

## Russian jet flies low past US destroyer

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

A Russian warplane conducted a low pass near the USS Donald Cook on Sunday in the Black Sea, where the Navy has dispatched three ships for exercises.

The Sukhoi Su-24 fighter-bomber screeched past the U.S. destroyer while it was operating in international waters, the U.S. Navy's 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet said in a statement.

The Navy said it operates in the Black Sea to reassure allies in the region and "ensure security and stability."

USS Donald Cook is operating alongside the destroyer USS Porter and USNS Laramie, which is refueling the warships during operations.

Refueling at sea is fundamental for the Navy, but doing it in the Black Sea is "a new operational model in a new year," said

Cmdr. Matt Curnen, USS Donald Cook's commander. "Taking fuel at sea is the most concrete way for us to sustain independent operations."

The arrival of three Navy ships in the Black Sea could signal that the service intends to bolster its presence there this year.

NATO has emphasized maintaining a presence in the region, which includes the Crimean Peninsula, annexed by force by Russia in 2014. But the time key allies operated there last year declined compared to 2019, a security analyst with The Heritage Foundation, a Washington think tank, said last week.

A Navy P-8A aircraft also was taking part in drills with the vessels in recent days. But more Navy ships and planes in the Black Sea can also mean additional attention from Russian forces, who routinely track their

movements.

The Navy didn't immediately lodge any formal public complaints against the Russians for the Su-24's low pass, though the service has criticized some Russian actions in the region in recent years.

In August, a U.S. B-52 bomber's maneuvers above the Black Sea were restricted by two Russian fighter planes that flew in an "unsafe and unprofessional manner" when they crossed within 100 feet of the Air Force's long-range bomber, the military said at the time.

In April and May, the U.S. accused Russia of multiple unsafe intercepts involving fighters flying as close as 25 feet from a Navy P-8A Poseidon reconnaissance aircraft over the eastern Mediterranean. Russia has also lodged complaints about U.S. operations near its borders.

## China escalates sea territory claims amid pandemic

By SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

As its neighbors and the United States grapple with the coronavirus, China is taking advantage of its improved strength to up the ante in the South China Sea, a maritime security expert says.

The only major country to grow its economy during the pandemic, Beijing on Friday authorized its coast guard to fire on foreign vessels and destroy "illegal structures" in waters where Chinese territorial claims are disputed by neighbors and, in one case, rejected by an international court.

Philippines Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. characterized the move, in a Wednesday tweet, as "a verbal threat of war to any country that defies the law."

China won't likely attempt overt military action in the maritime territorial disputes, but it may employ more aggressive tactics short of that, according to Ian Chong, an associate professor of political science at the National University of Singapore.

"The Chinese might feel they are in a stronger position now relative to the other

claimants and the U.S. so they might as well try to move the needle," he said in a telephone interview Monday.

The South China Sea and its vast natural resources are the subject of territorial disputes involving China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia. China also has overlapping claims with Japan and Taiwan in the East China Sea.

"It's interesting that there hasn't been a stronger reaction from Vietnam or Indonesia," Chong said. Many governments are focused on fighting the coronavirus and don't have the resources to open other fronts, he said.

"The economic pressure means they are not looking for a fight right now," he said.

The Chinese law might be a negotiating tactic amid stalled negotiations by South China Sea claimants on a code of conduct for the disputed waters, Chong said.

"It might be the Chinese trying to put forward a negotiating position that gets people back to the status quo that already benefited them," he said.

The new law is "a smack in the face" of

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, who thought he could negotiate to keep Chinese ships out of his country's waters, according to Paul Buchanan, an American security analyst based in Auckland, New Zealand.

"That has now been proven to be a naive hope," he said in a telephone interview Monday. Duterte, who has ordered the Philippine navy not to join in freedom of navigation patrols conducted by U.S. warships in the South China Sea, will have to "put up or shut up" when it comes to Chinese incursions, Buchanan said.

"If he does not respond it will likely cause a rift between him and his navy commanders, if not the military as a whole," Buchanan said.

The latest Chinese move is "lawfare" said Carlyle Thayer, an emeritus professor at the University of New South Wales and lecturer at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

"They keep moving goalposts to justify their indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea," he said in a telephone interview Monday.

# USAF deploys 4 B-52 bombers to Guam

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
*Stars and Stripes*

A task force of four B-52H Stratofortress bombers arrived Thursday at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, part of an ongoing demonstration by the Air Force of its ability to move strategic assets around the globe.

The B-52s, from the 96th Bomb Squadron at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., were sent to “reinforce the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific region” through “strategic deterrence,” according to an Air Force statement Friday.

Guam, at the eastern edge of the Philippine Sea, is within easy range of the South China Sea, where the United States and China are engaged in a global rivalry.

The 96th Bomb Squadron last deployed a task force there in De-

ember 2018, the Air Force said. A bomber task force last deployed to Guam in October with 200 airmen from the 9th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron out of Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.

Task force missions help “maintain global stability and security while enabling units to become familiar with operations in different regions,” according to the Air Force. The task force will train with and support other U.S. forces in the region, as well as those of allies and partners, according to the Air Force. It did not specify how long the squadron would remain on Guam.

