

Top admiral touts 'high morale' at Rota

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — The Navy is becoming more adept at balancing the well-being of sailors on destroyers deployed to Europe with the demands of defending U.S. and NATO interests, according to the service's top officer.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday told Stars and Stripes that the crews aboard the ships are benefiting from modifications to their training schedules and a shift in focus to the work that commanding officers believe is most important to the ship and its mission.

His comments came in the wake of a highly critical March study ordered by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin that cited significant concerns about the capabilities at Rota for preventing sexual assault, harassment and suicide.

"We've given time, discretionary time, back to those (commanding officers) and to those crews," Gilday said by phone Saturday from Edinburgh, Scotland.

Changes include placing more emphasis on the metrics and results of warfare training, rather than overvaluing the time spent on training.

Gilday shared his observations after visiting Spain last week. During the trip, he spoke with commanding officers and sailors aboard

the destroyers USS Arleigh Burke and USS Bulkeley.

Destroyers USS Paul Ignatius and USS Roosevelt are also homeported at Rota, while USS Ross and USS Porter will return to the U.S. in the fall, the Navy said last week.

The CNO's visit, which coincided with the arrival of Bulkeley to its new homeport, was part of a multi-city tour of Europe that included meetings in London with British navy officials and a stop at the U.K.'s Naval Base Clyde in Faslane, Scotland.

The Defense Department's March evaluation report, which reviewed 20 stateside and overseas U.S. military installations in 2021, found that Rota and Army garrisons in Germany had the most areas of concern identified in the report.

"Command climates tolerated harmful behaviors and an inability to access resources due to mission requirements or geographic dispersion of services," it said.

The report further concluded that at Rota, "mission requirements were prioritized above and at the expense of the sailors' well-being."

Sailors stationed there reported bullying, sexual harassment, mental health issues and relationship problems but couldn't seek help because of mission needs, according to the report.

Concerns were especially prominent for the destroyer squadron based at Rota, result-

ing in a recommendation that the Navy improve communication and reassess resources and requirements for the destroyers.

The study also recommended the service "make adjustments that enable the ships to prioritize the sailors' well-being both at sea and in port."

Evaluating the welfare of Arleigh Burke sailors and ensuring that the ship was balancing significant time at sea with sufficient in-port time was a priority during the visit, Gilday said.

Arleigh Burke arrived in theater in April 2021, completing a monthlong patrol in December 2021. It left in June for a second patrol. On Thursday, Arleigh Burke was dockside in Rota.

"What struck me the most is just the high readiness and high morale of those two groups," Gilday said, referring to Bulkeley and Arleigh Burke sailors.

Gilday said he had the impression that the ship's sailors are getting adequate ashore time.

That sense was gleaned through conversations with many sailors to learn about their experiences, challenges and thoughts on a variety of issues, said Cmdr. Courtney Hillson, a spokeswoman for Gilday.

Gilday also had a conversation about family and personnel readiness with a small group of commanding officers and their wives, she said.

US airstrikes in Syria target groups backed by Iran

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

President Joe Biden directed the U.S. military to conduct "precision airstrikes" in Syria on Tuesday to "protect and defend U.S. personnel," according to a statement that day from U.S. Central Command.

The strikes targeted infrastructure in Deir el-Zour used by groups affiliated with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, said the statement attributed to Col. Joe Buccino, the command's communications director.

"The President gave the direction for these strikes pursuant to his Article II authority to protect and defend U.S. personnel by disrupting or deterring attacks by Iran-backed groups," Buccino wrote.

The Associated Press reported that the airstrikes targeted the Ayash Camp run by the Fatimiyoun group made up of Shiite fighters from Afghanistan. The opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that at least six Syrian and foreign militants were killed in the airstrikes, while the activist collective Deir Ez-zor 24 reported 10 deaths.

In Iran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani issued a statement later Wednesday condemning the American strike "against the people and infrastructure of Syria." He also denied that Iran had any link to those targeted. Iran routinely denies arming militia groups targeting U.S. forces in the region, despite weaponry link-

ing back to them.

The Washington Post reported that the airstrikes came after U.S. forces reported an attack by drone aircraft on one of their remote outposts last week.

No casualties or damage were reported in the Aug. 15 attack on the Tanf outpost, a strategically located garrison near a Syria-Iraq border crossing. The outpost is near a major land supply route used by Iran to smuggle arms into Syria and to its Hezbollah allies.

The pace of attacks against U.S.-led coalition troops in Iraq and Syria picked up in 2019 as Tehran and the armed groups it backs sought to hasten Washington's withdrawal from the region.

Ukraine braces for attacks during holiday

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine braced for what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned could be especially brutal Russian attacks Wednesday as the country observed its Independence Day — and marked the war’s six-month point — under conditions considered too dangerous to allow any major public celebrations in the capital.

Residents of Kyiv woke up to air raid sirens, but there were no immediate airstrikes. The capital has been largely spared from attack in recent months, as a war that was widely expected to be a lightning conquest by Moscow turned into a grinding conflict fought mostly in the east and south.

