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US mulls delaying S. Korea war games

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

The United States is considering a proposal that would postpone its largest joint military exercises with South Korea until after the Winter Olympics, South Korean officials said this week.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in confirmed Tuesday during an interview with NBC News that he has asked U.S. officials to delay the massive springtime joint drills Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, which involve tens of thousands of troops and have been a point of contention with North Korea.

The 2018 Winter Olympics are scheduled to take place Feb. 9-25 in Pyeongchang, which is approximately 100 miles east of Seoul, with the 2018 Winter

Paralympics to follow March 9-18.

The start date for the drills has not yet been announced, though they generally begin in late February or early March.

Moon said any agreement would be contingent upon North Korea's willingness to refrain from provocations. The communist state conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear blast and test-fired more than 20 ballistic missiles so far this year.

Key Resolve and Foal Eagle have long been a point of contention between North and South Korea and its American allies. Pyongyang views the exercises as a rehearsal for invasion and a threat to the Kim dynasty, while South Korea and the U.S. say they are defensive in nature and necessary to

maintain readiness and provide deterrence.

South Korean officials have been joined by other world leaders in expressing concern over the Olympic Games potentially being interrupted by its nuclear-driven neighbor. There have also been reports of lagging ticket sales over safety concerns.

The U.N. General Assembly has adopted a resolution urging all countries to stop fighting and observe a truce during the games. South Korea has urged the North to participate in the events, though Pyongyang has not responded.

A meeting is slated for Jan. 16 in Canada between the U.S., Canada and other invested nations to stand in "solidarity" against North Korea's nuclear threat. U.S. Secretary of State

Rex Tillerson has said that the meeting's goals include advancing the pressure campaign on Pyongyang and sending a unified message that the global community will not accept North Korea as a nuclear state.

Tillerson opened the door to talks with Pyongyang last week by proposing that it sit down without preconditions; however, he quickly walked back those comments, saying, "North Korea must earn its way back to the table."

A North Korean ambassador to the U.N. said the country's possession of nuclear weapons was "an inevitable self-defensive measure."

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report. burke.matt@stripes.com

Congress passes epic tax law overhaul

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional Republicans delivered an epic overhaul of U.S. tax laws to President Donald Trump on Wednesday, bringing generous tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Americans while providing smaller cuts for middle- and low-income families.

In a re-vote due to a last-minute hiccup, the House passed the massive \$1.5 trillion tax package that affects everyone's taxes but is dominated by breaks for business and higher earners. Democrats call the legislation a boon to the rich that leaves middle-class and working Americans behind.

The vote was 224-201 and came hours after the Senate's early-morning passage along party lines.

Republicans cheered when the vote tally hit the magic number for passage, and again when the final vote was announced. One Democrat yelled, "Do over!"

It is the first major overhaul of the nation's tax laws since 1986.

On Twitter and in White House remarks, Trump hailed the outcome, his own efforts and the work of GOP allies, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, who had drawn the president's wrath for the Senate's inability this past summer to dismantle the health care law.

"Our team will go onto many more VICTORIES!" Trump tweeted.

Congressional Republicans have cast the bill as a blessing for the middle class, an argu-

ment they will stress in their drive to hold onto their congressional majorities in next year's midterm elections. But one comment by Trump could complicate their messaging.

In praising the bill, Trump cited the deep cut in the corporate tax rate, from 35 percent to 21 percent.

"That's probably the biggest factor in our plan," the president said at the White House.

Within minutes, during House debate at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., jumped on Trump's remarks, calling it proof that Republicans were never interested in passing meaningful tax cuts for the middle class.

The Senate used a post-midnight vote Wednesday morning to approve the measure on a

party-line 51-48 tally. McConnell insisted Americans would respond positively to the tax bill.

"If we can't sell this to the American people, we ought to go into another line of work," he said.

In an 11th-hour hiccup Tuesday, the Senate parliamentarian found that three minor provisions violated Senate rules, forcing lawmakers to strip them out.

House Republicans had passed the bill Tuesday with all voting Democrats in opposition. Because of the language the Senate removed, the House had to revisit the measure Wednesday because each chamber must approve identical legislation before it can be signed into law.

Count shows 9K died in Mosul battle

Associated Press

Between 9,000 and 11,000 people were killed in the nine-month battle to liberate the Iraqi city of Mosul from Islamic State — a civilian casualty rate nearly 10 times higher than has been previously reported, an Associated Press investigation has found.

The deaths are acknowledged neither by the coalition, the Iraqi government nor ISIS.

Iraqi or coalition forces are responsible for at least 3,200 civilian deaths from airstrikes, artillery fire or mortar rounds between October 2016 and the fall of ISIS in July 2017, according to the AP investigation, which cross-referenced morgue lists and multiple databases from non-governmental organizations. Most of those victims are simply described as “crushed” in health ministry reports.

The coalition, which did not send anyone into Mosul to investigate, acknowledges responsibility for only 326 of the deaths.

“It was the biggest assault on a city in a couple of generations, all told. And thousands died,” said Chris Woods, head of Airwars, an independent organization that documents air and artillery strikes in Iraq and Syria and shared its database with AP.

“Understanding how those civilians died, and obviously ISIS played a big part in that as well, could help save a lot of lives the next time something like this has to happen. And the disinterest in any sort of investigation is very disheartening,” Woods said.

