

## US virus fatalities hit record levels

*Associated Press*

Deaths from COVID-19 in the United States have soared to more than 2,200 a day on average, matching the frightening peak reached last April, and cases per day have eclipsed 200,000 on average for the first time on record, with the crisis all but certain to get worse because of the fallout from Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's.

Virtually every state is reporting surges just as a vaccine appears days away from getting the go-ahead in the U.S.

"What we do now literally will be a matter of life and death for many of our citizens," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Tuesday as he extended restrictions on businesses and social gatherings, including a ban on indoor dining and drinking at restaurants and bars.

While the impending arrival of the vaccine is reason for hope, he said, "at the moment, we have to face reality, and the reality is that we are suffering a very dire situation with the pandemic."

Elsewhere around the country, North Carolina's governor imposed a 10 p.m. curfew, and authorities in Southern California and the San Joaquin Valley sent a mass cell-phone text alert Tuesday telling millions about the rapid spread of the virus and urging them to abide by the state's stay-at-home

orders.

The virus is blamed for more than 285,000 deaths and 15 million confirmed infections in the U.S.

Many Americans disregarded warnings not to travel over Thanksgiving and have ignored other safety precautions, whether out of stubbornness, ignorance or complacency. On Saturday night, police in Southern California arrested nearly 160 people, many of them not wearing masks, at a house party in Palmdale that was held without the homeowner's knowledge.

Before his death Friday from complications of COVID-19, 78-year-old former Alabama state Sen. Larry Dixon asked his wife from his hospital bed to relay a warning.

"Sweetheart, we messed up. We just dropped our guard ... We've got to tell people this is real," his friend, Dr. David Thrasher, a pulmonologist, quoted him as saying.

Although Dixon had been conscientious about masks and social distancing, he met up with friends at a restaurant for what they called a "prayer meeting," and three of them fell ill, Thrasher said.

Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House coronavirus task force coordinator, offered what sounded like a subtle rebuke of the way President Donald Trump and others in the

administration have downplayed the disease and undercut scientists.

"Messages need to be critically consistent," Birx said Tuesday at a Wall Street Journal conference of CEOs. "I think we need to be much more consistent about addressing the myths that are out there — that COVID doesn't really exist, or that the fatalities somehow are made up, or the hospitalizations are for other diseases, not COVID, that masks actually hurt you."

On Thursday, a Food and Drug Administration advisory panel is widely expected to authorize emergency use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, and shots could begin almost immediately after that. Britain on Tuesday started dispensing the Pfizer vaccine, becoming the first country in the West to begin mass vaccinations.

Still, any vaccination campaign will take many months, and U.S. health experts are warning of a continuing surge of infections in the coming weeks as people gather for the holidays.

California officials painted a dire picture as more than 22,000 residents test positive for the coronavirus each day, with about 12% inevitably showing up at hospitals in two to three weeks. They fear the spike could soon overwhelm intensive care units.

## First woman recommended to command aircraft carrier

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy for the first time has recommended a woman for command of a U.S. aircraft carrier, Naval Air Forces spokesman Cmdr. Zachary Harrell said Wednesday.

Capt. Amy Bauernschmidt, a former Navy helicopter pilot and commander of an amphibious transport dock, is one of six Navy captains recommended for carrier command by the Aviation Major Command Board on Nov. 21. The others are Colin Day, Gavin Duff, Brent Gaut, David Pollard and Craig Sicola.

The Navy has not yet assigned Bauernschmidt or her colleagues to a car-

rier, Harrell said. They will be eligible for command in fiscal year 2022.

The board was directed to consider officers' "breadth of experience to include major staff and joint duty assignments" in selecting those they wished to recommend, according to the Nov. 9 Navy order convening the screening board.

The Navy has 11 aircraft carriers, all nuclear powered and the largest warships afloat, according to Navy.mil. Including their air wings, each carries a crew of about 5,000 and 60-75 aircraft.

Bauernschmidt in August 2016 became the first female executive officer of an aircraft carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln. Most recently, she commanded the amphibious transport dock USS San Diego

from November 2019 until October.

A 1994 Naval Academy graduate, Bauernschmidt was commissioned about two months after the first women to serve aboard combat ships received their orders, according to her Navy biography. Congress lifted the ban on women serving in such roles the year before.

A native of Milwaukee, Wis., she became a naval aviator in 1996 and spent her early career deployed in the Northern Arabian Gulf with Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 45 aboard the destroyer USS John Young, according to her biography. She later served as an instructor pilot, department head and executive officer of several helicopter squadrons. She has more than 3,000 flight hours.

# Biden makes case for Austin to lead DOD

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President-elect Joe Biden made his case for retired Army Gen. Lloyd Austin to be secretary of defense, urging Congress to waive a legal prohibition against a recently serving military officer running the Pentagon.

With concern rising in Congress about maintaining civilian control of the military, Biden on Tuesday suggested he felt a need to counter an emerging narrative that Austin's nomination blurs the lines between civil and military roles.