Outgoing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson marked the holiday with a visit to Kyiv — his third since the war started — and other European leaders used the

occasion to pledge unwavering support for the country and pay tribute to the sacrifices of its people. The U.S. announced a major military aid package totaling nearly \$3 billion to help Ukrainian forces fight for years to come.

Independence Day commemorates Ukraine’s 1991 declaration of independence from the Soviet Union.

Kyiv authorities banned large gatherings in the capital through Thursday, fearing the national holiday might bring particularly heavy Russian missile strikes.

“Russian provocations and brutal strikes are a possibility,” Zelenskyy said in a statement. “Please strictly follow the safety rules. Please observe the curfew. Pay attention to the air sirens. Pay attention to official announcements. And remember: We must all achieve victory together.”

Nevertheless, a festive atmo-

sphere prevailed at Kyiv’s Maidan square as thousands of Kyiv residents posed for pictures next to burned-out Russian tanks put on display. Folk singers set up, and many revelers — ignoring the sirens — were out and about in traditionally embroidered dresses and shirts.

Others were fearful.

“I can’t sleep at night because of what I see and hear about what is being done in Ukraine,” said a retiree who gave only her first name, Tetyana, her voice shaking with emotion. “This is not a war. It is the destruction of the Ukrainian people.”

In a message to the country, Zelenskyy said: “Six months ago, Russia declared war on us. On Feb. 24, all of Ukraine heard explosions and gunshots. ... On Feb. 24, we were told: You have no chance. On Aug. 24, we say: Happy Independence Day, Ukraine!”

U.S. President Joe Biden said

the latest American aid package will allow Ukraine to acquire air defense and artillery systems and other weapons.

“I know this Independence Day is bittersweet for many Ukrainians as thousands have been killed or wounded, millions have been displaced from their homes, and so many others have fallen victim to Russian atrocities and attacks,” Biden said. “But six months of relentless attacks have only strengthened Ukrainians’ pride in themselves, in their country, and in their 31 years of independence.”

Britain’s Johnson urged Western allies to maintain their support of Ukraine through the winter.

“This is not the time to put forward flimsy negotiating proposals,” he said. “You can’t negotiate with a bear when it’s eating your leg or with a street robber when he has you pinned to the floor.”

Okinawa citizens file lawsuit to stop runway construction

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMPFOSTER, Okinawa—A group of Okinawa citizens has filed a lawsuit aimed at forcing the Japanese government to stop construction of a Marine Corps runway into Oura Bay at Henoko.

The suit follows a similar action by Okinawa prefecture challenging a Cabinet minister’s authority to override Okinawa Gov. Denny Tamaki, who rejected updated construction plans for the project in November. The citizens’ lawsuit filed Tuesday in Naha District Court names as plaintiffs 20 individuals who live in Henoko or operate businesses there, plaintiff Takuma Higashionna, a member of the Nago city council, told Stars and Stripes by phone on Wednesday. They seek an order

upholding Tamaki’s decision.

The plaintiffs claim that noise and environmental degradation will adversely impact their lives and businesses, plaintiff Toshiki Iwamoto, owner of the Oumi dive shop in Naha, said Wednesday.

“Oura Bay has some of the most beautiful coral in Okinawa and it is unbelievable and unacceptable that the government is destroying it,” Iwamoto said.

The prefecture filed its lawsuit on Aug. 12.

The runway at the northern coastal Marine base Camp Schwab is decades in the making and will one day facilitate the closure of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan. The base has been labeled inherently dangerous by Japanese officials due to its central location in a densely packed urban area.

Ex-Navy official convicted of role in bribery scheme

The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer

A former Navy official was convicted for his role in a bribery conspiracy and for lying to federal officials, according to authorities.

Fernando Xavier Monroy, who worked as the director of operations of the U.S. Navy’s Military Sealift Command Office in Busan, South Korea, is accused of engaging in a conspiracy to commit bribery with a South Korea-based company, according to a news release from the Department of Justice.

Monroy conspired with a civilian captain of a Navy ship and a business owner to direct business to DK Marine, a company that provided services for the U.S. Navy, according to prosecutors. The scheme focused on

when the Navy ship was scheduled for a port visit to Chinhae, South Korea, in late 2013.

In exchange for “steering” Navy business toward DK Marine during the visit, Monroy was given bribes by a co-conspirator, including cash, personal travel expenses, meals, alcoholic beverages and prostitution services, the release said.

Investigators accuse DK Marine’s owner, Sun Yol Kim, of paying for “‘room salons,’ where the services of prostitutes could be hired,” for Monroy at least 10 times, according to Military.com.

Monroy is also accused of sharing “confidential and other proprietary, internal Navy information” with a co-conspirator as part of the scheme, investigators said.

Biden announces plan to forgive student debt

Associated Press

President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced his long-awaited plan to deliver on his campaign promise to provide \$10,000 in debt cancellation for millions of Americans — and up to \$10,000 more for those with the greatest financial need.

Borrowers who earn less than \$125,000 a year, or families earning less than \$250,000, would be eligible for the \$10,000 loan forgiveness, Biden announced in a tweet. For recipients of Pell Grants, which are reserved for undergraduates with the most significant financial need, the federal government would cancel up to an additional \$10,000 in federal loan debt.