In addition to the Airwars database, AP analyzed information from Amnesty International, Iraq Body Count and a United Nations report. AP also obtained a list of 9,606 names of people killed during the operation from Mosul’s morgue. Hundreds of dead civilians are believed to still be buried in the rubble.

Of the nearly 10,000 deaths the AP found, around a third of the casualties died in bombardments by the U.S.-led coalition or Iraqi forces. Another third were killed in ISIS’ final frenzy of violence. And it could not be determined which side was responsible for the deaths of the remainder.

But the morgue total would be many times higher than official tolls.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi told the AP that 1,260 civilians were killed in the fighting. The U.S.-led coalition has not offered an overall figure. The coalition relies on drone footage, video from cameras mounted on weapons systems and pilot observations for investigations.

“The coalition never came to us or sent anyone else to us asking for data. They never came directly or indirectly,” said Hatem Ahmed Sarheed, one of the Iraqi men responsible for recording Mosul’s dead. An AP reporter visited the morgue six times in six weeks and spoke to morgue staffers dozens of times over the phone.

The Americans say they do not have the resources to send a team into Mosul. Because of what the coalition considers insufficient information, the

majority of civilian casualty allegations are deemed “not credible” before an investigation ever begins.

The coalition has defended its operational choices, saying it was ISIS that put civilians in danger as it clung to power.

“It is simply irresponsible to focus criticism on inadvertent casualties caused by the Coalition’s war to defeat ISIS,” Col. Thomas Veale, a coalition spokesman, told the AP in response to questions about civilian deaths.

“Without the Coalition’s air and ground campaign against ISIS, there would have inevitably been additional years, if not decades, of suffering and needless death and mutilation in Syria and Iraq at the hands of terrorists who lack any ethical or moral standards,” he added.

What is clear from the tallies is that as coalition and Iraqi government forces increased their pace, civilians were dying in ever higher numbers at the hands of their liberators.

Mosul was home to more than a million civilians before the fight to retake it from ISIS. Fearing a massive humanitarian crisis, the Iraqi government dropped leaflets or had soldiers tell families to stay put as the final battle loomed in late 2016. As the battle crossed the Tigris River to the west last winter, ISIS fighters took thousands of civilians with them in their retreat. They packed hundreds of families into schools and government buildings.

They expected the tactic would dissuade airstrikes and artillery. They were wrong.

When Iraqi forces became

bogged down in late December, the Pentagon adjusted the rules regarding the use of airpower, allowing airstrikes to be called in by more ground commanders with less chain-of-command oversight.

As the fight punched into western Mosul, the morgue logs filled with civilians increasingly killed by being “blown to pieces.”

Reports of civilian deaths began to dominate military planning meetings in Baghdad in February and early March, according to a senior Western diplomat who was present but not authorized to speak on the record.

After a single coalition strike killed more than 100 civilians in Mosul’s al-Jadidah neighborhood on March 17, the entire fight was put on hold for three weeks. Under intense international pressure, the coalition sent a team into the city for the first time, ultimately concluding that the 500-pound bomb — which hit a house packed with families taking shelter from the fighting — was justified to kill a pair of ISIS snipers.

Iraq’s special forces units were instructed not to call in strikes on buildings. Instead, the forces were told to call in coalition airstrikes on gardens and roads adjacent to ISIS targets.

“It was clear that the whole strategy in western Mosul had to be reconfigured,” said the Western diplomat.

Noncombat death of coalition servicemember reported

Stars and Stripes

A coalition servicemember supporting the anti-Islamic State campaign has died at an unnamed location in southwest Asia, the military said

Wednesday.

Operation Inherent Resolve spokesman Lt. Col. Paul Greenberg said in a statement that the servicemember died “in what appears to be a non-combat-

related incident.” The death is under investigation.

The servicemember’s name, nationality and the circumstances of the death were withheld.

The latest death brings the number of noncombat fatalities this year in Operation Inherent Resolve to 14, according to the website iCasualties.org. At least 12 of those were Americans.

Marines weather cold to train

BY MARCUS FICHTL
Stars and Stripes

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — About 400 U.S. and South Korean Marines took a break from honing their winter warfare skills Tuesday for some friendly competition in the city that will host the upcoming Winter Olympics.

After doffing their shirts and yelling half-naked in the snow, the allies teamed up to battle each other in chicken fights, relay races and a free-for-all wrestling match.

It was a bit of levity to wrap up a tense year on the Korean Peninsula that saw more than 20 North Korean ballistic mis-

sile tests, two underground nuclear blasts and an ongoing bitter war of words between Washington and Pyongyang.

But Tuesday's event wasn't all fun and games. The Marines also used the time to show off some of the skills they've been practicing over the past 20 days in the harsh mountainous area. Snipers popped targets from snowy perches and skiers barreled James Bond-like down the slopes with guns in hand.

More choreographed than tactical, the troops performed for a horde of media, which at times seemed to outnumber the North Carolina-based Marines and their Korean counterparts during this annual photo op.

"An environment like this is unforgiving," said Capt. Thomas Rigby, 33, of Company A, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The company commander from Red Bank, N.J., said his Marines used the harsh locale to focus on cold weather squad tactics and decision-making skills.

