world's northernmost island located off Greenland's coast.

The scientists from the University of Copenhagen initially thought they had arrived at Oodaaq, an island discovered by a Danish survey team in 1978, to collect samples during an expedition that was conducted in July.

They instead wound up on an undiscovered island further north.

"We were convinced that the island we were standing on was Oodaaq, which until then was registered as the world's northernmost island," said expedition leader Morten Rasch of the university's department of geosciences and natural resource management.

"But when I posted photos of the island and its coordinates on social media, a number of American island hunters went crazy and said that it couldn't be true," he said in a statement on Friday.

"Island hunters" are known as adventurers whose hobby it is to

search for unknown islands.

The yet-to-be-named island is about 850 yards north of Oodaaq, an island off Cape Morris Jesup, the northernmost point of Greenland and one of the most northerly points of land on Earth.

The tiny island, apparently discovered as a result of shifting pack ice, is about 100 by 200 feet in size and rises to about 10 to 13 feet above sea level, the university said. The research team reportedly doesn't consider the discovery to be a result of climate change and has allegedly proposed naming the island Qeqertaq Avannarleq, which means "the northernmost island" in Greenlandic.

The island consists primarily of small mounds of silt and gravel, according to Rasch. He said it may be the result of a major storm that, with the help of the sea, gradually pushed material from the seabed together until an island formed. The island isn't expected to exist a long time, Danish researchers believe.

"No one knows how long it will remain. In principle, it could disappear as soon as a powerful new storm hits," Rasch said.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Deputies apprehend man waving machete around

**MD** FREDERICK — Deputies in Maryland apprehended a man who is facing charges after he was seen walking through a neighborhood waving a machete.

The Frederick County Sheriff's Office said in a news release that deputies were dispatched to a neighborhood in Urbana on Friday night after the man was spotted. He fled into a wooded area when approached but was eventually apprehended and taken to a hospital for a mental health evaluation, the news release said.

Unspecified charges are pending, according to the sheriff's office.

### Family tried to kidnap woman over dishonor

**AZ** PHOENIX — Police arrested six members of a Phoenix-area family that they say targeted a 20-year-old relative and tried to kidnap her because they disapprove of her boyfriend, who doesn't share their Muslim faith.

The woman, who is 20 weeks pregnant, told police she was afraid her relatives will kill her because they believe she has brought dishonor to the family, detectives wrote in a probable cause statement filed in Maricopa County Superior Court following the arrests on Thursday. Police believe the family wanted to send the victim back to Iraq, authorities wrote.

Police in the Phoenix suburb of Peoria said Friday the victim, her boyfriend and his family have filed more than 20 police reports from the West Valley to Yuma alleging crimes including

disorderly conduct, harassment, aggravated assault and kidnapping. Police did not identify the victim or the boyfriend.

In court records, detectives describe accusations of threats and assaults, most recently at a medical building in Avondale last week. Police said the relatives took the woman's cellphone and purse, along with her boyfriend's gun, during a "violent assault." The woman grabbed onto a responding officer, pleading "please, don't let them take me," according to court records.

### Mountain lion killed after attacking 5-year-old child

**CA** SAN FRANCISCO — A mountain lion that attacked a 5-year-old boy and dragged the child across his front lawn in Southern California was shot and killed by a wildlife officer, authorities said Saturday.

The 65-pound mountain lion attacked the boy while he was playing near his house Thursday in Calabasas and "dragged him about 45 yards" across the front lawn, said Capt. Patrick Foy, a spokesman with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The boy suffered significant traumatic injuries to his head and upper torso but was in stable condition at a Los Angeles hospital, Foy said.

"The true hero of this story is his mom because she absolutely saved her son's life," Foy said. "She ran out of the house and started punching and striking the mountain lion with her bare hands and got him off her son," he said.

The parents immediately drove the boy to the hospital, where law enforcement were notified of the attack and sent a wildlife officer to the scene.