Biden is also extending a pause on federal student loan payments for what he called the “final time” through the end of 2022. He was set to deliver remarks Wednesday afternoon at the White House to unveil his proposal to the public.

If his plan survives legal challenges that are almost certain to come, it could offer a windfall to a swath of the nation in the run-up to this fall’s midterm elections. More than 43 million people have federal student debt, with an average balance of \$37,667, according to federal data. Nearly a third of borrowers owe less than \$10,000, and about half owe less than \$20,000. The White House estimates that Bi-

den’s announcement would erase the federal student debt of about 20 million people.

Proponents have said cancellation will narrow the racial wealth gap — Black students are more likely to borrow federal student loans and at higher amounts than others. Four years after earning bachelor’s degrees, Black borrowers owe an average of nearly \$25,000 more than their white peers, according to a Brookings Institution study.

Still, the action is unlikely to thrill any of the factions that have been jostling for influence as Biden weighs how much to cancel and for whom.

Biden has faced pressure

from liberals to provide broader relief to hard-hit borrowers, and from moderates and Republicans questioning the fairness of any widespread forgiveness. The delay in Biden’s decision has only heightened the anticipation for what his own aides have acknowledged represents a political no-win situation.

The continuation of the coronavirus pandemic-era payment freeze comes just days before millions of Americans were set to find out when their next student loan bills will be due. This is the closest the administration has come to hitting the end of the payment freeze extension, as the current pause was set to end Aug. 31.

2 men convicted in plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Whitmer

Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — A jury on Tuesday convicted two men of conspiring to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020, delivering swift verdicts in a plot that was broken up by the FBI and described as a rallying cry for a U.S. civil war by anti-government extremists.

The result was a big victory for the U.S. Justice Department. A different jury just four months ago couldn’t reach unanimous decisions on Adam Fox or Barry Croft Jr. but acquitted two other men, a stunning conclusion that led to a second trial.

Their arrests nearly two years ago came at an extremely tense time: the volatile home stretch of the election between Joe Biden and

then-President Donald Trump playing out against a backdrop of armed protests over COVID-19 restrictions, especially in Michigan.

Jury selection in the retrial of Fox and Croft coincidentally occurred a day after FBI agents searched Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate for documents, putting the agency in headlines at the same time that the judge was trying to detect any biases about law enforcement in the jury pool.

Fox and Croft were convicted Tuesday of two counts of conspiracy related to the kidnapping scheme and attempts to use a weapon of mass destruction. Prosecutors said they wanted to blow up a bridge to disrupt police if the abduction could be pulled off at Whitmer’s vacation home.

er’s vacation home.

Croft, 46, a trucker from Bear, Del., was also convicted of another explosives charge. The jury deliberated for roughly eight hours over two days.

“Today’s verdicts prove that violence and threats have no place in our politics and those who seek to divide us will be held accountable. They will not succeed,” said Whitmer, a Democrat, who turned 51 years old Tuesday.

“But we must also take a hard look at the status of our politics,” she added. “Plots against public officials and threats to the FBI are a disturbing extension of radicalized domestic terrorism that festers in our nation, threatening the very foundation of our republic.”

Judge blocks enforcement of Biden abortion guidance in Texas

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — A federal judge in Texas temporarily blocked the federal government from enforcing a legal interpretation that would require hospitals in the state to provide abortion services if the life of the mother is at risk.

Texas sued Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra last month, arguing that the Emer-

gency Medical Treatment and Labor Act, which is a federal law, doesn’t require doctors to provide abortions if doing so would violate a state law.

In a ruling Tuesday, U.S. District Judge James Wesley Hendrix temporarily blocked the government from enforcing the guidance, finding that the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act “is silent as to abortion.”

“Since the statute is silent on the question, the Guidance cannot answer how doctors should weigh risks to both a mother and her unborn child,” the judge’s order said. “Nor can it, in doing so, create a conflict with state law where one does not exist. The Guidance was thus unauthorized.”

The Department of Health and Human Services issued the guidance in July, weeks after

the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that abortion is not a constitutional right.

The agency cited requirements on medical facilities in the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act to determine whether a person seeking treatment might be in labor or whether they face an emergency health situation — or one that could develop into an emergency — and to provide treatment.

Fla. Dems choose Crist to challenge DeSantis

Associated Press

MIAMI — U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist won the Democratic nomination for governor in Florida, setting him up to challenge Gov. Ron DeSantis this fall in a campaign that the Republican incumbent sees as the first step toward a potential White House run.

In selecting Crist on Tuesday, Florida Democrats sided with a candidate backed by many in the party's establishment who viewed him as the safest choice, even after he lost his previous two statewide elections.

The 66-year-old moderate, who served as Florida's Republican governor a decade ago, hopes to appeal to voters in Florida's teeming suburbs as Democrats seek to reverse a losing pattern in a state that was recently seen as a perennial political battleground.

Above all, the Democratic contest centered on DeSantis,

who views his November reelection as a potential springboard into the 2024 presidential contest. Given the stakes, Democrats across Florida and beyond expressed a real sense of urgency to blunt DeSantis' momentum.