“Deploying as a Bomber Task Force exercises our ability to produce agile, combat power in any location we are needed,” squadron commander Lt. Col. Christopher Duff said in the statement.

“We remain ready to deploy to reach anywhere in the world at any time,” he added.

The Air Force last year ended its 15-year practice of keeping a continuous bomber presence on Guam in favor of a less-predictable deployment system using bomber task forces. The change aligned with the 2018 National Defense Strategy’s call for strategic unpredictability.

Bomber task forces based in the U.S. deploy cyclically to Guam. Adversaries “watch us come and go,” said Pacific Air Forces commander Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach in a Sept. 9 call with reporters.

Last year, the Air Force rotated B-52s, B-1 Lancers and B-2 Spirit bombers through Guam, putting them to work on exercises with the Navy and the Japan Air Self-

Defense Force.

Bombers in the Indo-Pacific project U.S. airpower in a region ripe with tension. To the west, U.S. and Chinese forces criss-cross the South China Sea, conducting exercises and demonstrating resolve—on the U.S. part to maintain open seas, by China to defend territorial claims or test those of Japan and Taiwan.

The State Department in July formally rejected China’s claims to islands and reefs in the South China Sea, claims that China just as forcefully maintains as historic rights.

“Strategic bomber missions validate the credibility of our forces to address a diverse and complex global security environment,” the Air Force said in its statement.

## Okinawa court sentences Marine for drunken assault

*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Marine who admitted assaulting an Okinawa taxi driver after a night of drinking in November was given a three-year, suspended sentence by a Japanese court Monday.

Lance Cpl. Jamison Michael Bissett, 20, assigned to Camp Hansen, pleaded guilty last week to assault, obstruction of business, making threats, larceny and violation of Japanese traffic laws for choking Hideki Enokawa, 61, from behind on Nov. 7 on a trip to the base.

Bissett then stole and crashed the cab, totaling the vehicle, according to police.

Naha District Court Judge Tatsuto Sakamoto sentenced Bissett to three years in a Japanese prison with hard labor, but suspended the sentence for four years. Bissett will likely serve no

additional jail time unless he commits another crime in Japan.

“It has been recognized that the defendant committed these offenses under the influence of alcohol and on the spur of the moment, one after the other, and did not plot assaults and threats in order to commit a taxi robbery,” Sakamoto explained in court.

“The court is disinclined to impose a prison sentence right away when considering some favorable circumstances for the defendant where he has no prior criminal record, has admitted to the facts laid out in court, shown remorse and promised to not commit more crimes.”

A spokesperson for the Marine Corps did not immediately respond to requests Monday afternoon from Stars and Stripes seeking comment on Bissett’s future on the island or in the Corps.

## US Army makes ‘Harlem Hellfighters’ name official

BY CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

They called themselves the “Black Rattlers” and the French dubbed them “Men of Bronze,” but the Army now officially recognizes a historic Harlem unit by what the enemy called them in World War I — the “Hellfighters.”

The “Harlem Hellfighters” is now the official special designation for the 369th Sustainment Brigade, the New York National Guard said Friday. The unit traces its lineage to the all-Black 369th Infantry Regiment, which earned the moniker over a century ago in fierce fighting that’s been credited with helping to break down racial barriers.

The regiment was the first unit of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I that allowed Blacks to serve. But they were denied a send-off

parade with the 42nd Infantry Division, known as the “Rainbow Division,” after their commander was told they couldn’t participate because “black is not a color in the rainbow.” The soldiers fought under the French army because white American troops refused to fight alongside them.

They proved themselves in 191 days of continuous combat, suffering 1,500 dead and wounded. They outpaced their French counterparts by 7 miles in at least one offensive, and were the first French, British or American soldiers to reach the Rhine River at the end of the war.

On their return home, the unit’s 3,000 soldiers were honored by throngs of New Yorkers who turned up for a victory parade up 5th Avenue in February 1919.

# Report: Hate groups dip, move online

*Associated Press*

During one of the most politically divisive years in recent memory, the number of active hate groups in the U.S. actually declined as far-right extremists migrated further to online networks, reflecting a splintering of white nationalist and neo-Nazi groups that are more difficult to track.

In its annual report, to be released Monday, the Southern Poverty Law Center said it identified 838 active hate groups operating across the U.S. in 2020. That's a decrease from the 940 documented in 2019 and the record-high of 1,020 in 2018, said the law center, which tracks racism, xenophobia and anti-government militias.

"It is important to understand that the

number of hate groups is merely one metric for measuring the level of hate and racism in America, and that the decline in groups should not be interpreted as a reduction in bigoted beliefs and actions motivated by hate," said the report, first shared exclusively with The Associated Press.

The Montgomery, Ala.-based law center said many hate groups have moved to social media platforms and use of encrypted apps, while others have been banned altogether from mainstream social media networks.

Still, the law center said, online platforms allow individuals to interact with hate and anti-government groups without becoming members, maintain connections with like-minded people, and take part in real-world

actions, such as last month's siege on the U.S. Capitol.