Once at the house, the officer

discovered a mountain lion crouching in the bushes with its "ears back and hissing" at him, Foy said, where it was shot and killed on site. Subsequent DNA tests confirmed that the lion was the one responsible for attacking the child, the statement said.

### Effort underway to restore graves of abolitionists

**MA** SALEM — What started as a project to restore the gravestones of three Black men and women who played a role in the abolitionist movement on the North Shore is evolving into a larger effort to find and restore the final resting places for other African American families, officials said.

In Salem's Howard Street Cemetery, two of the stones marking the burial sites of Venus Chew, Prince Farmer and Samuel Payne, all of whom died in the 1850s, are broken into pieces, The Salem News reported.

The graves to be restored are in what Rachel Meyer, a stone conservator with Epoch Preservation, described as a corner of the cemetery, effectively segregated from the main cemetery. They occupy a square piece of land the city donated to expand the cemetery to bury African Americans.

The three stones in question have fallen over in time and were sinking into the ground when an area resident contacted Meyer about fixing them.

### City to celebrate state's first known Black sheriff

**VT** VERGENNES — A Vermont city is planning to erect a monument to the state's first known Black sheriff and chief of police. The city of Vergennes is planning to unveil and dedicate the monument to

former Sheriff Stephen Bates on Oct. 3.

Bates was first elected sheriff and chief of police in Vergennes in 1879.

Bates had been formerly enslaved in Virginia. He gained his freedom and served Union soldiers during the Civil War. He first came to Vergennes in 1866 with Vermont U.S. Rep. Frederick E. Woodbridge.

Bates served as sheriff of Vergennes for 25 years. He raised a family in Vergennes before his death in 1907, and some of his descendants will be attending the event.

### Search underway for a century-old painting

**CT** STAMFORD — A painting used in the annual celebration of Mass to honor La Madonna di Canneto, which translates to Our Lady of Canneto, has gone missing in Connecticut.

Descendants from the Italian village of Settefrati gather yearly to pay homage to their ancestral home, the Stamford Advocate reported. During the yearly gathering, the painting is displayed on a raised altar decorated with flower arrangements.

Antonia D'Amico, president of the Madonna Di Canneto Society in Stamford, said the painting went missing from the Sacred Heart Church and has asked the public to help find it.

The painting has been the centerpiece for the celebration since 1931 when the Settefratese Social Club — the host of the Mass — was founded in Stamford. It depicts a young shepherdess kneeling in prayer side-by-side with an angel before the Lady Madonna.

— From wire services

STARS AND STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# SEC contenders breaking in new QBs

Associated Press

Alabama's primary challengers in the Southeastern Conference can't take too much heart from the Crimson Tide breaking in an inexperienced quarterback.

They're in a similar boat.

There is a new group of passers at the top of the league, but the same expectations exist. The SEC has won three of the past four national titles, including dominating runs of perfection from the top-ranked Crimson Tide last season and LSU in 2019.

Georgia coach Kirby Smart even quoted Henry David Thoreau, though it could easily have come from his Alabama's Nick Saban.

"Success comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it," Smart said.

"I'm too busy trying to take the next step to give our team a competitive advantage to really worry about expectations."

In Tuscaloosa, Ala., that's referred to as The Process.

The defending national champion and preseason No. 1 Crimson Tide are turning to sophomore quarterback Bryce Young, who got limited opportunities last season. Alabama remains the national favorite despite losing QB Mac Jones, Heisman Trophy-winning wide receiver DeVonta Smith

and tailback Najee Harris from an explosive offense.

Not to mention offensive coordinator Steve Sarkisian.

Preseason No. 13 Florida and No. 6 Texas A&M are also turning to new quarterbacks. No. 5 Georgia has the no-brainer decision of sticking with end-of-season starter JT Daniels and No. 16 LSU's Max Johnson takes over for Myles Brennan, who is expected to miss much of the season after surgery on his left arm.