"Given the immense and urgent threats and challenges our nation faces, he should be confirmed swiftly," Biden wrote in *The Atlantic*. It was his first public confirmation that Austin is his pick for Pentagon chief, although word had already leaked out Monday, prompting criticism and skepticism from some in Congress.

Biden countered the concerns by arguing that Austin knows that a Pentagon

chief's duties are different from those of a military officer. He said Austin is aware that "the civil-military dynamic has been under great stress these past four years," an allusion to President Donald Trump's hiring of numerous retired generals for key posts early in his administration, including retired Marine Gen. Jim Mattis as defense secretary.

Biden argued that Austin would work to put the civil-military balance "back on track." He said the main reason he picked Austin was because he reacts well under pressure.

"He is the person we need in this moment," Biden wrote.

Austin would be the first Black leader of the Pentagon, and the historic nature of the nomination, particularly in a year of extraordinary racial tension in the country, adds an intriguing dimension to the debate in Congress over one of the key members of Biden's Cabinet.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.,

followed Biden's lead, announcing her support and calling Austin "particularly well-positioned to lead during this precarious moment."

Austin was an unexpected choice. Most speculation centered on Michele Flournoy, an experienced Washington hand and Biden supporter. She would have been the first woman to run the Pentagon. Flournoy issued a statement Tuesday congratulating Austin and calling him a man of deep integrity.

Austin is widely admired for his military service, which includes leading troops in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan in addition to overseeing U.S. military operations throughout the greater Middle East as head of Central Command. But the requirement for a congressional waiver makes getting him installed as Pentagon chief more complicated than usual. Austin retired in 2016 after 41 years in the Army and has never held a political position.

## House passes \$740.5B defense bill despite the threat of Trump's veto

**BY STEVE BEYNON**

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The House voted Tuesday to approve a \$740.5 billion defense spending bill as the Senate prepares to vote on the same legislation that President Donald Trump has threatened to veto.

House members passed the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets funding and policy priorities for the Pentagon, by a 335-78 vote, which is enough support to reach the two-thirds majority needed to override a veto.

"Today, the House sent a strong, bipartisan message to the American people: Our service members and our national security are more important than politics," said Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

"The House has proven we are capable of legislating and reaching compromise that results in good policy outcomes," he said.

The Senate is set to vote on the bill in the coming days. The bill would then go to President Donald Trump for him to sign it into law.

Trump has made repeated threats to veto the NDAA, however, after Congress declined to cater to his wishes with the legisla-

tion. In the summer, Trump threatened to sink the bill over efforts to rename military bases that honor Confederate leaders.

The NDAA was passed by the House and Senate with measures to plan for the renaming of several Army bases.

Trump more recently threatened to veto the NDAA over a repeal of legal liability protections for social media companies, which the final NDAA also does not include. Some Republicans backed the idea, though they said it falls out of the jurisdictions of military policy and reining in technology companies should be its own legislation.

"For members considering to vote 'no' because of this issue, ask yourself, do you think you'll get a better bill in two months?" said Rep. Don Bacon, R-Neb., a member of the House Armed Services Committee. "The answer is 'no.'"

The defense bill also puts restrictions on Trump's planned withdrawal of troops from Germany and Afghanistan.

The NDAA authorizes a 3% pay raise for troops and slightly increases hazardous duty pay. It also includes \$2.2 billion for the Pentagon to begin a Pacific Deterrence Initiative in an effort to check growing Chinese military power in the Indo-Pacific region.

## DJ's a soldier now and he knows it

**BY CHAD GARLAND**

*Stars and Stripes*

DJ Kenny Oliver, who created songs with dance music duo LMFAO and other big names in the past decade, started losing his enthusiasm for music as club and festival gigs dried up during the coronavirus pandemic, he said.

So he dropped beat-making and enlisted in the Army.

The 29-year-old sees military service as "an extension" of things he'd done to challenge himself, he said in an Army statement.

"But to serve my country is my number one reason for enlisting," he said.

The song that made his music career, "Sexy and I Know It," was an earworm in 2012, when it was featured in Madonna's Super Bowl halftime show and in an M&M's commercial that aired during the big game.

Recruiter Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Moe, who lives around the corner from Oliver, knew little about his successes in the music business when they first began working together.

"I think it's an amazing thing, to be in that lifestyle for years and then join the Army," Moe said in the Army statement.

# AP: Biden makes housing, USDA picks

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President-elect Joe Biden made two key domestic policy picks, selecting Ohio Rep. Marcia Fudge as his housing and urban development secretary and former Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to reprise that role in his administration, according to five people familiar with the decisions.

The picks on Tuesday highlighted Biden's delicate balancing act as he builds out his Cabinet, seeking to diversify his picks and reward the coalitions that helped elect him while also following his instincts to surround himself with close allies who served in the Obama administration.

Fudge, a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, was just elected to a seventh term representing a majority Black district that includes parts of Cleveland and

Akron. Vilsack spent eight years as head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Obama administration and served two terms as Iowa governor.

Their intended nominations were confirmed to The Associated Press by five people familiar with one or both of the decisions who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid preempting the president-elect's announcement.