White nationalist organizations, a subset of hate groups, declined last year by more than 100. Those groups had seen huge growth the previous two years after being energized by Donald Trump's campaign and presidency, the report said.

Bottom line, the levels of hate and bigotry in America have not diminished, said SPLC President and CEO Margaret Huang.

"What's important is that we start to reckon with all the reasons why those groups have persisted for so long and been able to get so much influence in the last White House, that they actually feel emboldened," Huang told the AP.

## Major storm blankets Northeast, bringing more than foot of snow

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Instead of closing schools and giving students snow days, the latest winter storm is shutting down vaccination sites and snarling other pandemic-related services in many states that could see as much as a foot of snow by Monday evening.

Lara Pagano, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said a nor'easter developing off the mid-Atlantic coast will be a "pretty slow mover" as it brings heavy snow and strong winds through Tuesday.

"It's going to be a prolonged event," Pagano said.

As of Monday morning, some areas had already gotten 3 to 5 inches of snow, with 6 inches in parts of Pennsylvania, she said. In parts of New Jersey, 7 inches already was reported as of Monday morning.

In-person learning was canceled in school districts across the Northeast on Monday, and many COVID-19 vaccination sites were closed. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said city-run vaccination sites would be closed Tuesday as well but he hopes they can reopen Wednesday.

Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont said most vaccinations scheduled for Monday were being postponed, but he wasn't concerned that any vaccine might go to waste.

"The vaccines, kept refrigerated, are good for eight to 10 days, so that's not a problem," Lamont said. "And if this is three or four weeks since your first vaccination, if it gets put off a few days, don't worry, it will

still stay very effective."

The storm delayed the opening of the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood, which was supposed to open Monday as a mass vaccination site for residents age 75 and over. Mass vaccination sites at Gillette Stadium and Fenway Park were open but with some changes, according to CIC Health, which is operating both sites.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy declared a state of emergency on Sunday and closed all state government offices for nonessential personnel.

Hundreds of flights were canceled at the region's major airports on Monday. Transportation officials said on Twitter that 81% of flights were canceled at New York's LaGuardia Airport and 75% at Newark Liberty Airport.

Amtrak canceled all Acela service between Boston and Washington and Pennsylvania service between New York and Pittsburgh. Amtrak's Northeast Regional, Keystone Service and Empire Service were operating on limited or modified schedules.

All New Jersey Transit trains and buses were suspended, except for the Atlantic City Rail Line. New York Waterway ferries were suspended.

In recent days, a storm system blanketed parts of the Midwest, with some areas getting the most snow in several years. Ohio, Washington, D.C., and parts of Virginia also received snow.

## GOP lawmakers call for tougher voting protocols

*Associated Press*

AUSTIN, Texas — Republican lawmakers in statehouses across the country are moving swiftly to attack some of the voting methods that fueled the highest turnout for a presidential election in 50 years.

Although most legislative sessions are just getting underway, the Brennan Center for Justice, a public policy institute, has already tallied more than 100 bills in 28 states meant to restrict voting access. More than a third of those proposals are aimed at limiting mail voting, while other bills seek to strengthen voter ID requirements and registration processes, as well as allow for more aggressive means to remove people from voter rolls.

"Unfortunately, we are seeing some politicians who want to manipulate the rules of the game so that some people can participate and some can't," said Myrna Pérez, director of the voting rights and elections program at the Brennan Center.

The proposals are advancing not only in Texas and other traditional red states but also in such places as Arizona, Georgia and Pennsylvania that supported Donald Trump four years ago, only to flip for Joe Biden in November.

Republicans have said the new bills are meant to shore up public confidence after Trump and his GOP allies, without evidence, criticized the election as fraudulent.

# Town skeptical of vaccine after syphilis study

*Associated Press*

TUSKEGEE, Ala. — Lucenia Dunn spent the early days of the coronavirus pandemic encouraging people to wear masks and keep a safe distance from each other in Tuskegee, a mostly Black city where the government once used unsuspecting African American men as guinea pigs in a study of a sexually transmitted disease.

Now, the onetime mayor of the town immortalized as the home of the infamous “Tuskegee syphilis study” is wary of getting inoculated against COVID-19. Among other things, she’s suspicious of the government promoting a vaccine that was developed in record time when it can’t seem to conduct adequate virus testing or consistently provide quality rural health care.

The coronavirus immunization campaign is off to a shaky start in Tuskegee and other parts of Macon County. Area leaders point to a resistance among residents spurred by a distrust of government promises and decades of failed health programs. Many people in this city of 8,500 have relatives who were subjected to unethical government experimentation during the syphilis study.

## Alaska

ANCHORAGE — Alaska health officials have asked people who prematurely signed up for vaccine appointments to cancel them.

About 500 people in Anchorage who registered by Saturday to receive vaccines at the city’s mass vaccination site in the Alaska Airlines Center were ineligible because of their age or occupation, Anchorage Daily News reported.

State officials said they are primarily focused on vaccinating older adults over the next month.

More than 1,600 vaccine appointment slots were still available Saturday.

## Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation health officials have reported 103 new COVID-19 cases and four more deaths. The latest numbers released Sunday raised the totals to 28,325 cases and 1,018 known deaths since the pandemic began.