Rigby said historic fights like the Korean War's Battle of Chosin Reservoir, in which Marines fought off and escaped a massive Chinese assault in 1950, have cemented the service's can-do, go-anywhere attitude.

"We're a jack of all trades," he said. "We fancy ourselves to be able to fight in any clime and place."

Police: Sailor kills wife and himself

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A sailor who just returned from a deployment aboard a Navy aircraft carrier is accused of killing his wife before taking his own life in the couple's home near Naval Base Kitsap, Wash., according to local police.

Bremerton police found Navy Seaman Francisco Rivera, 23, and his wife, Marie Aurora Rivera, 22, dead Dec. 13. The sailor stabbed his wife multiple times during a violent assault inside the house before hanging himself, police said in a statement.

The assault occurred just three days after Rivera returned home from a six-month deployment aboard the USS Nimitz, according to the Navy. The aircraft carrier had been at sea since June, sailing more than 78,000 miles and participating in multiple operations, including some 1,300 combat flights into Iraq and Syria from the Persian Gulf, according to the Navy.

The warship is based out of Naval Base Kitsap, east of Seattle.

The Bremerton Police Department did not release a possible motive for the attack, saying they were continuing to investigate.

Navy officials on Wednesday said Rivera had no history of violence or other disciplinary problems in his service record. The sailor was from Anchorage, Alaska, and had served in the Navy since 2015, according to the service.

Navy officials declined to discuss whether Rivera had recently shown any signs of troubling behavior or sought counseling or other help during the deployment, saying such information would be included in the police investigation.

Report: N. Korea tests anthrax on ICBMs

Bloomberg News

TOKYO — North Korea has begun tests to load anthrax onto intercontinental ballistic missiles, Japan's Asahi newspaper reported Tuesday, citing an unidentified person connected to South Korea's intelligence services.

The report said the testing involves ensuring the anthrax survives the immense temperatures generated during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

North Korea has a stockpile

of between 2,500 and 5,000 tons of chemical weapons, and is capable of producing biological agents such as anthrax and smallpox, South Korea has previously said.

The Asahi report comes a day after the White House published its National Security Strategy, a document that said Pyongyang is "pursuing chemical and biological weapons which could also be delivered by missile."

"North Korea — a country that starves its own people — has spent hundreds of millions

of dollars on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons that could threaten our homeland," the report said.

North Korea claimed it had completed its nuclear force after it fired a new Hwasong-15 ICBM in late November.

South Korea assessed the missile — North Korea's largest yet — could potentially fly about 8,000 miles and reach Washington, though additional analysis was needed to determine whether it was capable of re-entry.

Air Force assessing damage at Mildenhall

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Air Force is assessing the damage caused to RAF Mildenhall, two days after a 44-year-old British man stormed the base in his vehicle and sent security personnel on a chase across the facility.

"An investigation will be conducted in order to determine any damage; we do not have that information at this time," Capt. Lauren Ott, a spokes-

woman for U.S. Air Forces in Europe, said Wednesday.

Aerial video footage of the Monday intrusion indicates the intruder managed to drive within feet of a parked V-22 Osprey, coming to a halt with police right behind.

The man, who was taken into custody under Britain's Mental Health Act, suffered bruises and scrapes during the encounter, Suffolk police said. U.S. military personnel fired shots during the melee, but the minor

nature of the injuries suggest the suspect wasn't hit.

The Air Force declined to say how many shots were fired or whether the shots were fired in warning.

The Air Force said that in pursuit of the suspect a chase ended on an "aircraft ramp near the flight line."

Police said the incident at Mildenhall was not terrorism-related, but the breach raises concerns about force-protection procedures.

Despite a brief calm, wildfire threatens Christmas in Calif.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Thousands of people under wildfire evacuation orders in Southern California wondered if they'll be home for the holiday as fire officials braced for a new round of strong winds Wednesday.

The so-called Thomas Fire — one of the largest ever recorded in the state — is more than half contained, but officials were wary that harsh gusts could whip up new danger.

Those who fled the flames in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties feared they might not have homes to go back to.

"My husband has the feeling, 'Why aren't they letting us back in?'" said Curry Sawyer, 82, whose Christmas tree is up still waiting for their grandkids to decorate it after she and her husband, Ray, had to evacuate from their home in Santa Barbara two weeks ago. "But they've got hot spots up there, and if we get more Santa Ana winds we're going to be back to square one. I'm not sure we're out of the woods."

The devastating fire that began on Dec. 4 has destroyed at least 750 homes.

Even if their beloved home of five decades survives the next onslaught of winds, the Sawyers are preparing for Christmas in yet another hotel.

"This is getting ridiculous," Curry Sawyer said from her hotel in Goleta on Tuesday.

The Sawyers' gifts for their family are hidden away in closets waiting to be wrapped, the ingredients for gingerbread men are sitting in cupboards, and the kindling for the fireplace has been chopped.

They were planning a big family Christmas with their sons, who each are married and have a daughter and live in Los Angeles and Amherst, Mass.

If their home doesn't make it, or if a mandatory evacuation remains in place come Christmas, Sawyer said the family will make do in Los Angeles. Her son's home can accommodate her other son's family, but Sawyer and her husband would have to stay in a hotel.