Biden has viewed Fudge as a leading voice for working families and a longtime champion of affordable housing, infrastructure and other priorities, while Vilsack was selected in part because of the heightened hunger crisis facing the nation and the need to ensure someone was ready to run the department on day one, according to those briefed on the decision.

As news outlets started reporting Fudge's

selection as HUD secretary, she said on Capitol Hill that it would be "an honor and a privilege" to be asked to join Biden's Cabinet, though she didn't confirm she had been picked.

"It is something in probably my wildest dreams I would have never thought about. So if I can help this president in any way possible, I am more than happy to do it," she said Tuesday evening.

A longtime member of the House Agriculture Committee and a fierce advocate for food stamps, Fudge was originally discussed to become agriculture secretary. South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, the No. 3 House Democrat who gave Biden a key nod of support in the primaries, had strongly backed her, saying, "It's one thing to grow food, but another to dispense it, and nobody would be better at that than Marcia Fudge."

## Minneapolis eyes deep police cuts after Floyd's death

*Associated Press*

MINNEAPOLIS — Minneapolis City Council members who tried unsuccessfully to dismantle the police department in response to George Floyd's death are voting Wednesday on whether to shrink it, a move that could imperil the entire city budget because the mayor is threatening to use his veto in order to protect public safety amid soaring crime rates.

The plan, which supporters call "Safety for All," is the latest version of the "defund the police" movement that Minneapolis and other cities have considered since Floyd's May 25 death ignited mass demonstrations against police brutality and a nationwide

reckoning with racism.

Eleven of the 13 council members have already cast committee votes in favor of the largest parts of the plan, signaling that passage is likely. It would cut nearly \$8 million from Mayor Jacob Frey's \$179 million policing budget and redirect it to mental health teams, violence prevention programs and other initiatives.

"I am actively considering a veto due to the massive, permanent cut to officer capacity," Frey said in a statement Monday night. Reducing the authorized size of the force by 138 officers before enacting alternatives is "irresponsible," he said.

Cities around the United States, including

Los Angeles, New York City and Portland, Ore., are shifting funds from police departments to social services programs in an effort to provide new solutions for problems traditionally handled by police. Such cuts have led some departments to lay off officers, cancel recruiting classes or retreat from hiring goals.

In Minneapolis, violent crime rates have surged since the death of Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed and pleading for air for several minutes while Derek Chauvin, a white former officer, pressed his knee against his neck. Chauvin and three others were charged in Floyd's death and are expected to stand trial in March.

## Portland police clash with protestors in broad daylight

*Associated Press*

PORTLAND, Ore. — Protesters outraged with the arrests of seven people at a home where a family was removed in September hurled rocks at officers, sprayed a fire extinguisher at them and damaged police vehicles on Tuesday.

The violence happened in broad daylight, and by evening, Mayor Ted Wheeler sent out a statement saying he was authorizing Portland Police "to use all lawful means to end the illegal occupation ... There will be no autonomous zone in Portland."

"It's time for the encampment and occupation to end," Wheeler said in a statement that also acknowledged the issues the protesters want to fix, such as housing and health care.

"There are many ways to protest and work toward needed reform. Illegally occupying private property, openly carrying weapons, threatening and intimidating people are not among them."

The clash fits into a larger debate roiling in Oregon about whether state lawmakers should extend a pandemic-inspired morato-

rium on evictions that's set to expire within weeks. Federal renter protections are also set to expire on Dec. 31 and housing advocates are worried that an end to those policies could lead to a huge wave of the newly homeless.

A group of activists for months have camped at the home dubbed "Red House on Mississippi" because it is on North Mississippi Avenue — to express their outrage against gentrification and the eviction of the Black and Indigenous family in September.



# White House seeks \$600 checks in bill

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration dived back into Capitol Hill's confusing COVID-19 negotiations, offering a \$916 billion package to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that would send a \$600 direct payment to most Americans but eliminate a \$300-per-week employment benefit favored by a bipartisan group of Senate negotiators.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin made the offer to Pelosi late Tuesday afternoon, he said in a statement. He offered few details, though House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy said it proposes the \$600 direct payment for individuals and \$1,200 for couples, which is half the payment delivered by the March pandemic relief bill.

Mnuchin reached out to Pelosi after a call with top congressional GOP leaders, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who remains at odds with Democratic leaders over COVID-19 relief. Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., responded to Mnuchin's entreaty with a statement that said they would prefer to let a bipartisan group take the lead.

The bipartisan group, led by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and GOP Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, among others, is seeking to rally lawmakers in both parties behind a \$908 billion framework that includes a \$300-per-week pandemic jobless benefit and \$160 billion for states and local governments. It is more generous than a GOP plan that's been filibustered twice already but far smaller than a wish list assembled by House Democrats.

## Idaho

BOISE — Idaho public health officials abruptly ended a meeting Tuesday after the Boise mayor and chief of police said intense protests outside the health department building — as well as outside some health officials' homes — were threatening public safety.

The request from Boise Mayor Lauren McLean and the Boise Police Department came a few minutes after one health board member, Ada County Commissioner Diana Lachiondo, tearfully interrupted the online meeting to say she had to rush home from work to be with her son. The board had been expected to vote on a four-county mask mandate in Idaho's most populated region.