The tribe has extended its stay-at-home order with a revised nightly curfew to limit the spread of COVID-19.

The Navajo Department of Health has identified 53 communities with uncontrolled spread of the coronavirus, down from 75 communities in recent weeks.

## Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana health offi-

cialists are making the COVID-19 vaccine available to those between ages 65 and 69.

The state Department of Health announced the expansion Monday, adding the new age group after previously making all residents ages 70 and older and health care workers eligible for shots.

The vaccine is available at no cost. Appointments will be available in all 92 counties and can be made at the website ourshot.in.gov or by calling the state’s 2-1-1 telephone assistance service.

Indiana officials have based shot eligibility on age rather than moving up teachers and other essential workers as other states have done. They cite statistics that those ages 60 and older represent 93% of Indiana’s COVID-19 deaths and 64% of hospitalizations, arguing that vaccinating those people will have the biggest impact.

## Michigan

ROYAL OAK — About 2,700 people were able to use an online scheduling vulnerability to register out-of-turn for COVID-19 vaccinations, according to a Detroit-area health care system.

Beaumont Health said it has determined a user publicly shared an unauthorized pathway for scheduling.

Beaumont’s information technology team detected and shut down unusual activity Saturday on its Epic electronic medical record system. Personal medical records were not compromised, and users were not able to access hospital records, Beaumont said.

The issue will not affect properly scheduled vaccine appointments, it added.

## Missouri

ST. LOUIS — St. Louis officials are looking into concerns raised after young and healthy people were invited to a COVID-19 vaccination clinic, but older people with chronic health conditions were not.

The clinic was set up Saturday at Union Station. Jessi Kniffen, a healthy 39-year-old who works from home, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch she was surprised when she got the invitation on Friday. Kniffen thought she’d have a much longer wait, since the early shots are supposed to be for people age 65 or older, with chronic health conditions or with jobs that put them at high risk.

Others who are elderly or have underlying health conditions reported not getting an invitation despite registering with the city.

About 1,800 people ended up getting doses at Union Station, the site of the city’s first

large-scale vaccination event.

## Nebraska

LINCOLN — Nearly 47,000 doses of coronavirus vaccines were administered across Nebraska last week as officials continue to speed up distribution of the vaccines.

State officials said 46,806 doses of the vaccine were administered last week, which included two days when more than 10,000 doses were given to Nebraskans.

The state estimates that 3.25% of Nebraska’s population has now received both required doses of the vaccine. And Nebraska said it has administered 184,045 of the 254,000 doses of vaccine that it has received. Most of those vaccines have gone to health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities, but in some parts of the state, health officials have started vaccinating people 65 and older and other groups.

## Vermont

MONTPELIER — Vermont’s largest city is continuing to monitor its wastewater for any signs of the new, more infectious strains of COVID-19.

Burlington has been testing its wastewater since August to monitor COVID-19 levels and recently starting testing for the U.K. variant, WCAX-TV reports.

Brian Lowe, the city’s chief innovation officer, said the type of test for the U.K. variant can also detect other mutations of the virus.

Chittenden County has had more than 500 new confirmed virus cases and two deaths in the last two weeks.

## Wisconsin

When a pharmacist discovered 57 vials of the Moderna vaccine left to spoil outside a Wisconsin clinic’s refrigerator in December, the worker immediately suspected a colleague who had spread false and outlandish claims, according to court records.

For months, Steven Brandenburg, the overnight pharmacist at Aurora Medical Center in Grafton, Wis., had said he thought the vaccine would harm people, make them infertile and implant them with microchips.

Now, federal authorities say belief in debunked claims went beyond the vaccine. The pharmacist, who has agreed to plead guilty to charges of attempting to try to spoil the vaccine, also believes the Earth is flat and that the sky is not real, according to court documents. His beliefs were revealed in a search of Brandenburg’s phone, computer and hard drive recently unsealed in court by the FBI.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Maker of 'Bernie' mittens joins teddy bear maker for new line

**VT** The teacher who created the recycled wool mittens that U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders wore to the presidential inauguration—engendering countless memes—is partnering with the Vermont Teddy Bear Co. to create a whole mitten line to meet soaring demand, with some of the proceeds going to Make-A-Wish Vermont.

Jen Ellis, a Vermont elementary school teacher who has a side business making mittens out of recycled wool, gave Sanders a pair as a gift, and he wore them to President Joe Biden's inauguration. His fashion look, also featuring a winter jacket made by Burton Snowboards, sparked countless memes prompted by the photo taken by Agence France-Presse: The former presidential candidate could be found on social media timelines taking a seat on the subway, the moon and the couch with the cast of "Friends," among other creative locales.

Sanders raised at least \$1.8 million from merchandise for charities stemming from the Jan. 20 image of him seated with his arms and legs crossed, clad in his brown parka and the recycled wool mittens. Sanders put out so-called "Chairman Sanders" merchandise, including T-shirts, sweatshirts and stickers, on his campaign website.