"We'll be more just trying to cramp ourselves into a small space," she said. "But at least we'll be together."

As of Tuesday, 432 people were still staying at evacuation shelters run by the Red Cross, agency spokeswoman Georgia Duncan said.

The shelters are preparing to stay open for Christmas, and many agencies are donating toys so the children there have presents to open. One company already donated more than 100 bicycles, mostly for children.

Trainee presence in crashed Amtrak train cab probed

Associated Press

DUPONT, Wash. — Investigators are looking into whether the Amtrak engineer whose speeding train plunged off an overpass, killing at least three people, was distracted by the presence of an employee-in-training next to him in the locomotive, a federal official said Tuesday.

The official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said investigators want to know whether the engineer lost "situational awareness" because of the second person in the cab.

Preliminary information indicated that the emergency brake on the Amtrak train that derailed in Washington state went off automatically and was not manually activated by the engineer, National Transportation Safety Board member Bella Dinh-Zarr said.

The train was hurtling at 80

mph in a 30 mph zone Monday morning when it ran off the rails along a curve south of Seattle, sending some of its cars plummeting onto an interstate highway below, Dinh-Zarr said, citing data from the locomotive's event recorder.

Dinh-Zarr said it is not yet known what caused the train to derail and that it was too early in the investigation to conclude why it was going so fast.

Investigators will talk to the engineer and other crewmembers and review the event data record from the lead locomotive as well as an identical device from the rear engine, which has already been studied. Investigators are also trying to get images from two onboard cameras damaged in the crash, she said.

The engineer, whose name was not released, was bleeding from the head after the crash and his eyes were swollen shut, according to radio transmissions from a crewmember.

House discrimination payouts cost taxpayers \$342K

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Newly released statistics show taxpayers paid more than \$342,000 to settle workplace discrimination disputes at House lawmakers' offices between 2008 and 2012, including nearly \$175,000 for eight settlements related to sexual harassment and sex discrimination accusations.

The new numbers were released Tuesday by the House Office of Compliance, the taxpayer-funded office that handles the often-secret payouts to House employees. The information reveals three previously undisclosed settlements for sexual harassment. One of

those payouts, for \$85,000, was to settle claims brought against Rep. Eric Massa, D-N.Y., who resigned in 2010 amid accusations that he sexually harassed male aides, according to a person with knowledge of the settlement.

The Office of Compliance previously released more recent statistics that revealed a single \$84,000 sexual harassment payment on behalf of Rep. Blake Farenthold. Before announcing that he won't seek re-election, Farenthold pledged to pay back the amount of his settlement.

The new data show payouts totaling \$342,225.85 for member-led offices, including roughly \$115,000 paid to settle three sex-

ual harassment complaints in the four-year period. About \$53,000 was paid to settle five cases involving sex discrimination.

The statistics also show an additional \$12,240 was paid to settle an age and race discrimination and retaliation claim for a non-member-led office on Capitol Hill.

Revelations and allegations of misconduct in the political sphere continue to roil Capitol Hill. In the past month, six lawmakers have been forced to resign, retire or abandon plans to seek re-election after each was accused of sexually inappropriate behavior. Reps. Farenthold, Ruben Kihuen and Joe Barton

have said they won't run again, while Sen. Al Franken, of Minnesota, and Reps. Trent Franks, of Arizona, and John Conyers, of Michigan, announced their resignations.

As Congress grapples with how to reform what has long been known as a "boys club" environment, both chambers have agreed to adopt mandatory sexual harassment training programs for all members and their staffs. Additionally, bills have been introduced that would eliminate mandatory confidentiality clauses attached to mediation and require members to repay any settlements made with taxpayer funds.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police 'elves' hand out cash in traffic stops

FL OCALA — A Florida police department spread some good will this holiday season, handing out some \$4,200 to unsuspecting residents.

In a news release, Ocala police officials said Operation Secret Santa was made possible by 14 anonymous donors. Earlier this month, four officers who were dubbed "elves" sought out the unlikely suspects.

The officers handed out gifts of up to \$200 in cash through traffic stops, in parking lots, at bus stops and in parks. In a couple of cases, the connections were "pre-planned" by officers who alerted the "elves" to residents who were going through a difficult time.

Police: Argument over candy spurs stabbing

PA READING — Authorities say a dispute over candy spurred a woman to stab her roommate.

Reading police said Tracy Mitchell, 54, faces charges of aggravated assault, reckless endangerment and other counts stemming from the stabbing Monday.

The victim claimed Mitchell was holding a pocketknife in one hand and a picture frame in the other as they argued in their apartment. She said Mitchell tried to strike her with the picture frame as they both fell to the floor.

The woman said she tried to hold Mitchell on the ground but Mitchell stabbed her once in the leg. Mitchell left the apartment a short time later.

Fee to be charged for plastic bags

NY NEW YORK — Shoppers on eastern Long

Island will soon be charged a fee for using plastic bags.

WCBS-TV reported Suffolk County's new plastic bag law takes effect Jan. 1. Under the law, shoppers will be charged 5 cents for each single-use bag.

Suffolk County Legislator William Spencer said the initiative is an important step that will help curb pollution.