Crist decried DeSantis as an "abusive", "dangerous" and a "bully" in his victory speech.

"Tonight, the people of Florida clearly sent a message: They want a governor who cares about them and solves real problems, preserves our freedom, not a bully who divides us and takes our freedom away," Crist declared. "This guy wants to be president of the United States of America and everybody knows it. However, when we defeat him on Nov. 8, that show is over. Enough."

Crist won the Democratic nomination over Nikki Fried, the state agriculture commissioner. She staked out a more

progressive campaign and was particularly vocal in defending abortion and LGBTQ rights.

The 44-year-old cast herself as "something new" and hoped to become Florida's first female governor.

In a sign of the party's meager standing in Florida, she's currently the only Democrat holding statewide office.

"We are going to make Ronald DeSantis a one-term governor and a zero-term president of the United States," she said as she conceded Tuesday, calling on her supporters to unite behind Crist.

DeSantis won his first election by less than half a percentage point but soon became one of the most prominent figures in GOP politics.

His hands-off approach to the coronavirus pandemic and eagerness to lean into divides over race, gender and LGBTQ rights have resonated with many Re-

publican voters who see DeSantis as a natural heir to former President Donald Trump.

From a raucous ballroom in Miami on Tuesday night, a fiery DeSantis declined to say Crist's name and instead cast the general election as a contest against President Joe Biden and "woke" ideology.

"We will never ever surrender to the woke agenda," DeSantis charged. "Florida is a state where woke goes to die."

The Florida contest concludes the busiest stretch of primaries this year, which featured contests in 18 states over just 22 days.

In that span, Republicans from Arizona to Alaska have supported contenders who embraced Trump's lies that the 2020 election was stolen, an assertion roundly rejected by elections officials, the former president's attorney general and judges he appointed.

Nadler defeats Maloney in NY, ending 30-year run

Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. Rep. Jerry Nadler, who twice led fights to impeach former President Donald Trump, defeated U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney in a Democratic primary Tuesday after a court forced the two veteran lawmakers into the same New York City congressional district.

Nadler's victory ends a 30-year run in Congress for Maloney, who battled to get government aid for people sickened by clouds of toxic soot after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The unusual fight between incumbents who have spent decades working together was the result of a redistricting process that lumped Nadler's home base on the west side of Manhattan together with Maloney's on the east side, with neither will-

ing to run in another part of the city. In his victory speech, Nadler said he and Maloney "have spent much of our adult lives working together to better both New York and our nation. I speak for everyone in this room tonight when I thank her for her decades of service to our city."

Nadler also defeated Suraj Patel, a 38-year-old lawyer and lecturer at New York University who has now failed to advance out of a Democratic congressional primary in three straight tries.

Nadler, 75, was first elected to Congress in 1992. As chair of the House Judiciary Committee, he led both impeachments of Trump. Nadler was buoyed in the last weeks of the campaign by endorsements from The New York Times and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer.

Israel's premier urges West to reject Iran nuclear deal

Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's prime minister urged President Joe Biden and Western powers to call off an emerging nuclear deal with Iran, saying that negotiators are letting Tehran manipulate the talks and that an agreement would reward Israel's enemies.

Yair Lapid called the emerging agreement a "bad deal" and suggested that Biden has failed to honor red lines he had previously promised to set.

"The countries of the West draw a red line, the Iranians ignore it and the red line moves," Lapid told reporters at a press conference in Jerusalem. An emerging deal, Lapid said, "does not meet the standards set by President Biden himself: preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear state."

Biden has been eager to revive the 2015 deal, which offered sanctions relief to Iran in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear program. The original deal unraveled after then-President Donald Trump withdrew from it in 2018. Iran has insisted its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. The Islamic Republic has claimed the Americans are now delaying the deal, even though Tehran spent months in back-and-forth negotiations that previously stalled in Vienna and Qatar.

Lapid warned that Iran would divert billions of dollars in unfrozen funds to hostile militant groups that threaten Israel.

"This money will fund the Revolutionary Guard," Lapid said, adding later, "It will fund more attacks on American bases in the Middle East."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Called for trespassers, troopers find buried meth

NE WINSIDE — State troopers called to a farm in northeastern Nebraska for reports of two people trespassing not only found the suspected trespassers, but more than 20 pounds of illicit drugs buried in a field, the Nebraska State Patrol said.

Troopers stopped a pair from Los Angeles, then found some suspected methamphetamine, a gun and a cattle prod that had been stolen from another farm, according to the patrol.

The troopers got information that drugs had been buried in a nearby farm field. The patrol said officials dug up a bag containing 20 pounds of meth and 3 grams of fentanyl.

The pair were arrested on suspicion of drug, weapons, theft and other counts.

Veteran admits faking death to avoid charges

AL MOBILE — A military veteran pleaded guilty in federal court to faking his own death off the Alabama coast to try to avoid sexual abuse charges in Mississippi.

Jacob Blair Scott pleaded guilty to charges of sending a false distress call that led to a Coast Guard search; illegally shipping weapons across state lines and giving false information, according to court records.