### 8 hurt after SUV crashes through busy supermarket's front doors

**TX** HOUSTON — Eight people were hurt after an SUV crashed into a busy Houston supermarket, police said.

Shoppers were in a Fiesta Mart in south Houston when the vehicle went through the store's front doors, said Kevin Deese, commander of the Houston police department's vehicular crimes division. Eight people were hit either by the SUV or by debris, police said.

A 9-year-old child was hurt and another person suffered a head injury, but all the individuals who were hurt are expected to survive, Deese said.

Investigators are still trying to determine why the vehicle crashed into the store, but

the driver showed signs of being impaired, Deese said.

### City to start yearlong celebration of its contribution to creativity

**MI** DETROIT — A yearlong celebration of arts and culture in Detroit will focus on the city's contribution to American creativity.

The UNDEFEATED began Feb. 1 with the city hosting a week of virtual events to start Black History Month.

Mayor Mike Duggan will call for a city-wide read of the Detroit-based novel "Black Bottom Saints." He was expected to interview author Alice Randall about her tale of Detroit when the city's Black Bottom neighborhood thrived.

The UNDEFEATED campaign is made possible in part by \$176,000 in support from the Troy-based Kresge Foundation and comes as artists have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, not just by illness but by the loss of income, according to the Office of Arts, Culture and Entrepreneurship, which began an emergency grants program last spring.

### Police: Now-suspended teacher tried to hire someone to kill mom

**KY** LOUISVILLE — Law enforcement officials said an eastern Kentucky teacher was arrested after allegedly attempting to hire someone to kill his mother.

The Louisville Courier Journal reported that Bill G. Reynolds, 41, of Olive Hill, faces a solicitation of murder charge and is being held in a Carter County detention center. Reynolds worked as a special education teacher for a middle school and as a bus driver for Carter County Schools. He has since been suspended.

The Kentucky State Police said Reynolds paid a person, who was not named but has been identified as a cooperating witness, \$10,000 to kill his mother.

Court records show that Reynolds' mother had filed a lawsuit last year, claiming that he illegally attempted to claim his parents'

property. The lawsuit says Reynolds' parents were intending to give the property to their son after their death. The suit claims, however, that Reynolds stole the paperwork after his father died and tried to claim the property.

### 2 arrested in more than 80 metro home robberies, vehicle thefts

**NM** ALBUQUERQUE — Two suspects were arrested for allegedly being involved in more than 80 home burglaries in the Albuquerque area, according to police.

They said Jesse Mascareno-Haidle, 18, and a 17-year-old boy were arrested after a police detective launched a detailed investigation into dozens of home invasions in the metro Albuquerque area.

Police said the two suspects are accused of several home burglaries and stealing vehicles from many of the residences.

Albuquerque TV station KOB reported that police found a pattern with many of the incidents. That included homes backed up to open space, which allowed burglars to enter the homes from unlocked back doors or windows in the middle of the night.

### Group of whales in Gulf of Mexico is a new species, officials confirm

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — The tiny group of endangered whales that make the Gulf of Mexico their home turned out to be a previously undiscovered species.

The best count is that there are about 33 of the long, slender filter feeders — and definitely fewer than 100 of them. They're listed as endangered in the United States and as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

They were classified as one of three of Bryde's (pronounced BROO-duhs) whale subspecies, but many scientists suspected they were actually something different.

Pamela Rosel of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently published confirmation that it's a previously unknown species.

— From wire reports

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# Bucs, Chiefs pushed through pandemic

Associated Press

The Kansas City Chiefs had a pretty good idea what kind of COVID-19 protocols they would have to wade through in defense of their Super Bowl championship the moment they finally gathered for in-person training camp.

One of their own helped to devise them.

It was Chiefs vice president of sports medicine and performance Rick Burkholder who worked hand in hand with the NFL, physicians and other trainers in developing the testing, social distancing and tracing parameters that would ultimately allow the league to play its full 256-game regular-season schedule. And it was Burkholder who helped the Chiefs navigate the season with few positive tests and just one postponement — the fault of the other team — as they closed in on a Super Bowl repeat.

“I think in the spring and early summer, many of us had a lot of uncertainty about how this was going to unfold,” Chiefs chairman Clark Hunt said. “I don’t think we knew for sure you could play football safely, that the virus would not be passed on the football field. Those were things we just

didn’t know, and it was a process to figure out how to do this.”

Ultimately, the Chiefs and Buccaneers are in the Super Bowl in part because they figured it out as well as anybody.

They adhered to strict mask mandates inside the facility. They avoided large gatherings once they left. They spread out to eat meals, held meetings in small groups and paid whatever it took for cutting-edge tracking systems.

They held the health of the guy next to them in the same regard as their own.

“We had to take care of each other. We couldn’t go out there and do things we normally do,” Kansas Citywide receiver Mecole Hardman said. “We did a real good job of protecting each other, and it did bring us together. We all had to be locked in.”

According to the NFL, there were 922,220 tests administered from Aug. 1 to the end of the regular season, resulting in 256 positive tests among players and 432 among other staff members. But many of those positive tests could be traced to a few teams and a handful of outbreaks, which all but crippled some of them for large parts of the season.