Some local merchants say they were unaware of the change and worry shoppers will complain. Spencer said shoppers can bring their own bags to avoid the fee.

High-rise developer pulls 'poor door' plan

HI HONOLULU — The plans for a proposed Honolulu high-rise have been changed to take out a separate entrance that was to be used by moderate-income renters.

The Star-Advertiser reported Monday that the entrance, deemed the "poor door" by affordable housing advocates, would have been reserved for the renters, while market-priced condominium buyers would've used their own door.

The tower's developer, ProPac Holding Group, previously said separate entrances were a logical way to service two buildings with different clientele and amenities.

City Council member Kymberly Pine said the new plan calls for a corridor that will connect the two entrances so apartment and condo residents can use either door.

2 charged in glue gun injuries at day care

IL CHICAGO — Authorities said two women are facing charges after five children were injured with a hot glue gun at a Chicago day care.

Chicago police said five 2-

year-olds were injured earlier this month at the Children's Learning Place. The extent of their injuries was unknown.

A judge on Monday ordered Lizandra E. Cosme, 32, held without bail. She was arrested Sunday and faces felony counts of aggravated battery to a child. She's due back in court Dec. 26.

Also, Susana D. Gonzalez, 27, was charged with misdemeanor counts of causing the circumstances of endangering a child.

Firefighters rescue pair trying to save dog

NY FULTON — Firefighters had to save two people who were attempting to rescue a dog from an icy New York river.

Fulton fire officials said the dog fell through the Oswego River's ice Sunday afternoon, and a man and woman tried to help.

Syracuse.com reported the man fell into the water, so firefighters worked with state police and volunteers to throw a rope to him. The woman had hoisted the dog into a kayak, but was unable to return to shore on her own. She and the animal were pulled to shore by firefighters in ice rescue suits.

Officials said the two were treated for exposure.

University library now has 14 million books

IL CHAMPAIGN — The University of Illinois Library now has 14 million books.

The state's flagship university chose a volume by Frederick E. Hoxie to be the landmark 14 millionth. The professor emeritus of history and American Indian studies is author of "The University of Illinois: Engine of Innovation." It's a collection of

essays on the U. of I.'s top accomplishments and is one of the projects commemorating the university's 150th anniversary.

Museum seeks tank for snapping turtle

VT MARLBORO — A Vermont museum's friendly snapping turtle has outgrown his tank, and officials are in search of a new one.

The Brattleboro Reformer reported staff at Southern Vermont Natural History Museum in Marlboro is seeking \$5,500 for a custom-made tank for Basil.

Assistant museum director Michael Clough said Basil came to the museum five years ago after he was raised as an illegal pet.

The turtle has grown from 3 pounds to 12 pounds in the museum's care, and Clough said he is expected to eventually reach more than 30 pounds.

Clough said the tank will allow Basil to freely swim around once he's fully grown.

Police: Donated gifts are stolen by thief

NY YONKERS — Police in suburban New York are searching for a suspect who they say stole toys from a donation box.

WCBS-TV reported a thief is targeting Toys for Tots boxes in Yonkers. Steve Topilnycky, of Westchester Toys for Tots, said someone stole donations from a Modell's and a Toys R Us last week.

Topilnycky said he was tipped off by a store manager who said the thief was posing as a Toys R Us employee. He alerted other businesses before the thief stole more toys.

Officials said the toy thief got away with about 50 gifts.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Veggie might: Titans thrive on new diet

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Wesley Woodyard misses putting milk in his cereal, and try as he might, the Tennessee Titans linebacker still reaches for a strip of bacon here and there.

Giving up meat hasn't been easy, but in a league where everyone is looking for an edge, Woodyard and the Titans think they've found one in the produce aisle.

Woodyard and at least 10 teammates — mostly on defense — have opted to eat vegan or vegetarian diets this season. Football players have long had a carnivorous reputation, but Tennessee's defenders say they feel energized by their nutrition adjustment, something that's helped the unit rank third against the run and fifth in the league with 40 sacks.

Woodyard is in his 10th NFL season, and usually by this time of year, he's taking daily naps to combat late-season fatigue. Not so much since going to a plant-based diet.

"My energy level's gone up," the Titans' leading tackler said. "And it's just putting in good fuel to your body. And of course, it's always hard to keep weight on this time of the season. But it's worth it for me staying on top of my health."

Linebacker Derrick Morgan sparked the move away from

meat. He and his wife — Cordon Bleu-trained chef Charity Morgan — had gone vegan for stretches, and when Morgan's nutritionist advised him 10 months ago that veganism could help maximize his athleticism, he decided to give up meat and dairy entirely.

"He knew that dairy always didn't agree with his body because he would have reactions when he ate it," Charity Morgan said. "He never thought about meat. The human brain, we've been taught, 'Oh, we need meat. It's protein, protein, protein.' We both had to re-educate ourselves on what is protein."

Having a trained chef in the house eased the transition. Charity Morgan studied plant-based meals online and began preparing dishes for her husband. By the time training camp opened, Charity Morgan was also feeding defensive lineman Jurrell Casey, a three-time Pro Bowl selection, and defensive end DaQuan Jones. Her client list grew as more teammates smelled what she had cooking.