Scott had been sentenced to serve 85 years in prison in Mississippi after he was convicted of sexually assaulting a girl and impregnating her when he was 40 and she was 14.

Scott was facing charges of assaulting the girl when he faked his death in July 2018. The Or-

ange Beach Police Department responded to a call for assistance and found a small boat in the Gulf of Mexico, about a mile away from shore, with a gun tied to it. The dinghy was empty except for a suicide note.

Scott was captured in 2020 at an RV park in Oklahoma; he was living under another name.

NTSB: Copilot who jumped was upset about landing

NC RALEIGH — A copilot who jumped to his death from a small airplane in North Carolina was upset over damaging the craft's landing gear during a failed runaway approach, according to a preliminary report released recently by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The plane's pilot in command told federal investigators that his copilot "became visibly upset about the hard landing" in the minutes after they diverted to another airport for an emergency landing, the report stated.

The copilot lowered the ramp in the back of the airplane, indicating that he felt like he was going to be sick and needed air.

The report said the copilot "got up from his seat, removed his headset, apologized and departed the airplane via the aft ramp door."

Charles Hew Crooks, 23, did not have a parachute, and his body was found in a backyard in the town of Fuquay-Varina.

Cannon moved from park as Confederate symbol

LA NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans quietly moved a cannon owned by a unit that fought for the Confederacy out of a French Quarter park to a Louisiana National Guard mu-

seum.

The pocket park overlooking Jackson Square and St. Louis Cathedral was renamed last year from Washington Artillery Park to Oscar Dunn Park, honoring a lieutenant governor who took office in 1868 as the nation's first Black elected executive.

The cannon, which the 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery, unit bought in 1875, was removed as the first step in redeveloping the park, John Lawson, a spokesperson for Mayor LaToya Cantrell, told The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate.

It is now in front of the Jackson Barracks museum, Col. Kenneth Baily told WDSU-TV.

Prisons worker charged with unsafe gun storage

WA MARYSVILLE — Prosecutors said a state prisons employee didn't properly secure the gun her 12-year-old son used to die by suicide, leading to a first-of-its-kind criminal charge in Snohomish County.

Late last year, Branden McKinnon's father sued the boy's mother, Jennifer Wright, over his death last May. The lawsuit was settled for an undisclosed amount in April.

When Wright got home from work at the Monroe Correctional Complex, she reportedly checked on her son. She thought he was sleeping.

When she checked later, she found he'd shot himself, according to the charges filed in Snohomish County Superior Court.

Her 9 mm pistol was on the bed.

Wright told a detective she had taken her pistol out the pre-

vious night as she prepared to go to a search-and-rescue academy. She said she put it back in a kitchen drawer, unloaded. She put ammunition in a different drawer.

Marina fire, sparked by gas vapors, accidental

MA MATTAPOISETT — Gasoline vapors ignited by spark during a gas tank replacement project on a boat was the likely cause of a major fire at a Massachusetts marina last week that destroyed buildings, vehicles and boats and sent one employee to the hospital, investigators said.

The fire at the Mattapoisett Boatyard was determined to be accidental, according to a statement from the state fire marshal and local authorities. The investigation determined that the fire began inside a building at the boatyard where a worker had been replacing a boat's gas tank.

The fire spread to six buildings, 47 vehicles and 14 boats, authorities said.

Zoo welcomes birth of male white rhino

CA SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Zoo Safari Park announced the arrival of a male white rhino born to a first-time mother.

The park tweeted a video of the curious new calf following his mom, Livia, around at the Nikita Rhino Resource Center.

The unnamed calf was born on Aug. 6.

Livia and the calf will remain in a private habitat to allow bonding before being introduced to other rhinos.

— From wire reports



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KC's Bieniemy patiently waiting his turn

Associated Press

Eric Bieniemy is still waiting to land a head coaching job after interviewing with 14 teams over the past four years.

He's not pouting but he's not giving up, either.

Bieniemy has assembled an impressive résumé as the offensive coordinator for the Kansas City Chiefs under Andy Reid. The Chiefs scored the third-most points (565) in NFL history in his first year at the helm in 2018. Patrick Mahomes was NFL MVP that season. They won the Super Bowl the following year.

Yet, Bieniemy has been passed over for coaches who've accomplished far less. Still, he has a bright outlook.

"I'm very proud that I've had the opportunities that I've been given," Bieniemy told The Associated Press. "You want to come away with the job, but you still got to feel proud and stand tall that you were given that opportunity. But also realizing that it's not just about the opportunity, it's how you learn from that particular situation that you've been given. I've made it a point to just digest all the information, go back through all my notes. I always want to reevaluate myself

first. Yes, it hasn't happened, but that's not going to be a downfall to me not pursuing my dreams or my goals.

"When it's all said and done, Eric Bieniemy is going to continue to be Eric Bieniemy. I'm going to be the best offensive coordinator that I can possibly be. I'm going to be the best husband I can be, the best father. And I will continue expanding my horizons and making sure that when the next hiring process comes around, I will give myself a better opportunity to go and pursue the job that wants to pursue me."