Kansas City had eight players on the active roster land on the COVID-19 list, including Hardman and starting linebacker Anthony Hitchens, both of whom missed games. They also had a couple of staff members test positive, including strength coach Rick Rubin and Burkholder, the very same man who worked with the NFL to develop testing protocols.

Tampa Bay had 11 players on the active roster land on the list, including running back Ronald Jones and linebacker Devin White, who missed the Buccaneers’ regular-season finale and wild-card win over Washington.

But compared to other teams around the league, the Chiefs and Bucs had modest problems. Four of the Chiefs and four of the Bucs who landed on the COVID-19 list didn’t miss a game, and both teams are — knock on wood — expected to be at full strength when they meet in the Super Bowl on Feb. 7 in Tampa, Fla.

“I think our guys have done a great, great job of being accountable to each other with COVID all year, and will continue to do that,” Tampa Bay coach Bruce Arians said.

## Super Bowl QBs Brady, Mahomes have history

Associated Press

There was a regular-season shootout and a playoff masterpiece the first season that Patrick Mahomes and Tom Brady met on a football field.

Brady came out ahead in those two meetings, but Mahomes has gotten the edge the past two times they met.

Now as they are set to meet on football’s biggest stage of the Super Bowl, it’s time to look back at those first four games when they shared a field.

While their teams split those contests, Mahomes has put up the better numbers with his 109.2 passer rating and 11-3 touchdown to interception ratio outpacing Brady’s 86 rating with six TDs and five interceptions.

But the matchup features the most accomplished quarterback ever to play the game who is still thriving at age 43 in Brady against the young gun who is rewriting record books at age 25.

“Could you imagine if Michael Jordan had gotten his team to the (NBA) Finals when he was older against a young LeBron James?” CBS game analyst Tony Romo said. “It would be the greatest thing in the

history of sports. ... I think we actually might have that game.”

Here’s a look at the past meetings between Brady and Mahomes:

**Chiefs 27, Bucs 24 at Tampa, Nov. 29, 2020:** Mahomes and Tyreek Hill jumped all over Tampa Bay early with TD passes of 75 and 44 yards in the first quarter. Hill had seven catches for 203 yards in the first period, the third-most yards in any quarter for a player in the past 40 years. Mahomes added a 20-yard TD pass to Hill in the third quarter to make it a 17-point game. Mahomes threw for 462 yards and three TDs, with Hill leading the way with 13 catches for 269 yards.

**Chiefs 23, Patriots 16 at New England, Dec. 8, 2019:** Mahomes and the Chiefs clinched the AFC West and snapped New England’s 21-game home winning streak. Mahomes injured his hand on the second drive of the game yet finished with 283 yards passing and a TD.

Brady struggled, going 19 of 36 for 169 yards, a touchdown and interception. Bashaud Breeland sealed the win when he knocked away Brady’s fourth-down pass attempt to Julian Edelman in the end zone

with just over a minute to play.

**Patriots 37, Chiefs 31, OT, at Kansas City, Jan. 20, 2019:** The only previous postseason meeting between the star QBs was a classic, with Brady and the Patriots coming out victorious in overtime in the AFC title game to set up his sixth championship.

“Overtime, on the road against a great team,” Brady said. “They had no quit. Neither did we. We played our best football at the end. I don’t know, man, I’m tired. That was a hell of a game.”

**Patriots 43, Chiefs 40, at New England, Oct. 14, 2019:** The first meeting between Brady and Mahomes was a shootout, with Brady staking the Patriots to a 24-9 halftime lead.

Mahomes responded with four TD passes in the second half and gave the Chiefs the lead with a 75-yarder to Tyreek Hill with 3:03 to play.

Brady responded with a 65-yard drive including a 16-yard pass to James White and 39-yarder to Gronkowski. That set up Stephen Gostkowski’s winning field goal on the final play that gave Brady his record 200th victory as a starting QB.

# McDavid, Oilers rout skidding Sens

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — Connor McDavid had a goal and four assists, linemate Leon Draisaitl had six assists and the Edmonton Oilers outscored the skidding Ottawa Senators 8-5 on Sunday night.

McDavid has eight goals this season, tied for the league lead with Vancouver's Brock Boeser, and leads the points race with 22 — one ahead of Draisaitl.

Draisaitl was an assist off the NHL record held by Edmonton great Wayne Gretzky (done three times) and Detroit's Billy Taylor (in 1947). The German forward leads the NHL in assists with 15, one more than McDavid.

Dominic Kahun, James Neal, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Tyson Barrie, Darnell Nurse and Kailer Yamamoto also scored for the Oilers. Stuart Skinner made 33 saves in his NHL debut, handing Ottawa its eighth straight defeat.

The teams will complete the two-game set in Edmonton on Tuesday night.

It took eight seconds for the Oilers to score. Off a faceoff win by Draisaitl in the Senators' zone, Kahun took the pass from his center and fired a shot toward the net. The puck deflected off Ottawa forward Josh Norris' stick and went past goaltender Matt Murray.

**Hurricanes 4, Stars 3 (SO):** Vincent Trocheck zipped a shot past Anton Khudobin's glove in the shootout and James

Reimer denied Jamie Benn's final shot, helping host Carolina beat Dallas.