"I broke down, tasted it, and I've been in ever since," Woodyard said. "It's good. You start off just trying to get rid of certain things. I've always wanted to give up red meat. Once I got the chance to get into the vegan diet, it's kind of like you trick your mind to eat other things,

and you get used to it."

Charity Morgan is now feeding 11 Titans — and sometimes a few wives — with more on a waiting list. She's also dished advice to other wives about handling vegetarian dinners at home. Favorites have included vegan crabcakes and pea protein burgers with Charity Morgan's own take on In-n-Out's special sauce. The chef delivers a pair of coolers packed with food each day for practice, and she even provides breakfast burritos on game days at home.

The Titans are 8-6 and the defense ranks 13th overall in the league. With results on the field holding strong, there hasn't been any concern about the diet from coaches or team officials.

"No, guys are still performing, guys are taking care of business," Casey said. "So until that falls off, then you don't have nothing to worry about."

Some players have found they can't quite do vegan full-time. Jones gives himself a cheat meal of chicken once a week for the protein boost, and Casey still eats fish.

Linebacker Brian Orakpo isn't ready for a lifestyle change, but he was a fan of the lunch Charity Morgan left for him after a recent practice. A handful of Titans even gathered for a vegan Thanksgiving meal at the Morgans' home.

Vegetarianism isn't unheard of in the NFL. Detroit RB Ameer Abdullah switched last summer to help prolong his career — a move made easier with both his parents vegetarians.

"It actually helps you build up a faster metabolism," Abdullah said. "A lot of the food is cleaner, so there's not a lot of the gunk that there is in processed foods. You burn through it quicker, but I eat more. That's been a positive for me for sure."

Washington left tackle Trent Williams stuck to a vegan diet through training camp this year after studying the links between diet and disease. The 6-foot-5, 320-pound lineman had to stop when he dropped to around 300 pounds, somewhere he hadn't been since his freshman year of high school. He loved how much better he slept, but he had to gain that weight back to help his center of gravity.

"The only bad thing was I couldn't maintain my weight," Williams said.

The biggest issue for Tennessee is taste. Casey is still on the fence there, and grateful to have Charity Morgan jazzing up his meat substitutes.

"Once you get all the sauce and the seasoning off of it, the texture of the meat or the substance that's supposed to replace it, the flavor of that is horrible," Casey said.

Steelers have 8 Pro Bowlers, most of any team

Associated Press

Antonio Brown, Le'Veon Bell and Ben Roethlisberger are among an NFL-leading eight Pittsburgh Steelers selected for the Pro Bowl. They will be joined on Jan. 28 in Orlando, Fla., by tackle Alejandro Villanueva, guard David DeCastro, center Maurice Pouncey, kicker Chris Boswell, and linebacker Ryan Shazier, who is injured. Brown, also injured but expected back for the playoffs, was voted a starter, as were Bell and the three offensive linemen.

The Philadelphia Eagles and New Orleans Saints each placed six players in the game in balloting announced Tuesday.

Four rookies were chosen in voting by NFL players, coaches and fans: running backs Alvin Kamara of the Saints and Ka-

reem Hunt of the Chiefs, cornerback Marshon Lattimore of the Saints, and safety Budda Baker of the Cardinals.

Two long snappers will be selected by each coach; the losing AFC and NFC team with the best record will have its coaching staff work the Pro Bowl.

Twenty-four of the 86 Pro Bowl selections are newcomers. That includes two of the three Rams specialists chosen: kicker Greg Zuerlein and return specialist Pharaoh Cooper. Rams punter Johnny Hekker is a repeat Pro Bowler.

"The presence of five of our players on the Pro Bowl roster is a testament to the collective effort of our football team," Rams coach Sean McVay said in a release. "While we emphasize football as a team

sport, we appreciate their individual contributions to our overall success. We're extremely proud of them."

Five teams have no representatives: the Jets, Browns, Colts, Bears and Packers.

Other AFC offensive starters: Patriots QB Tom Brady and FB James Develin; Texans WR DeAndre Hopkins; Chiefs TE Travis Kelce; Titans T Taylor Lewan; and Raiders G Kelechi Osemele.

Starting on offense for the NFC: Eagles QB Carson Wentz, who is injured, TE Zach Ertz and G Brandon Brooks; Falcons WR Julio Jones and C Alex Mack; Vikings WR Adam Thielen; Rams RB Todd Gurley; Cowboys T Tyron Smith and G Zack Martin; Redskins T Trent Williams; and 49ers FB Kyle Juszczyk.

Florida Atlantic rolls in Boca Raton Bowl

Associated Press

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Lane Kiffin's first bowl game at Florida Atlantic was the perfect microcosm of his first season with the Owls.

Slow start. Super finish.

And the future could be even better.

Devin Singletary ran for 124 yards and three touchdowns, Jason Driskel accounted for four scores and FAU rolled past Akron 50-3 in the Boca Raton Bowl on Tuesday night — finishing the season on a 10-game winning streak, and with Kiffin having agreed to terms on an extension that, in theory, would keep him at FAU for another 10 years.

That seems unlikely, of course. Then again, so did a program with nine wins in the last three years combined rolling through 2017 this way.

"Just an unbelievable day," Kiffin said. "Can't imagine it being better, 50-3. This is a special story. These are unique

stories. They don't happen. You don't come to FAU after winning nine games in three years combined and win 11 games — and not even play close games. ... These guys just dominate everybody they play."