After six interviews following the 2020 season, Bieniemy met with the Saints and Broncos earlier this year. New Orleans went with in-house assistant coach Dennis Allen and Denver hired former Packers offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett.

In a copycat league where teams continually pluck top coordinators from successful teams, it's a mystery why Bieniemy keeps missing out. Nearly half the teams have interviewed him. The New York Jets brought him in twice in 2019 and 2021.

Reid's extensive coaching tree includes Super Bowl champions John Harbaugh and Doug Pederson. There's also Sean McDer-

mott, Ron Rivera, Leslie Frazier, Todd Bowles, Matt Nagy and more. Reid has called Bieniemy "an owner's dream" and a "tremendous leader." Mahomes and other players have heaped praise on him.

Bieniemy maintains a positive perspective.

"Sometimes the job is not right for us and it may not be the time, but that's OK," Bieniemy said. "Our job is to pursue a championship so my job is to make the very most of this. And then when that opportunity comes around again, I guarantee you I'm going to be better because of the experiences that I've had. And that's what I'm looking forward to so we can't sit around and wallow in pity."

While he strives to become a head coach, Bieniemy is helping other coaches advance their careers. He was among the featured speakers at the NFL Quarterback Coaching Summit in June. Bieniemy led a discussion on how to interview for an offensive coordinator position.

"The thing you want to do when you're in that particular environment, you want to share all the knowledge that you have and the wisdom and insight just so those guys are prepared for those moments," Bieniemy said.

Hall of Fame Chiefs quarterback Dawson dies at 87

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Hall of Fame quarterback Len Dawson, whose unmistakable swagger in helping the Kansas City Chiefs to their first Super Bowl title earned him the nickname "Lenny the Cool," died Wednesday. He was 87.

Dawson's family announced his death in a statement through KMBC, the Kansas City-based television station where he starred in his second career as a broadcaster. No cause was given, though Dawson had been in declining health for years. He entered hospice care on Aug. 12.

"With wife Linda at his side, it is with much sadness that we inform you of the passing of our beloved Len Dawson," the family's statement read. "He was a wonderful husband, father, brother and friend. Len was always grateful and many times overwhelmed by the countless bonds he made during his football and broadcast careers."

Dawson was the MVP of the Chiefs' 23-7 Super Bowl victory over the Minnesota Vikings in January 1970.

"Len Dawson is synonymous with the

Kansas City Chiefs," owner Clark Hunt said in a statement on Wednesday. "Len embraced and came to embody Kansas City and the people that call it home. You would be hard-pressed to find a player who had a bigger impact in shaping the organization as we know it today than Len Dawson did."

Dawson personified the Chiefs almost from the start, when the suave standout from Purdue lost out on starting jobs in Pittsburgh and Cleveland and landed with the nascent franchise, then located in Dallas. There, Dawson reunited with Hank Stram, who had been an assistant with the Boilermakers, and together they changed the franchise.

The coach and quarterback won the AFL championship in 1962, their first year together, and became bona fide stars the following year, when club founder Lamar Hunt moved the team to Kansas City and rechristened it the Chiefs.

They proceeded to win two more AFL titles, one in 1966 when they lost to the Green Bay Packers in the first Super Bowl, and the other in 1969, when Dawson returned

from an injury to help beat the Vikings at Tulane Stadium in New Orleans.

Dawson was born June 20, 1935, the ninth of 11 children that filled the house of James and Annie Dawson in the blue-collar manufacturing town of Alliance, Ohio. He was a three-sport athlete at Alliance High School, setting records in both football and basketball, and turned his success on the gridiron into a scholarship offer from Purdue.

Dawson was chosen by the Steelers in the first round of the 1957 draft, but he wound up riding the bench behind Earl Morrall as a rookie and then failed to beat out Bobby Layne for the starting job the following season. The Steelers ultimately traded him to the Browns, where Dawson was unable to beat out Milt Plum for the job and was released.

With newfound freedom to sign anywhere, Dawson jumped to the upstart AFL and the Texans, lured in part by the chance to play for one of his old coaches at Purdue. Stram tapped into his talent, helping Dawson to quickly become one of the league's prolific passers as the Texans went 11-3 and won the first of three championships.

Garoppolo still with 49ers

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The San Francisco 49ers went through another round of roster cuts with quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo still on the roster.

The Niners reduced the active roster from 85 players to 80 on Tuesday without making a move with Garoppolo, their former starter who has spent all training camp working out on his own while San Francisco tries to find a trade partner.

The Niners placed cornerback Jason Verrett (knee) on the reserve physically unable to perform list and rookie defensive lineman Kalia Davis (knee) on the reserve non-football injury list. Both players no longer count against the roster and must miss at least the first four weeks.

San Francisco also released tight end Tanner Hudson, waived linebacker Jeremiah Gemmel and waived OL Sam Schlueter with an injury designation.

Garoppolo spent the start of practice Tuesday throwing on a side field without his teammates as he has not taken part in any meetings or practices this summer. The 49ers have turned the offense over to Trey Lance and still hope to trade Garoppolo before the start of the season but there haven't been any teams willing to take on his \$24.2 million nonguaranteed salary for 2022.