"My 12-year-old son is home alone right now and there are protestors banging outside the door," Lachiondo said.

Another board member, family physician

Dr. Ted Epperly, said protests were "not under control at my house," as well. Protesters went to at least three board members' homes, the Boise Police Department said.

## California

LOS ANGELES — Los Angeles County's health director acted "arbitrarily" and didn't prove the danger to the public when she banned outdoor dining at restaurants as coronavirus cases surged last month, a judge ruled Tuesday in a case other businesses may use to try to overturn closures and restrictions.

The county failed to show that health benefits outweigh the negative economic effects before issuing the ban, Superior Court Judge James Chalfant wrote. He also said the county did not offer evidence that outdoor dining presented a greater risk of spreading the virus.

"By failing to weigh the benefits of an outdoor dining restriction against its costs, the county acted arbitrarily and its decision lacks a rational relationship to a legitimate end, the judge wrote.

Chalfant limited the outdoor dining ban to three weeks and said once it expires Dec. 16 the Department of Public Health must conduct a risk-benefit analysis before trying to extend it.

## Kansas

WICHITA — Bar owners in Kansas' largest city are challenging rules designed to slow the spread of COVID-19, hoping to use the courts to overturn a mask mandate, limits on public gatherings and an 11 p.m. closing time for bars and restaurants.

If the bar owners and others suing officials in Wichita and its home of Sedgwick County are successful, they would take the county back to business as it was before the coronavirus pandemic reached Kansas in early March, The Wichita Eagle reports.

The lawsuit is partially crowd-funded by "Unmask the Truths," a Facebook and web-based group of mask opponents. It was first filed in state district court in late November, but attorneys for both sides had it moved to federal court this month because the lawsuit alleges that pandemic rules violate the business owners' rights to free speech and due legal process under the U.S. Constitution.

"A face mask has become a symbol of an attempt by the government to gain control of its citizenry," the lawsuit claims. "Forcing them to wear face masks is forcing them to convey a message with which they disagree."

The lawsuit was filed by 10 businesses, their owners and two other Sedgwick County residents who allege that their rights as citizens are violated.

## New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE — Top health officials said New Mexico has a solid plan in place to stretch hospital and health care resources as far as possible before having to ration care, but they also warned Tuesday that the state could face that prospect if the coronavirus pandemic worsens.

Human Services Secretary Dr. David Scrase said there are hospitals around New Mexico facing extremely high demands, and state health officials are expected to formally declare that providers are at a stage where care is being rationed. Such a step is likely despite a slowdown in the rate of spread and a decrease in the number of virus cases being reported daily in the state.

Under a crisis standards of care declaration, an established framework and guidelines would be used for making ethical decisions about triaging care.

"The trigger for when that happens is actually when the resources don't match the demand," said Dr. Michael Richards, vice chancellor for clinical affairs with the University of New Mexico Health System. "In our case, we've had months of this and months to prepare."

Local triage boards are up and running at hospitals around the state, and a centralized call center has been helping to identify which hospitals have room and which ones need help.

## Illinois

CHICAGO — The city of Chicago has cited a restaurant owned by an alderman for allowing customers to dine inside in violation of rules designed to slow the spread of COVID-19, city officials said Tuesday.

Ann Sather, a restaurant owned by Alderman Tom Tunney, faces two citations, which carry maximum fines of more than \$10,000 combined, according to Chicago's Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Department.

Indoor dining has been shut down in the city since late October. And Tunney has previously acknowledged that allowing diners inside his restaurant in the Wrigleyville neighborhood was an "error in judgment."

"We've been sporadically letting some people in, regulars at the restaurant, to accommodate them from time to time," Tunney said Monday. "It's done."

## ID of man who found treasure chest revealed

**WY** CHEYENNE — A grandson of Forrest Fenn has confirmed that a medical school student from Michigan found an over \$1 million treasure chest that the retired art and antiques dealer stashed in the wilds of Wyoming over a decade ago.

Jonathan “Jack” Stuef, 32, found the treasure in June, Fenn’s grandson, Shiloh Forrest Old, posted on a website dedicated to the treasure.

Fenn, who was also a decorated U.S. Air Force fighter pilot during the Vietnam War, left clues to finding the treasure in a poem in a memoir entitled “The Thrill of the Chase.”

A court order in a federal lawsuit against the Fenn estate prompted Stuef to identify himself to writer Daniel Barbarisi, who’d been in touch with Stuef for a book he has been working on. Barbarisi identified Stuef in an article published in Outside Magazine.

In the lawsuit, a woman who believed the treasure was hidden in New Mexico claims the finder succeeded by hacking her texts and emails, Barbarisi wrote.

## Brewery releases beer honoring President-elect Biden

**DE** WILMINGTON — A brewery in Delaware is making a beer that honors President-elect Joe Biden and his long association with Amtrak.

The News Journal in Wilmington reported that Wilmington Brew Works released its new IPA this week.