Nino Niederreiter scored at 17:25 of the third period to force overtime and the shootout for the Hurricanes, who squandered a 2-1 lead to start the third period, but hung on to beat the Stars for the second time in two nights.

Jordan Staal and Brock McGinn also scored for Carolina. The Hurricanes returned Thursday from a pause due to COVID-19 concerns that led to four games being postponed. Carolina won all three games in its return.

Reimer finished with 26 saves for the Hurricanes, including five in overtime.

Benn, Jamie Oleksiak and Andrew Colangelo scored for Dallas.

**Flyers 4, Islanders 3 (OT):** Joel Farabee had a hat trick, Kevin Hayes scored on a power play 4:23 into overtime and Philadelphia beat visiting New York for a weekend sweep.

James van Riemsdyk had three assists to help the Flyers win their fourth straight. They also beat the Islanders in overtime Saturday.

Nick Leddy, Josh Bailey and Matthew Barzal scored for New York, which has lost five in a row.

**Devils 5, Sabres 3:** Michael McLeod and Miles Wood each scored twice in New Jersey's win at Buffalo.

Wood assisted on McLeod's go-ahead goal midway through the third period.

Andreas Johnsson also scored to help the Devils avenge a shootout loss Saturday in the opener of the back-to-back set.

**Panthers 3, Red Wings 2:** Patric Hornqvist, Aaron Ekblad and Carter Verhaeghe scored and Chris Driedger made 32 saves in Florida's victory over visiting Detroit.

Anthony Mantha scored with 1:48 remaining to pull the Red Wings within a goal after the Red Wings pulled Thomas Greiss to add an extra skater. Detroit pulled its goaltender again, but couldn't get another shot past Driedger.

**Wild 4, Avalanche 3 (OT):** Jonas Brodin scored 18 seconds into overtime to lift depleted Minnesota past visiting Colorado. Victor Rask scored his second goal of the game for the Wild to tie it with 7:26 left in regulation. Jordan Greenway also scored and set up the winner with a pass from the end line.

**Blues 4, Ducks 1:** Brayden Schenn scored twice, Ville Husso made 25 saves for his first NHL victory and St. Louis won at Anaheim. Schenn is one of the NHL's hottest players with six goals in his last seven games. He also has four assists in that span.

**Blackhawks 3, Blue Jackets 1:** Kevin Lankinen made 32 saves and short-handed Chicago beat visiting Columbus.

Patrick Kane and Philipp Kurashov each had a goal and an assist for the Blackhawks, and Pius Suter also scored.

## A day after controversy, Reed wins at Torrey Pines

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Patrick Reed was so unaffected by a rules controversy a day earlier that he won the Farmers Insurance Open by five shots, the biggest margin in his nine career PGA Tour victories.

Reed closed with a 4-under 68 at Torrey Pines, making an eagle on the par-5 sixth and finishing off his dominating Sunday with a birdie on the 18th.

The former Masters champions finished at 14 under. He shared the first-round lead with Alex Noren, was in a group one shot off the lead in the second round and then shared the third-round lead with Carlos Ortiz.

Reed said staying mentally strong, as well as good play with his wedge and putter, were able to "keep me in the golf tourna-

ment and really allowed me to have a fun stroll up 18."

Saturday, on the par-4 10th Reed hit a 190-yard shot out of a bunker with a TV replay showing the ball bounced once before settling into the rough. Without waiting for an official, Reed picked up the ball to see if it was embedded. Reed told the official that no one in his group, as well as a nearby volunteer, saw it bounce. He was awarded a free drop and saved par in a round of 70.

On Sunday, Reed jump-started his round with a 45-foot eagle putt on the No. 6 to get to 12 under and followed with a birdie on the par-4 seventh. His only bogey was on the par-3 eighth, and he rebounded with a birdie on the par-5 ninth. He played par the rest of the way until sinking an 8-foot birdie putt on No. 18.

"I was allowed to kind of put it behind me when the head rules official comes up and says you did everything you were supposed to do," Reed said. "When you do everything you're supposed to do, at the end of the day that's all you can control. Going into today, I felt good, I felt confident and really went to the golf course, plugged in my headphones and just kind of got in my world with my coach and got to that first tee."

Tony Finau, Xander Schauffele, Ryan Palmer, Henrik Norlander and Viktor Hovland tied for second.

Reed said he was resilient.

"I knew today was going to be a grind, especially with that leaderboard and seeing how many big names were right around there at the top. I knew you were going to have to go out and play on offense."

# In the zone: 76ers down Pacers

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Doc Rivers threw a changeup at the Indiana Pacers on Sunday night.

It turned out to be the perfect call.

With his team trailing by 16 early in the fourth quarter, the Philadelphia 76ers coach switched to a zone defense — throwing off the Pacers and fueling an incredible closing run that ended with the Sixers rallying for a 119-110 victory.

“We were calling it our John Chaney matchup zone and it was great,” Rivers said, referring to the trailblazing Temple coach who died Friday.

“What it did was stop their movement.

You miss a couple threes early in a zone in the NBA and it becomes tough all of a sudden.”