Gone, though, are seemingly impossible-to-defend targets Smith and Florida tight end Kyle Pitts. And two Heisman finalist quarterbacks, Alabama's Jones and Florida's Kyle Trask.

Texas A&M flirted with a playoff berth last season, unable to overcome a lopsided early loss to 'Bama. Now, the Aggies will replace four-year starting quarterback Kellen Mond with redshirt freshman Haynes King, who coach Jimbo Fisher named the starter on Tuesday.

The Gators turn to new starter Emory Jones, Trask's backup, who waited three years for his turn.

The SEC must replace 12 first-round NFL draft picks, half of them courtesy of the Tide.

Alabama lost three Heisman finalists from offense — including Harris. But a defense led by linebackers Will Anderson and Christian Harris — and ex-Tennessee starter Henry To'oTo'o — looks to be formidable.

"We're going to be a work in progress as we focus on improvement, and that's going to be critical to our success," Saban said. "We have a lot of difficult games early on the road, new coaches, new quarterback, eight new guys on offense."

With COVID-19 issues remaining and a region that lags in vaccination rates, the goal remains minimal disruption and, of course, the College Football Playoffs for defending national champion Alabama and others.

There was good news and bad in camps. Auburn coach Bryan Harsin tested positive while Ole Miss had 100% of players and staff fully vaccinated. Other teams were close, including Alabama and Georgia.

## Early challenges

The first two weeks features some big nonconference tests, including Alabama-Miami, Georgia-Clemson, LSU-UCLA and Arkansas-Texas.

## Pending changes, but a familiar Big 12 favorite

Associated Press

Things have quickly gotten awkward for the Big 12 Conference.

Whether eight will be enough for the Big 12 moving forward, there are still 10 teams this season. Second-ranked Oklahoma and No. 21 Texas, the only Big 12 teams to win national championships in the league's first 25 seasons, aren't leaving for the Southeastern Conference just yet.

"Sure it will be great when it happens, but it doesn't matter right now," Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley said. "I mean, right now, we're a member of the Big 12."

The Sooners are the overwhelming favorite to win their seventh Big 12 title in a row. They have two preseason first-team AP All-Americans (sophomore quarterback Spencer Rat-

tler and junior linebacker Nik Bonitto) and their highest preseason Top 25 ranking since starting No. 1 in 2011.

Oklahoma and Texas will start SEC play no later than 2025, and could leave before then. The initial public reports of them seeking a move came only a week after Big 12 media days in mid-July. They had accepted formal invitations to join the SEC by the end of that month.

The pending departure of its most prominent members has already created plenty of uncertainty about the future of the Big 12. Then the league wasn't included in a pact between the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten and Pac-12, furthering the image of a league left out.

The Sooners are the only Big 12 team to make the College Football Playoff (four times

since that system started in 2014), but their last national title was in 2000. The Longhorns won the league's last national title in 2005, but hasn't been a conference champ since 2009.

Steve Sarkisian is the new Texas coach after moving from the SEC, where he was part of a national title last season as Nick Saban's offensive coordinator at Alabama. Tom Herman was fired after winning records in each of his four seasons with the Longhorns, and won bowl games each year, but they made the Big 12 title game only once. They lost to Oklahoma in 2018 after beating the Sooners in the Red River rivalry game that regular season.

"When you think of the University of Texas, you think of resources. You think of great recruiting and recruitability, all those things — big stadiums,

great education," Sarkisian said even before the SEC announcement. "The point I've been trying to make is focus on us and what we're doing, and not necessarily what didn't work before, but what are we going to do to make it work this time."

## Climbing Cyclones

No. 7 Iowa State has its highest ranking ever, with fourth-year starting quarterback Brock Purdy, national rushing leader Breece Hall and Big 12 defensive player of the year Mike Rose all back after the Cyclones made their first conference championship game last season.

They beat Oklahoma in the regular season, but came up short against the Sooners in the Big 12 title game before beating Oregon in the Fiesta Bowl.