The beer is called “Rail Car One: Wilmington to Washington.” Biden has long been known for commuting on Amtrak during his decades as a U.S. senator.

Ironically, Biden doesn’t drink beer. He’s well known as a life-long teetotaler.

## Gun sales rising amid fears of more regulation

**MD** BALTIMORE — Gun sales are booming in Maryland.

The Baltimore Sun reported that Maryland has seen a more than 76% spike in background checks this year compared to last year.

This number doesn’t represent the number of actual gun sales. But it’s a sign of the growing demand for firearms. Background checks have been up 49% nationwide.

Carroll County gun store owner Dan Hartman said the increase is due to the uncertainty people feel about the coronavirus pandemic as well as frequent protests in major cities.

## Former governor marries staffer 41 years his junior

**MN** MINNEAPOLIS — Former Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton announced that he has married one of his gubernatorial campaign staffers.

Posting on Facebook, Dayton, 73, said he wed Ana Orke, 32, who worked on his campaign in 2010.

Acknowledging the age gap of more than four decades, Dayton said the two “realized that the love binding” them “is far deeper and more meaningful than the years that separate” them.

Dayton, the 40th governor of Minnesota from 2011 to 2019, says the two ran into each other a couple years ago in Minneapolis and the “rest is happy history.”

## Man bitten by shark at popular surfing spot

**OR** SEASIDE — A surfer in Seaside was bitten by a shark and suffered non-life-threatening injuries to his lower leg.

The incident took place in a popular surfing spot in South Seaside known as The Cove, near Tillamook Head, according to Jon Rahl, a spokesman for the City of Seaside, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Seaside Fire and local medics arrived at the scene to find the adult male victim being carried to the parking lot by fellow surfers. An off-duty Seaside lifeguard had applied a field tourniquet to the man’s leg to help slow the bleeding.

The victim was transferred to the trauma unit of the local hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

## 7 men indicted after 2018 dog fight

**GA** DUBLIN — Seven men were indicted after a dog fight in middle Georgia was broken up in March 2018.

The federal prosecutors said the owner of the fighting site and five people accused of participating have been charged with felonies.

The owner, James “Pookie” Lampkin, 45, of Eastman, was charged with conspiracy to violate the Animal Welfare Act and 63 counts of possession and training a dog for animal fighting. That’s one count for each of the 63 dogs seized on his property.

Officials identified the men while performing traffic stops after a dog fight was reported near Eastman. Officers found a dog in a vehicle that appeared to have been injured in a fight.

The 63 dogs were seized at Lampkin’s

house, found chained in the back yard.

All the dogs except one diagnosed with cancer were adopted after being legally seized.

## Fire destroys building filled with antiques

**ND** FARGO — It took three hours for firefighters to control a blaze that destroyed a Fargo building filled with antiques.

The three-alarm fire at Reinhart Auction required assistance from firefighters in nearby West Fargo and Moorhead, Minn.

Fargo Fire Marshal Ryan Erickson says the large amount of antiques in the building made the blaze difficult to fight. Witnesses said flames were visible on the roof of the building.

The owner, Gary Reinhart, is an auctioneer.

## 13 people sickened by carbon monoxide at home

**TN** CLEVELAND — Thirteen people exposed to high levels of carbon monoxide were treated at a Tennessee hospital, officials said.

Emergency crews were originally called to a home in Bradley County for a potential stroke victim, Bradley County Fire Chief and EMS Director Shawn Fairbanks told news outlets. Several family members who lived nearby crowded into the home while officials were still on scene and shortly afterward, everyone inside began complaining of weakness, dizziness and nausea, Fairbanks said.

Bradley County Fire Rescue found high levels of carbon monoxide in the home and ventilated it with electric fans.

Meanwhile, three EMS workers and 10 others were treated for carbon monoxide sickness, Fairbanks said.

## 2 people injured after chairlift detached from line at ski resort

**WA** CHEWELAH — Two people were injured after a chairlift detached from its line at an eastern Washington ski resort, according to a news release from the resort.

The Bellingham Herald reported a chair carrying two people broke from the lift line on Chair 1 at 49 Degrees North Mountain Resort in Chewelah, the release said.

Ski patrol immediately attended to the guests who fell and escorted them to the patrol room, the release said. They sustained minor injuries, according to the release.

From The Associated Press

# Ravens' ground game whips Cowboys

*Associated Press*

BALTIMORE — Back in action after a 15-day layoff, Lamar Jackson directed a relentless rushing attack that the Baltimore Ravens hope will be the first big step in a run to the playoffs.

Jackson ran for 94 yards and a touchdown, and the Ravens returned from a COVID-19 outbreak to amass 294 yards rushing in a 34-17 rout of the Dallas Cowboys on Tuesday night.

Playing for the first time since Nov. 22 following a positive test for the potentially deadly virus, Jackson carried 13 times and threw for two scores. He was one of 23 Baltimore players to spend time on the reserve/COVID-19 list while four strains of the virus

swept through the organization.

"I still can't really taste or smell, but I'm good," Jackson said. "I feel good to be back with my guys. It was like two weeks I ain't seen them."