Coach Kyle Shanahan said "any scenario is possible" in terms of whether the team trades, keeps or releases Garoppolo but added that he has recovered from offseason shoulder surgery.

"He looks the same as he always has,"

Shanahan said. "He always throws really good, so it looks the exact same."

General manager John Lynch told the team's flagship radio station KNBR that he feels like a resolution is "getting pretty close." San Francisco must reduce its roster from 80 players to 53 next Tuesday.

"From the beginning, I think our take has been that Jimmy's a good player," Lynch said. "He's a starting quarterback all day long in this league, and I think proven to be a really good one. Just look at the record, look at where he's taken us. And so, with guys like that, you don't just give it away."

"I think there's been some complications that have been much chronicled with his injury. The good news is he's kind of come out of that, and no one's really presented something that would make us jump, as to now. So I think the options, not much has changed. The options are open but just like always, having some sort of a deadline tends to force action on these things, and we'll see."

Lance has run the offense the entire offseason as he's ready to take over as starter after playing sparingly behind Garoppolo as a rookie. Lance and the rest of the starters are expected to play as much as the entire first half in the exhibition finale at Houston on Thursday night. They mostly sat last week in Minnesota.

The other big question at quarterback for the Niners comes behind Lance. Nate Sudfeld and rookie Brock Purdy alternated playing against the Vikings as Shanahan wanted to get a longer look at Purdy.

Yankees sweep Subway Series, Judge hits 48th

Associated Press

NEW YORK — If this is what the regular-season Subway Series was like, imagine the Yankees and Mets meeting in October for baseball's biggest prize.

"You'd like to think ahead a little bit, because of the pace they're on and where we're at, too," Aaron Judge said, "but we got to get there first."

Judge hit a 453-foot drive halfway up the bleachers for his major league-leading 48th home run and added an RBI single during a seventh-inning rally, boosting the New York Yankees past the Mets on Tuesday night for their second straight 4-2 win and a two-game sweep.

The Yankees turned a pair of sparkling 6-4-3 double plays, Andrew Benintendi came through with another big hit and rookie right fielder Oswaldo Cabrera made three key contributions. The go-ahead rally was boosted by a fluky popup that dropped for a single, and fans stood for nearly 20 minutes in the ninth inning anticipating the final out.

Francisco Lindor lofted Wandy Peralta's changeup for a routine fly to center, stranding the bases loaded and ending as scintillating a regular-season game as you'll see.

"We hope that we do the things it takes to get a chance to hopefully come back to this place," Mets manager Buck Showalter said.

The Yankees (76-48) lead the AL East by eight games. The Mets (79-46) are two games ahead of Atlanta in the NL East.

PGA Tour players to commit to 20-event, big-money slate

Associated Press

ATLANTA — The PGA Tour made its boldest response yet to the rival Saudi-funded league Tuesday with a plan for the best players to commit to a 20-tournament schedule in which they will compete against each other up to 17 times.

The schedule includes the four majors and features \$20 million purses, except for the smallest field at the Sentry Tournament of Champions at Kapalua to start the year.

Most of the key tournaments were already in place — the

Genesis Invitational at Riviera, Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill and the Memorial; Kapalua and Match Play; the three FedEx Cup playoff events; the four majors and The Players Championship.

Still to be announced are four tournaments that would be "elevated events." PGA Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan hopes to announce those in the next two months.

Players would also be required to play three regular PGA Tour events.

The changes stem from sev-

eral meetings among top players that began at the J.P. McManus Pro-Am in Ireland last month and culminated with a players-only meeting involving 23 top players at the BMW Championship last week.

Players who take part next year will be determined by the Player Impact Program, which has been revised. The tour said 20 would come from this year's PIP program and from another list that involves the new criteria.

The tour is moving away from a system geared toward Q-rat-

ing and social media and moving more toward television exposure, media mentions and fan awareness.

The PIP bonus pool goes from \$50 million to \$100 million next year, with the leading player getting a \$15 million bonus.

The announcement comes at the season-ending Tour Championship, where the winner of the FedEx Cup gets \$18 million. In the meantime, the LIV Golf series is expected to announce a new batch of PGA Tour players that is likely to include as many as six players.

Verlander wins again as Astros topple Twins

Associated Press

Justin Verlander was totally fine leaving with a no-hitter intact after six innings against the Minnesota Twins on Tuesday night.

"I like to go deep in games in the regular season, but I'd rather do it in the postseason or at least be fresh and strong for that," the Houston ace said.

Verlander posted his major league-leading 16th win and the Astros beat Minnesota 4-2 on Tuesday night in Carlos Correa's return to Houston.

Verlander (16-3) allowed just one runner to reach base — Nick Gordon struck out in the second inning on a wild pitch to get aboard. Verlander fanned 10 and lowered his MLB-best ERA to 1.87 in his spectacular return after missing almost two seasons after Tommy John surgery.

Manager Dusty Baker said Verlander was on a pitch limit of 90 on Tuesday as the Astros transition from a six- to five-man rotation. But he still asked Verlander if he wanted to keep going since he hadn't allowed a hit.