The Owls were 1-3 in late September. They never lost again, the 10 wins coming by an average of 24.8 points and capped by a win in FAU's first bowl appearance since 2008.

"A long time coming," said FAU linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair, who announced he is returning for his senior season — amid some NFL speculation.

Singletary finished with 32 touchdowns this season for the Owls (11-3), who matched the school record for wins in a season — set during the team's run to the Division I-AA semifinals in 2003.

Driskel threw for 270 yards and two touchdowns, plus ran for two more scores for FAU.

The Owls had a massive turnaround in Kiffin's first year

and may have an even brighter future. Earlier Tuesday, a person with knowledge of the negotiations told The Associated Press that FAU and Kiffin have agreed to extend his contract six more years through 2027.

The days of being called out with an overhead projector as he was by Al Davis in Oakland, or fired on a tarmac like he was at USC, or facing weekly questions about his job security like he was at Alabama, are over.

He's at FAU for as long as he wants to be. The new deal isn't signed, but the sides will get there.

"It was a neat day," Kiffin said. "It's the university saying, 'We're excited about what's going on, we believe in what you're doing, we don't mind that you make jokes on Twitter like other people do.' It was just neat to see."

Kato Nelson threw for 80 yards for Akron (7-7).

"We just got whipped," Akron coach Terry Bowden said. "They didn't punt until

the very end. ... They just were better than us tonight, it was clear to see."

And Kiffin held nothing back.

FAU got three touchdowns on fourth-down tries, unsuccessfully tried an onside kick in the first quarter, went for a 2-point conversion in the third quarter to make it 36-3 and even tried a halfback pass in the fourth quarter with a 47-point lead. The Owls didn't punt on their first nine possessions, getting seven touchdowns and two missed field goals out of those.

Even on the last play of the game, FAU threw a pass — a 10-yard gain, one that gave the Owls a 582-146 edge in total yards. The Owls left no doubt: Only two bowl games since 2000 had a bigger margin of victory than FAU's 47-point romp in this one.

"Lane was just playing football," Bowden said. "I have no problem with it."

NHL roundup

Lundqvist, Carey help Rangers win third straight

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Henrik Lundqvist stopped 39 shots, Paul Carey scored twice and the New York Rangers beat the Anaheim Ducks 4-1 on Tuesday night.

Kevin Hayes and Michael Grabner also scored for New York, and Nick Holden and David Desharnais each had two assists. The Rangers have won three straight.

Ondrej Kase scored for the Ducks, who have lost three straight. John Gibson made 28 saves.

The Ducks outshot the Rangers 16-10 in the first period and had several quality scoring opportunities. However, Lundqvist covered up a few defensive breakdowns, giving New York's offense time to get on track.

The Rangers scored twice in 1:24 spanning the first intermission. Desharnais found a streaking Carey at 19:14 of the first period, and Hayes scored 38 seconds into the second for a 2-0 lead.

Carey scored again at 13:00 of the middle frame. Desharnais stopped short near the hash marks and found Carey alone in the slot. Jimmy Vesey also assisted on the play.

Desharnais had been playing well on the top line while center Mika Zibanejad missed nine games with a concussion, but Zibanejad returned Tuesday. Rangers coach Alain Vigneault slid Desharnais to the fourth line, but he still contributed and has nine points in his last 10 games.

Grabner scored his 17th of the season at 16:37 of the third for a 4-1 lead.

Golden Knights 4, Lightning 3: Shea Theodore snapped a tie with 2.3 seconds left and host Vegas scored four power-play goals, ending Tampa Bay's seven-game winning streak.

Jets 6, Predators 4: Brandon Tanev scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:26 left, sending visiting Winnipeg past Nashville.

Bruins 3, Sabres 0: Jake DeBrusk scored for the second straight night, Anton Khudobin turned away 36 shots and visiting Boston blanked Buffalo.

Maple Leafs 8, Hurricanes 1: Mitch Marner and Tyler Bozak each had a goal and three assists, and host Toronto stopped a three-game slide by routing Carolina in a rare weekday afternoon game.

Wild 6, Senators 4: Eric Staal scored twice, Nate Prosser had a goal and an assist, and visiting Minnesota

rallied from a two-goal deficit to beat Ottawa.

Red Wings 6, Islanders 3: Trevor Daley scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period and visiting Detroit beat New York for just its third win in 13 games.

Capitals 4, Stars 3 (OT): Andre Burakovsky scored his second goal of the game 1:51 into overtime, lifting visiting Washington over Dallas.

Panthers 3, Coyotes 2: Mike Matheson scored the winner early in the third period and visiting Florida rallied from two goals down to hand slumping Arizona its seventh straight defeat.

Canadiens 7, Canucks 5: Nicolas Deslauriers had the first two-goal game of his career, Carey Price made 34 saves and visiting Montreal beat Vancouver.

NBA roundup

Bucks blow big lead, still beat Cavaliers

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Bucks have blown big fourth-quarter leads far too many times this season, leading to disheartening losses.

The Bucks wasted another sizeable advantage in the final period Tuesday night against the Cleveland Cavaliers, but fought back this time to capture a 119-116 win.