Although the Ravens still have a half-dozen players on the COVID-19 list, the team felt complete for the first time in weeks.

"It's like when you go on a family vacation and one of your family members get sick and you can't bring them," rookie linebacker Patrick Queen said. "You're down in the dumps."

The game was played on Tuesday night because Baltimore's previous game — against Pittsburgh last Wednesday — was pushed back three times while the Ravens

had at least one player test positive for 10 consecutive days.

Gus Edwards ran for 101 yards on just seven carries and rookie J.K. Dobbins — who also missed time on the COVID-19 list — added 71 yards rushing and a TD to help Baltimore (7-5) break a three-game skid and stay alive in its quest to reach the postseason for a third straight year.

"It's a win we really, really had to have. It was a must-win," coach John Harbaugh said. "Running game was excellent. That was the key on offense."

Dallas came in with the worst rush defense in the league, and it showed. The Ravens averaged 7.9 yards per carry and prevailed despite getting only

107 yards passing from Jackson.

"I think today was obviously a different challenge than we've seen," Dallas coach Mike McCarthy said. "This is a unique offense. A very physical offensive line and the dynamic of the combination of the running backs and Lamar."

The last-place Cowboys (3-9) have lost six of seven. Andy Dalton went 31-for-48 for 285 yards and two touchdowns, and Ezekiel Elliott rushed for 77 yards.

"I thought Andy managed the game very well," McCarthy said. "We needed to throw some bigger punches there and we needed to get on the board with touchdowns and we didn't get that done."

## NFC East suddenly turning into postseason threat

*Associated Press*

The NFC East suddenly doesn't look so bad, with the New York Giants and Washington tied for the division lead coming off road victories against teams that qualify for the conversation about the Super Bowl.

The Giants, who beat Seattle on Sunday, control their fate because they swept Washington, and could become the first team to make the playoffs after starting 1-7. Washington is also 5-7 after handing Pittsburgh its first loss Monday night.

Those were the first two victories over opponents with winning records this season for the only division in the NFL without a winning team.

But the NFC East winner will get a home game in the first round of the playoffs, expanded by one team in each conference because of the pandemic.

The altered format also means just one first-round bye, currently held by New Orleans

(10-2), the only NFC team to clinch a postseason berth thus far.

A division-by-division look at the NFC playoff race going into the final quarter of the season:

### NFC East

New York's four-game winning streak is its longest since 2016, the last time the Giants made the playoffs. With quarterback Daniel Jones expected to rest his injured hamstring another week, Colt McCoy should get the nod again after beating Seattle for just his second win in his eighth start since 2014.

Washington is on its third quarterback in former starter Alex Smith, playing for the first time in two years after a career-threatening leg injury. Smith has Washington on a three-game winning streak, capped by a drive to a tiebreaking field goal late against the Steelers.

### NFC North

Green Bay (9-3) has a three-game lead over Minnesota with

four to go and is currently the No. 2 seed in the NFC. Three of the Packers' opponents currently have losing records.

The Vikings (6-6) hold the last of the seven playoff spots in the NFC right now with a big opportunity to put a tighter grip on that spot if they can beat Tom Brady at Tampa Bay on Sunday.

New Orleans is also on the schedule, so Minnesota could be looking at must wins against division rivals Chicago and Detroit, the two NFC North teams with losing records at the moment.

### NFC South

What looked like a duel between the Brady-led Buccaneers and Drew Brees' Saints for the division title — and possibly that lone first-round bye — has faded with three losses in four games by Tampa Bay (7-5).

Meanwhile, the division lead for the Saints (10-2) has grown to three games because they're doing the same thing they did

last year: win without Brees.

Teddy Bridgewater went 5-0 a year ago, and Taysom Hill has won his first three starts since Brees left a 27-13 win over San Francisco on Nov. 15 with broken ribs and a collapsed lung. New Orleans has won nine straight games since a 1-2 start.

### NFC West

It's still the NFC's best division, but the struggles of the Seahawks and Cardinals have changed things some.

The Los Angeles Rams have won three out of four to get even atop the division with Seattle, which is 3-4 since the first 5-0 start in franchise history.

The Rams have the tiebreaker at the moment by virtue of their 23-16 win over the Seahawks, so their rematch in the second-to-last week of the season looms large. If Seattle wins Dec. 27, the subsequent tiebreakers of division records and records with other common opponents are a tossup right now.



# Not much movement in CFP rankings

*Associated Press*

For the third straight week, Alabama, Notre Dame, Clemson and Ohio State held on to the top four spots in the College Football Playoff rankings.

The selection committee's second-from-last rankings had only a little movement in the top 10. Texas A&M is still fifth and Florida held at sixth.

Iowa State moved up a couple of spots to seventh after earning a spot in the Big 12 title game. Cincinnati slipped a spot to eighth after an idle week because of COVID-19 issues in the program.

The Bearcats also will not play this week against Tulsa, the committee's 24th-ranked team. Those two schools are scheduled to meet Dec. 19 in the American Athletic Conference title game.