# Michigan downs Ohio for LLWS title

Associated Press

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — Twice, Jackson Surma walked to the plate with runners in scoring position in the biggest game of his young life. Both times he delivered.

Surma drove in four runs and Ethan Van Belle struck out eight as Michigan beat Ohio 5-2 on Sunday in the championship game of the Little League World Series.

"The first one, I knew I had runners on second and third," Surma said. "There weren't two outs, so I needed just something in play. He threw me a curveball, I sat on it and drove it to left. The second one, he threw me a high fastball and I went up there and got it."

The team from Taylor North Little League delivered the first LLWS title for the state of Michigan since 1959 when Hamtramck National Little League won it all.

"We're just excited we're mentioned with them," manager Rick Thorning said. "To be in that group and say that a team from Michigan won the LLWS, it still doesn't sound right when

you say it."

Both Michigan and Ohio are from the Great Lakes, marking the only time clubs from the same region played in the championship. That was because international teams didn't compete in the LLWS for the first time since 1975, due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Little League allowed two squads from each U.S. region to fill out the 16-team field.

The pandemic also led to tight restrictions on attendance, with just 1,017 in the stands Sunday. The famous sliding hill behind Lamade Stadium was mostly empty.

Michigan jumped out to a three-run lead in the first after Surma's two-run single and an RBI groundout by Jakob Firkas. Surma's next clutch hit, a single to center, came in the fifth.

Ohio had plenty of chances. It loaded the bases in the first on a pair of walks and a single by JJ Vogel, but Van Belle struck out Levi Smith with two out to end the threat.

The team from West Side Lit-

tle League in Hamilton, Ohio, loaded the bases again in the third with nobody out. The next two batters struck out looking before Chance Retherford was picked off at third base as he headed toward the dugout after strike two.

Ohio got its first run in the second. Chase Moak led off with a triple and Cooper Clay singled him home to bring the score to 3-1.

Gavin Ulin came in to relieve Van Belle in the fifth and got into a jam with runners on first and second with one out. He induced a double-play grounder.

In the sixth, Ohio loaded the bases again, as Ulin hit two of the batters, then walked in a run. But Retherford flew out to center to end the game.

"I was a little nervous at the end. It was a great feeling after I got out of it," Ulin said. "When I hit that kid (to load the bases) and then I had to face their best hitter in the lineup, I was a little worried there. But once I got out of it, got him to pop it up, I was so happy."

"It's beyond words."

# Cantlay comes up clutch to win BMW

Associated Press

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — No one ever questioned that Patrick Cantlay had the chops to be among golf's elite.

What he might have lacked in number of PGA Tour victories, he made for it with the way he won or the field he beat. His victory Sunday in the BMW Championship — the fifth of his career and his PGA Tour-leading third of the season — was a little of each.

On a Caves Valley course that suited the biggest hitters, facing the biggest masher of them all in Bryson DeChambeau, he delivered a moment that will be remembered for the ice in his veins and nerves of steel.

He really only smiled after he made the last of six pivotal putts on the final nine holes — six of them in a sudden-death playoff.

"I'm just as focused as I can be. If I look the way I do, it's because I am locked in and focused," Cantlay said. "And I felt like that today."

Even more remarkable is that Cantlay had plenty of occasions to believe he wouldn't be winning the BMW Championship, yet it only crossed his mind once.

That came on the second playoff hole when he hit his approach heavy and came up 55 feet short of the hole. DeChambeau, who had a 30-yard advantage off the tee on the 18th hole, hit wedge in to 6 feet.

"I liked Bryson's chances of making that 6-footer up the hill," Cantlay said. "I thought he was going to make that putt. That was maybe the only time that I really thought I was done. But he didn't make it. That's golf."

As for the other times? Right when Cantlay looked to be done, he was clutch.

# Saints displaced by Hurricane Ida

Associated Press

Displaced by Hurricane Ida, the New Orleans Saints went back to work Monday about 500 miles away in the home of another NFL team.