Indiana never figured it out or recovered — even with All-Star center Joel Embiid sitting out for Philadelphia because of a sore back.

Instead, the 76ers outscored the Pacers 31-6 over the final eight minutes to earn their sixth win in seven games.

Tobias Harris led Philadelphia with 27 points and eight rebounds.

Furkan Korkmaz added 17 points, including the two biggest baskets of the game — a 17-footer with 2:30 to play that finally gave the 76ers the lead and a 19-footer on the ensuing possession to make it 109-106.

But Harris thought this one was all about Philadelphia’s surprise defense.

“Probably five minutes and I’m not kidding,” Harris said when asked how much time the 76ers had spent talking about zone defense this season.

“It was in preparation for another team. But it got us talking out there and defensively and that’s something we always say on defense. We’ve got to communicate more.”

Malcolm Brogdon scored 25 points and Domantas Sabonis had 21 in a game they dominated for almost 3½ quarters. Indiana seemed to be cruising when Aaron Holiday’s basket with 8:16 to play made it 104-88. But the Pacers only netted one more basket — and the 76ers took control.

## Wizards’ late rally shocks Nets

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bradley Beal and Russell Westbrook hit three-pointers in a wild 3.8-second sequence in the final seconds to help the Washington Wizards stun Kevin Durant and the Brooklyn Nets 149-146 on Sunday night.

Westbrook had 41 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists, and NBA scoring leader Beal had 37 points. In the fourth quarter, Beal had 22 points and Westbrook had 15. Durant, second in the NBA in scoring, also had 37 points.

With Washington down 146-141, Beal hit a three-pointer with 8.1 seconds left. Garrison Matthews deflected Joe Harris’ inbounds pass to Westbrook and he made a three with 4.3 seconds left for a 147-146 lead.

Kyrie Irving found Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot under the basket with 2.9 seconds left, but his layup attempt spun around the rim and failed to drop. Beal added two free throws with 0.7 seconds left as the Wizards broke a four-game losing streak and improved to a still NBA-worst 4-12.

Harris scored a career-high 30 points, and Irving had 26 for Brooklyn. The Nets had won four in a row. James Harden sat out because of a thigh contusion, the first game he has missed since being traded from to Brooklyn on Jan. 13.

The Wizards are 1-4 since resuming play after a 13-day layoff that included six postponements due to COVID-19 related issues.

**Nuggets 128, Jazz 117:** Nikola Jokic matched his career high with 47 points and host Denver ended Utah’s winning streak at

11. Jokic was 17-for-26 from the field, hit all four of his three-point attempts, made 9 of 10 free throws and had 12 rebounds and five assists. He scored 33 points in the first half.

Will Barton added 18 points, and Jamal Murray had 16 to help the Nuggets win for the sixth time in seven games.

**Clippers 129, Knicks 115:** Kawhi Leonard scored 28 points and Los Angeles rang up the highest point total of the season against the NBA’s leading defense, winning at New York for its 10th victory in 11 games.

The Clippers shredded the NBA leaders in fewest points allowed per game to break away after leading by one after two quarters. They surpassed the 102.7 points per game the Knicks had been allowing with their first basket of the final quarter.

Reggie Jackson added 18 points and Paul George had 17 to help Los Angeles improve to 16-5. Julius Randle had 27 points and 12 rebounds for the New York.

**Raptors 115, Magic 102:** Pascal Siakam had 30 points and 10 rebounds in Toronto’s victory over visiting Orlando.

Kyle Lowry had 12 points and 14 assists, and Aaron Baynes added eight points and 16 rebounds to help the Raptors snap a three-game losing streak.

**Timberwolves 109, Cavaliers 104:** Malik Beasley scored 23 points and rookie Anthony Edwards had 23 in his second straight start in Minnesota’s victory over visiting Cleveland.

The Timberwolves snapped a three-game losing streak.

## Houston wins eighth straight

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Marcus Sasser scored 19 points and No. 6 Houston beat SMU 70-48 on Sunday for its eighth straight win.

After scoring just three points in a victory over Tulane on Thursday, Sasser opened 0-for-5 against the Mustangs. He bounced back and made five of his final 10 shots.

“My teammates kept telling me every time I went to the bench, ‘Keep shooting the ball,’” Sasser said. “Coach (Kelvin Sampson) tells me all the time he doesn’t care how many I miss, just keep shooting. Even when I am off to a bad start like that, I keep shooting and gaining confidence because my teammates put that confidence in me even though I miss.”

Justin Gorham had nine points and 17 rebounds for the Cougars (15-1, 10-1 American Athletic Conference), who won their 20th consecutive home game. Reggie Chaney added 10 points.

They won despite shooting only 34%.

“I thought our offense was great the first half, we just weren’t making open shots,” Sampson said. “Look at how many open shots we missed, look at how many shots around the rim we were missing. I told our guys, ‘Don’t worry about that, you’ll make them.’”

**No. 13 Ohio State 79, Michigan State 62:** E.J. Liddell had 20 points and eight rebounds to lead the host Buckeyes past the skidding Spartans. Justin Ahrens added 17 for Ohio State (14-4, 8-4 Big Ten).