Ohio State is also currently without a game this weekend after Michigan had to cancel because of a COVID-19 outbreak.

The Buckeyes had to cancel their game two Saturdays ago because of their own virus issues. Last week they beat Michigan State 52-12 without more than a dozen scholarship players, including three starting offensive linemen.

"That certainly got our attention," selection committee chairman Gary Barta said.

Georgia is ninth and Miami is 10th.

Coastal Carolina, coming off a big victory against BYU, jumped five spots to No. 13.

## Two hats

Barta is also the athletic director at Iowa, a member of the Big Ten.

The Big Ten currently has a bit of a dilemma on its hands. Ohio State (5-0) might not play enough games to be eligible to play in the Big Ten championship game.

As part of his real job, Barta will meet with his colleagues in the Big Ten on Wednesday, a regularly scheduled meeting. Barta said he does not know the agenda of that meeting and declined to speculate, but it doesn't seem to be a stretch to think that Ohio State's situation will come up.

Should the Big Ten try to shuffle this week's schedule to get Ohio State an opponent? Should the ADs who made the minimum games rule way back in the summer when the conference first started altering its schedule to deal with the pandemic simply change the rule to

let Ohio State play for the title?

Or keep it the way it is and match up Ohio State with the second-best team in the West Division, likely Iowa, on the weekend of Dec. 19 while Northwestern and Indiana play in the Big Ten championship game?

That's if Indiana can play. The Hoosiers paused team activities Tuesday because of COVID-19 cases.

The Big Ten ADs not only have to figure out what is fair to Ohio State and the rest of the conference, they also must consider how best to protect the integrity and value of their league championship game.

On top of that, they also should be thinking about what is the best way to put the Buckeyes in position to be picked for the playoff by the selection committee.

# Emmert: NCAA must stay open to reform

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — NCAA President Mark Emmert hopes lessons learned through navigating the pandemic will lead college sports leaders to be more open to future reform and to prioritize opportunities for athletes when it comes time to cut costs.

In a 25-minute interview Tuesday with The Associated Press, Emmert said the NCAA and its member schools have shown an uncommon ability to be nimble and responsive in addressing issues of eligibility, scheduling, recruiting, transfers and conducting championship events.

"We've done a whole array of things, many of which member schools in the past have said, 'No, no, no, we can't do that. That's not right.' Well, we're doing it. And the sporting world hasn't collapsed," Emmert said. "And so can we as we move forward, say, well, why can't we continue to do that? Why can't we continue

to provide more flexibility? Why can't we continue to think more creatively about scheduling models and about the way we run a variety of elements of the associations?"

He added: "I'm hoping that that those lessons aren't lost."

It has been a grim 2020 for college sports just the same. Between the cancellation of last season's lucrative NCAA basketball tournaments and the loss of football ticket revenue because of limited attendance, athletic departments have been forced to make steep cuts.

Ohio State, for example, has made plans to lose more than \$100 million, cutting wages and jobs, but not teams. Other schools plan to eliminate sports, including Iowa and Stanford, which plans to drop 11 programs from one of the largest athletic departments in the country.

At lower levels, Furman discontinued its baseball team and Akron got rid of cross country.

Dozens of programs have been cut as budgets have been slashed.

"I know everybody's got difficult financial decisions to make. We had to make a lot inside the national office. But trying to support these students in as many ways as we possibly can has really been the hallmark of all of this," Emmert said. "Because when you look at how the schools have stepped up with their health and safety support for students, it's been pretty remarkable. It's been extensive. It's been hard, but it's been remarkable. We need to say, 'OK, if we can do that, why can't we do these other things?'"

South Carolina last month fired football coach Will Muschamp at a cost of about \$12 million to buy out the remainder of his contract. That move came after the athletic department implemented furloughs to address an expected \$50 million in lost revenue. There is also specula-

tion about the future of Texas football coach Tom Herman, whose buyout with his staff would be more than \$20 million.

"The pandemic and the financial struggles that have come with that, even at very, very well-financed schools makes those choices clearer and a little more stark," Emmert said of the large buyouts that have become common in major college football. "And I hope that causes folks to think longer and harder about those kind of allocation decisions. And that's not to be critical of South Carolina or Texas or anybody else. That's just to say that we need to be clear among ourselves as to why we're engaged in this activity and what we are trying to accomplish collectively and individual institutions." Emmert spoke to the AP after participating in the Sports Business Journal's annual Intercollegiate Athletics Forum. The event is being conducted virtually.

# No. 5 Kansas tops No. 8 Creighton

*Associated Press*

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Jalen Wilson remained composed when he needed to hit the go-ahead three-pointer for Kansas in the closing seconds.

He was equally stoic watching No. 8 Creighton try to match him.

The redshirt freshman calmly hit the go-ahead three-pointer with 42 seconds left Tuesday night, only to foul the Bluejays' Marcus Zegarowski attempting a tying three at the other end. But as Wilson watched, the preseason Big East player of the year missed the last of three foul shots, allowing the fifth-ranked Jayhawks to escape with a 73-72 win.