“It was a big step for our team. It shows maturity,” said Giannis Antetokounmpo, who led the Bucks with 27 points. “Usually, in a situation like that, we give the game away.”

Eric Bledsoe scored 26 points for Milwaukee, which ended a five-game losing streak to Cleveland. Khris Middleton had 18 points and 10 assists, and Malcolm Brogdon finished with 16 points.

“We kind of bent but we didn’t break,” Bucks coach Jason Kidd said. “Giannis made plays down the stretch. We stayed to-

gether. We are playing against one of the best teams in the world.”

LeBron James scored 39 points for Cleveland, which lost for just the second time in its last 20 games. James had seven assists but grabbed just one rebound in the waning seconds. Kevin Love finished with 21 points.

After a slow start, the Bucks got to the Cavaliers for 39 second-quarter points. Milwaukee cracked the 100-point barrier early in the fourth, but then stalled.

Milwaukee led 103-83 when Cleveland launched a furious comeback with James on the bench. Back-to-back three-pointers by Dwyane Wade put the Cavaliers up 107-105, capping a 24-3 run and giving the visitors their first lead since the second quarter.

“Obviously, tonight [Wade] showed what he’s capable of still doing,” James said. “It’s a luxury having a guy like that

coming off the bench.”

A three-pointer by Brogdon put the Bucks back in front with 3:38 remaining. A traditional three-point play by James put the Cavaliers ahead 113-112 with about two minutes left.

Tony Snell responded with a three-pointer for Milwaukee with 58.9 seconds remaining. After a Cleveland miss, Antetokounmpo grabbed a loose ball, hit a short shot and was fouled. His free throw gave the Bucks a 117-113 lead with 5.9 seconds to go.

Wade finished with 14 points for Cleveland, and Jeff Green had 13.

Wizards 116, Pelicans 106: Bradley Beal scored 26 points, Mike Scott had a season-high 24 and host Washington won for the third time in four games.

John Wall collected 18 points and 10 assists for the Wizards, who were coming off a 106-99 loss to Cleveland on Monday. Marcin Gortat had 10 points, 14 rebounds and three blocked

shots.

New Orleans got another big game from Anthony Davis and DeMarcus Cousins, but the Pelicans dropped their second straight. Davis scored 37 points, and Cousins finished with 26 points and 13 rebounds.

After New Orleans tied it at 61 early in the third quarter, the Wizards went on a 24-5 run to open an 85-66 lead.

Kings 101, 76ers 95: Zach Randolph scored 27 points and Buddy Hield added 24, leading Sacramento to the road win.

Frank Mason III had 16 points for the Kings, who came back from a 16-point second-half deficit.

Ben Simmons had 13 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists for slumping Philadelphia, which lost for the seventh time in eight games while playing without center Joel Embiid for the second straight night due to a back injury. Robert Covington led the 76ers with 17 points.

College basketball roundup

No. 17 OU wins first game since moving into Top 25

Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Freshman Trae Young had 26 points and tied an NCAA Division I record with 22 assists as No. 17 Oklahoma rolled past Northwestern State 105-68 on Tuesday night in the Sooners’ first game since moving into the Top 25.

Brady Manek added 22 points and Kameron McGusty had 15 for Oklahoma (9-1). The Sooners have won seven straight games — including an upset of then-No. 3 Wichita State on Saturday — and have scored 90 or more points seven times this season.

Young’s 22 assists tied the major college record set by Tony Fairley of Charleston

Southern vs. Armstrong in 1987 and matched by Southern’s Avery Johnson against Texas Southern in 1988 and Syracuse’s Sherman Douglas against Providence in 1989.

No. 3 Arizona St. 95, Longwood 61: Tra Holder scored 20 points, Kodi Justice added 18 and the host Sun Devils overcame a shaky first half to extend the best start in school history.

Arizona State (11-0) struggled early for the second straight game.

No. 8 Texas A&M 64, Northern Kentucky 58: Senior guard Duane Wilson scored 16 points and the host Aggies escaped with the win.

Short-handed Texas A&M (10-1), missing injured starters

Admon Gilder and Robert Williams, trailed 16-15 more than midway through the first half before outscoring the Norse 12-2 over the next 4 minutes.

No. 9 Xavier 81, Marshall 77: Kerem Kanter had 16 points and 13 rebounds for the host Musketeers, who played the second half without three starters.

Xavier (11-1) led by as many as 23 points but was outscored 50-34 in the second half. Xavier didn’t have starters J.P. Macura (blurred vision) and Kaiser Gates (dizziness) the entire game. Freshman Naji Marshall, who was moved into the starting lineup, took a hard fall near halftime and did not play in the second half.

No. 11 Wichita State 89,

Arkansas State 80: Samajae Haynes-Jones came off the bench to score 27 points for the host Shockers.

No. 13 Virginia 77, Savannah State 49: Sophomore guard Ty Jerome scored a career-high 17 points, hitting all three of his three-point attempts for the host Cavaliers.

No. 20 Cincinnati 77, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 49: Cane Broome matched his season high with 17 points as the Bearcats kept the Golden Lions winless while extending the nation’s longest home-court winning streak.

No. 21 Texas Tech 90, Florida Atlantic 54: Keenan Evans led six players in double figures for the host Red Raiders.