"After six innings at ... 91 pitches, you know it's not going to be one of those nights," Verlander said. "Maybe 15 years ago, 10 years ago when I loved throwing 130-something. But not now and specifically not after Tommy John in my first season back."

The 39-year-old Verlander was pulled after 91 pitches. He is the only active player to have thrown three no-hitters — in May, he lost a no-hit try against the Twins in the eighth inning at Target Field. Ryne Stanek relieved to begin the seventh and Correa led off with Minnesota's first hit.

"I didn't want to get no-hit on the first game back, so I had to drop that one in there," Correa said.

Cubs 2-3, Cardinals 0-13: Nolan Arena-

do and Tyler O'Neill homered in a five-run fourth inning, Corey Dickerson had four hits and St. Louis split a doubleheader at Chicago.

The Cubs blanked the Cardinals 2-0 in the opener, ending St. Louis' season-best eight-game winning streak.

Rays 11, Angels 1: Christian Bethancourt had two run-scoring hits in a six-run seventh inning and later moved from behind the plate to pitch a scoreless ninth as host Tampa Bay beat Los Angeles.

The Rays own the top AL wild card spot. They have won four straight and 10 of 12.

Braves 6, Pirates 1: Max Fried allowed three hits in eight innings as Atlanta won at Pittsburgh.

Fried (12-4) struck out seven and walked one, retiring 20 of the final 23 batters he faced, and allowed one run. The Braves have won 13 of 15, while the Pirates have dropped 10 of 12.

Orioles 5, White Sox 3: Ryan Mountcastle hit a three-run homer off Dylan Cease in the first inning and host Baltimore held off Chicago.

Cease (12-6) allowed four runs in 5½ innings, his second straight start allowing at least three earned runs after he went 14 in a row yielding no more than one.

Blue Jays 9, Red Sox 2: Jackie Bradley Jr. doubled and scored to key an eight-run third inning as Toronto rolled past Bradley's former team in a win at Boston.

Ross Stripling (6-3) yielded one run off six hits and struck out six over six innings.

Phillies 7, Reds 6: Nick Maton's pinch-hit single with one out in the bottom of the ninth gave host Philadelphia the win over Cincinnati.

Matt Vierling homered and J.T. Realmuto had a two-run triple for the wild card-con-

tending Phillies.

Giants 3, Tigers 1: Carlos Rodón worked seven strong innings and San Francisco won at Detroit.

Evan Longoria homered for the Giants.

Rockies 7, Rangers 6: C.J. Cron hit a go-ahead three-run homer in the seventh inning and Elias Díaz also had a three-run homer as host Colorado overcame two three-run deficits to beat Texas.

Cron's two-out homer came after a fielding error by shortstop Corey Seager. Charlie Blackmon beat out an infield single with two outs before Cron hit his 24th homer of the season off Brock Burke (6-3).

Diamondbacks 7, Royals 3: Christian Walker had three hits, including a run-scoring double, and Arizona won at Kansas City.

Walker's two-out double highlighted a three-run eighth against Josh Staumont (3-3) to extend the Diamondbacks' lead to 5-1.

Marlins 5, Athletics 3: Brian Anderson homered, Pablo López pitched six scoreless innings and visiting Miami withstood Oakland's ninth-inning rally.

López (8-8) struck out five, allowing four hits and two walks.

Dodgers 10, Brewers 1: Tony Gonsolin combined with four pitchers on a four-hitter in his major league-tying 16th victory, and Los Angeles beat visiting Milwaukee.

Mariners 4, Nationals 2: Robbie Ray took a no-hit try into the seventh inning, Mitch Haniger and Eugenio Suárez both hit two-run homers and host Seattle beat Washington.

Guardians 3, Padres 1: Rookie Oscar Gonzalez and Andrés Giménez homered off former Cleveland pitcher Mike Clevinger and the AL Central-leading Guardians won at San Diego.

Tatis apologizes to Padres, fans for drug suspension

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Fernando Tatis Jr. apologized privately to his San Diego Padres teammates for testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug, then publicly expressed remorse for the 80-game suspension that will keep him off the field well into next season.

"There's no other one to blame than myself," Tatis said Tuesday.

"I'm really sorry for my mistakes," he said. "My dreams have turned into my worst nightmares."

The star shortstop helped make baseball fun again in San Diego with a youthful swagger and flashy talent in his first three big league seasons. But his suspension just as he was about to return from a broken wrist has been a damper as the Padres scrap to hold onto a

wild card playoff spot, and has even led to some fans turning against him.

"It's going to be a very long process to gain everybody's trust again, to gain that love back that I have stabbed straight to the heart," he said.

Looking and sounding downcast, Tatis spoke in the Padres dugout while sitting next to general manager A.J. Preller.

"Sorry fans, good baseball

fans, and I'm learning. I'm maturing," he said.

"I'm going to remember how this feels and I'm going to make myself never be in this position ever again," said the 23-year-old Tatis, who was dressed in a red polo shirt and jeans.

Tatis also announced that he will have surgery as soon as possible on his troublesome left shoulder.