Saints players and staff, along with about 120 family members, relocated to North Texas in advance of the storm that made landfall south of New Orleans on Sunday as a powerful Category 4 hurricane with winds of 150 mph, and left that entire area without power.

Coach Sean Payton said the team will practice through Wednesday at AT&T Stadium, home of the Dallas Cowboys. That comes before a previously planned break leading into the start of the regular season.

"Left behind are obviously apartments, condominiums, homes. Those are all physical things. Nonetheless, they're still home for so many people," Payton said Monday. "We had a team meeting this morning, kind of hit on some topics. And then, you know, I think to some degree that going out and being able to practice today is going to be good for everyone, because from afar, there's only so much you can do."

The Saints are then scheduled to resume practice next Monday, though Payton said that it would be unrealistic to believe that would be at their headquarters in Metairie, La., even though initial reports from people there indicated that the facility handled

the storm "overall pretty well."

Payton said he had heard nothing about the scheduled Sept. 12 season opener at home against the Green Bay Packers that is to be played in the Superdome.

"Obviously we'll have a plan B. And, you know, there are a lot of other things probably from a priority standpoint that are more important for our city," Payton said. "But that all being said, you know, we fully anticipate starting the regular season with Green Bay."

The office of Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards has described damage to the area's power grid appeared "catastrophic," and officials warned it could be weeks before power is fully restored.

# Homers back Anderson as Braves roll

*Associated Press*

ATLANTA — Jorge Soler and Austin Riley homered off Anthony DeSclafani, Ian Anderson pitched into the sixth inning in his return from the injured list, and the Atlanta Braves beat the San Francisco Giants 9-0 on Sunday.

Soler opened the fourth inning with his 20th homer, a drive into the seats in left. Freddie Freeman followed with an infield single and Riley then launched his 28th homer into the seats in left-center.

Eddie Rosario added two-run triple in the sixth for the NL East leaders, and Ozzie Albies connected for his 23rd homer in the eighth.

The Giants, with the best record in the major leagues, had won 15 of 19. They maintained their 2 ½-game lead over Los Angeles in the NL West after the Dodgers lost 5-0 to Colorado.

"I have a lot of belief in this club and every time we go on the field I think we're going to win that day's baseball game, but right now I'm not pleased with the way we played this one," San Francisco manager Gabe Kapler said.

Atlanta had lost three of four following a nine-game winning streak. The Braves have a 4 ½-game lead in the division over Philadelphia.

Next up for Atlanta is a seven-game trip against the defending World Series champion Dodgers and Colorado, which began the day with the second-best home record in the majors.

Anderson (6-5) made his first start since July 11 after missing 39 games with right shoulder inflammation. He pitched out of jams in the first with two runners on and in the third with a runner on third.

DeSclafani (11-6) came off the injured list, too, after right ankle pain had sidelined him since Aug. 18. He retired his first six batters before Rosario singled to begin the third. DeSclafani stranded him at second with a strikeout of Albies.

DeSclafani left when a trainer came out to see him after Dansby Swanson reached on an infield single with no outs in the fourth. He gave up three runs and six hits.

**Rays 12, Orioles 8:** Joey Wendle hit a pair of homers, including a grand slam, and drove in six runs to help visiting Tampa Bay complete a three-game series sweep.

Austin Meadows and Jordan Luplow also homered for the AL East-leading Rays, who finished 18-1 against Baltimore this year.

Rookie Ryan Mountcastle tied a career

high with four hits for Baltimore, including his 24th home run.

**Athletics 3, Yankees 1:** Tony Kemp lined a tiebreaking, two-run homer off Chad Green in the eighth inning and host Oakland beat New York.

New York has lost two in a row for the first time since July 22-23.

Kemp entered as a pinch-hitter in the seventh and finished 2-for-2 with his fifth homer of the season, with three of them coming against the Yankees.