"I just had a lot of confidence in myself. My team has a lot of confidence in me," said Wilson, who missed most of last season with an injury. "We told each other, 'We're going to win this game. We're going to win this game.'"

Wilson finished with 23 points and 10 rebounds, his role of hero solidified, thanks to Zegarowski's miss. Christian Braun added 14 points, missing a foul shot that could have clinched the game with 12.5 seconds to go, while David McCormack contributed 13 points as Kansas (5-1) won its fifth straight against Creighton.

"To have their best player miss one late, yeah, we were fortunate. Very fortunate," Jayhawks coach Bill Self said. "But the game should have never been in that situation, even though it was a great game and either team could have won. We had a chance to put ourselves in a position where that wouldn't happen and we screwed it up."

Denzel Mahoney gave the Bluejays (3-1) a chance down the stretch. He hit a three-pointer with 1:22 left to get them within 70-68, then picked the pocket of Bryce Thompson and coasted for the tying layup with just

over a minute to go.

That's when Wilson drilled his three off a nifty kick-out from McCormack, and Zegarowski missed an answering three as Braun gathered the rebound and was fouled. But the sharpshooter missed the front end of a one-and-one, giving Creighton a chance to tie. Zegarowski unloaded his attempt and Wilson got the slightest bit of arm.

Zegarowski hit the first free throw. And the second. The third clanked off the rim.

"It was a hell of a college basketball game and kind of unfortunate that somebody had to lose. Really unfortunate that it was us," Bluejays coach Greg McDermott said.

Zegarowski finished with 16 points, though he was hounded by defensive whiz Marcus Garrett and was 5-for-14 from the floor.

Mahoney led Creighton with 19 points while Christian Bishop and Damien Jefferson had 13 each.

## Top 25 roundup

## Bohannon scores 24, leads No. 3 Iowa past No. 16 UNC

*Associated Press*

IOWA CITY, Iowa — Jordan Bohannon said he could have been much better.

Given what he's been through in the last year, he'll take the night he had on Tuesday.

Bohannon scored 24 points to lead four players in double figures for No. 3 Iowa, and the Hawkeyes beat No. 16 North Carolina 93-80 in an ACC/Big Ten Challenge game.

Bohannon had scored 11 points in Iowa's first three games this season. But he got hot from three-point range, making 7 of 16 attempts, and converted his only shot from inside the arc.

"I didn't think I shot the ball well," Bohannon said. "I hit some pretty big shots. But I still thought I had an off day."

"He's been shooting it that way every day," Iowa coach Fran McCaffery said. "If he gets open shots, he's going to make them. I don't care who we play. That's the way he is."

Bohannon had surgeries on both hips last year, one during the summer and then a second one that ended his season in December.

"I've been here for, like, 20 years," said Bohannon, who is in his fifth season. "I kind of have a lot of experience in my belt."

North Carolina's defense slowed Iowa center Luka Garza, who came in as the na-

tion's leading scorer at 34 points per game. Garza had 16 points and 14 rebounds, his 24th career double-double, but his streak of 19 straight games scoring 20 points or more was snapped.

Iowa's guards, though, were left open because of the way the Tar Heels (3-2) defended Garza, and the Hawkeyes (4-0) took advantage, especially in the first half.

CJ Fredrick had 21 points and Joe Wieskamp added 19 for the Hawkeyes. Frederick, Wieskamp and Bohannon had all 17 of Iowa's 3-pointers.

"That's the kind of team we put together," McCaffery said. "They were physical. They have size. They rotated guys (on Garza). When they're in like that, you've got to move it, move it, move it, and shoot open jumpers."

Iowa made seven of its first nine three-pointers. The Hawkeyes opened the game with an 11-2 run and led by as much as 17 points in the first half before taking a 43-31 halftime lead on Fredrick's 3-pointer.

"We didn't guard the three-point shooter," North Carolina coach Roy Williams said. "And if you go by our defensive principles that we do every single day, then we wouldn't have allowed those three-point (shots). And they happened to make a

bunch of them."

**No. 6 Illinois 83, No. 10 Duke 68:** Ayo Dosunmu scored 18 points and the Illini shot 58% to win a top-10 matchup in Durham, N.C., in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge. Kofi Cockburn added 13 points for Illinois (4-1), which jumped to a 14-2 lead and never looked back. It led by 14 at halftime and didn't let the margin slip below double figures after the break, handing the Blue Devils a second home loss in a week.

**No. 12 Tennessee 56, Colorado 47:** The host Vols (1-0) didn't get their first player into double figures until less than a minute remained when John Fulkerson hit two free throws to reach 11 points. Santiago Vescovi also scored 11.

**Penn State 75, No. 15 Virginia Tech 55:** Izaiah Brockington scored a career-high 24 points in the Nittany Lions' lopsided road win.

**No. 21 Rutgers 79, Syracuse 69:** Ron Harper Jr. scored 26 points and the host Scarlet Knights took over a close game down the stretch in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

**No. 22 Ohio State 90, Notre Dame 85:** E.J. Liddell led five Buckeyes players in double figures with 19 points as they rallied from 11 points down on the road.