**Mariners 4, Royals 3:** Salvador Perez homered for Kansas City for the fifth consecutive game, but Kyle Seager connected for a two-run drive to lift host Seattle.

Seager hit his career-high 31st homer in the seventh inning, lifting the Mariners to a 4-2 lead and helping them avoid a four-game series sweep at home.

**Rockies 5, Dodgers 0:** Antonio Senzatela pitched seven sparkling innings, C.J. Cron slugged a three-run homer and visiting Colorado beat Los Angeles to take two of three from the defending World Series champions.

It was the Dodgers' fourth shutout loss of the season. They missed an opportunity to gain ground on NL West-leading San Francisco, which lost 9-0 at Atlanta. The Giants lead the Dodgers by 2 ½ games.

**Brewers 6, Twins 2:** Rowdy Tellez hit a three-run homer, Aaron Ashby recorded his first major league win, and NL Central-leading Milwaukee muscled its way out of a three-game losing streak.

Luis Urias also homered and Kolten Wong hit a two-run double for the visiting Brewers, who raised their major league-best road record to 43-23 while ending their only losing streak longer than two games since the All-Star break.

**Indians 7, Red Sox 5:** Oscar Mercado was awarded home plate on a fielder's obstruction call for the go-ahead run in the eighth inning, sending host Cleveland to the win.

The Indians trailed 4-0 and didn't have a hit against Boston rookie Tanner Houck until José Ramirez homered with one out in the sixth.

Cleveland was still down 5-4 in the eighth when Austin Hedges hit a tying homer off Austin Davis (0-2).

Mercado then singled and Yu Chang followed with a double down the left field line. Mercado appeared to be thrown out at home, but plate umpire Nic Lentz immediately ruled that Boston second baseman Yairo Munoz had impeded Mercado's pro-

gress on the basepaths.

**Marlins 2, Reds 1:** Jesús Luzardo allowed one hit and no runs in six-plus innings, helping host Miami take the rubber game of the series.

Luzardo (5-7) had by far his best outing since being acquired from Oakland for Starling Marte at the trade deadline. The left-hander tied a career high with eight strikeouts.

**Rangers 13, Astros 2:** Adolis García hit the first grand slam by a Texas batter in almost two years, and the rebuilding Rangers avoided being swept by visiting Houston again.

García's 29th homer was part of an eight-run outburst in the fifth, the highest-scoring inning for the last-place Rangers this season.

**Pirates 4, Cardinals 3:** Yoshi Tsutsugo hit a three-run homer off Alex Reyes in the ninth inning, sending host Pittsburgh to the win.

Tommy Edman hit a two-run homer for St. Louis, which remains 3 ½ games back of Cincinnati for the second NL wild card.

**White Sox 13, Cubs 1:** Luis Robert homered twice, Dylan Cease tied a career high with 11 strikeouts and the White Sox pounded the Cubs.

Eloy Jiménez, Yasmani Grandal and Brian Goodwin also connected for the White Sox, who went 5-1 against the Cubs this year. Robert, Jiménez and Goodwin each drove in three runs.

**Phillies 7, Diamondbacks 4:** Freddy Galvis drove in three runs, leading host Philadelphia to the victory.

Bryce Harper, Jean Segura and Rafael Marchand each had two hits for the Phillies, who have won three in a row and remained 4 ½ games behind NL East-leading Atlanta.

**Blue Jays 2, Tigers 1:** José Berríos struck out 11 in seven innings, and Bo Bichette and Kevin Smith homered, leading visiting Toronto to the victory.

Berríos (9-7) allowed an unearned run and six hits. Tim Lincecum got four outs for his first career save.

**Mets 9, Nationals 4:** Javier Báez and Jonathan Villar homered for host New York, which took two of three from Washington and won a series for the first time since sweeping the Nationals in a three-game set Aug. 10-12.

Josh Bell hit two home runs for Washington and Juan Soto also connected. Those were the only three hits for the Nationals in the game.