

## Biden meets GOP on aid; no quick deal

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden told Republican senators during a two-hour meeting he's unwilling to settle on an insufficient coronavirus aid package after they pitched their slimmed down \$618 billion proposal that's a fraction of the \$1.9 trillion he is seeking.

No compromise was reached in the lengthy session Monday night, Biden's first with lawmakers at the White House, and Democrats in Congress pushed ahead with groundwork for approving his COVID-19 relief plan with or without Republican votes. Despite the Republican group's appeal for bipartisanship, as part of Biden's efforts to unify the country, the president made it clear he won't delay aid in hopes of winning GOP support.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that while there were areas of agreement, "the president also reiterated his view that Congress must respond boldly and urgently, and noted many areas which the Republican senators' proposal does not address."

She said, "He will not slow down work on this urgent crisis response, and will not settle for a package that fails to meet the

moment."

The two sides are far apart, with the Republican group of 10 senators focused primarily on the health care crisis and smaller \$1,000 direct aid to Americans, and Biden leading Democrats toward a more sweeping rescue package to shore up households, local governments and a partly shuttered economy.

The goal is to have COVID-19 relief approved by March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires, testing the ability of the new administration and Congress to deliver, with political risks for all sides from failure.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine called the meeting a "frank and very useful" conversation, noting that the president also filled in some details on his proposal.

"All of us are concerned about struggling families, teetering small businesses and an overwhelmed health care system," said Collins, flanked by other senators outside the White House.

Republicans are tapping into bipartisan urgency to improve the nation's vaccine distribution and vastly expand virus testing with \$160 billion in aid. That is similar

to what Biden has proposed. But from there, the two plans drastically diverge.

The GOP's \$1,000 direct payments would go to fewer households than the \$1,400 Biden has proposed, and the Republicans offer only a fraction of what he wants to reopen schools.

They also would give nothing to states, money that Democrats argue is just as important, with \$350 billion in Biden's plan to keep police, fire and other workers on the job. Gone are Democratic priorities such as a gradual lifting of the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Wary Democrats pushed ahead at the Capitol, unwilling to take too much time in courting GOP support that may not materialize or in delivering too meager a package that they believe doesn't address the scope of the nation's health crisis and economic problems.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer warned that history is filled with "the costs of small thinking."

House and Senate Democrats released a separate budget resolution Monday, a step toward approving Biden's package with a reconciliation process that wouldn't depend on Republican support for passage.

## Nimitz heads home after extended deployment

**BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS**

*Stars and Stripes*

The aircraft carrier USS Nimitz is headed home to Bremerton, Wash., after an extended deployment in the Middle East, a Navy official told Stars and Stripes by email on Tuesday.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin over the weekend called the carrier and its strike group home, according to a Monday report by U.S. Naval Institute News.

The Nimitz was conducting flight operations in the Arabian Sea as of last week, according to Navy photos published online Wednesday. On Monday, it was operating "west of India," according to USNI News.

On New Year's Eve, then-Acting Secretary of Defense Chris Miller ordered the ship home from the Middle East. But he re-

versed that decision four days later, citing Iranian threats of "severe revenge" a year after the United States killed Iran's leading military commander, Gen. Qassem Soleimani, in a Baghdad drone strike Jan. 3, 2020.

"Due to the recent threats issued by Iranian leaders against President [Donald] Trump and other U.S. government officials, I have ordered the USS Nimitz to halt its routine redeployment," Miller said at the time.

As President Joe Biden's administration works to renew negotiations with Tehran regarding its nuclear program, immediate tensions with Iran are "seeming to ease a bit," the New York Times reported Tuesday.

Though the Nimitz deployed in June,

most of its more than 5,000 sailors have been on the ship since early April because of coronavirus quarantine precautions and pre-deployment training, according to a June 8 report by the Kitsap Sun in Washington.

The deployment itself has lasted 241 days, the Navy's longest deployment since the USS Abraham Lincoln returned to San Diego on Jan. 20 after 295 days at sea, according to USNI.

During its deployment, the Nimitz supported U.S. troops in Somalia, provided air cover during the troop drawdowns in Africa and "conducted operations and exercises that strengthened enduring partnerships and alliances in the U.S. Central Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command areas of responsibility," Miller said in his statement.

# USAF bombers go to Norway for 1st time

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Air Force is deploying bombers and airmen to a base in Norway for the first time, underscoring the growing importance of the Arctic region to U.S. defense strategy.

More than 200 Air Force personnel from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, were expected to arrive at Orland Air Base with an expeditionary B-1 Lancer bomber squadron to support missions in the region, U.S. European Command said in a statement Tuesday.

EUCOM did not say when the airmen and B-1s would arrive or how long they would remain at Orland, a base on the country's west coast where the Royal Norwegian Air Force operates a fleet of F-35A Lightning II fighter aircraft.

The airmen "will be a part of the advance team for scheduled missions in the

coming weeks which will occur for a limited time," the statement said.

The Air Force in July unveiled a new Arctic defense strategy focused on bolstering its presence in the area and countering threats from Russia and China.

While at Orland, the airmen will conduct operations in the High North and work with allies and partners across the European theater.

"Operational readiness and our ability to support Allies and partners and respond with speed is critical to combined success," Gen. Jeff Harrigian, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Africa commander, said in a statement. "We value the enduring partnership we have with Norway and look forward to future opportunities to bolster our collective defense."

The Air Force has been stepping up its strategic bomber missions in the Arctic, but recent missions have either been

staged from England, where bombers typically deploy while training in Europe, or have involved roundtrip flights between the U.S. and the Nordic region.

This is the first time bombers are deploying to Norway, a USAFE-AFAFRICA spokeswoman said Tuesday.

During the height of the Cold War, strategic bombers often crisscrossed the region. Although bombers such as the B-52 and F-111 were based nearby in Britain, they weren't allowed to use Norwegian air bases, even for exercises, because the government in Oslo banned nuclear-capable allied aircraft from using its territory.

The long-range B-1 was nuclear capable until the mid-1990s, when it was revamped for exclusively conventional missions.

Nicknamed "The Bone," the Lancer has served the U.S. Air Force since 1985.

## Navy band responds to critics of their Taylor Swift sea-shanty

By WYATT OLSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy Band embraced the current sea-shanty craze last week by modifying a Taylor Swift pop song into a whaling-style ditty.

On Monday, they embraced the wave of Twitter critics who blasted the adaptation as a crime against music and good sense.

Haters gonna hate, the Navy Band seems to be saying in a video retort posted online Monday, but we're just gonna laugh at the shade.

"Last week we had some fun with sea shanties and Twitter had some fun with us," the Navy Band tweeted with the video, which parodies a running segment on "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" called Mean Tweets. "Here's a few tweets that made us laugh."

In the video, the musicians who performed the shanty version of Swift's "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" take turns reading some of the flaming tweets and offering their reactions.

"God, you guys are embarrassing," commenter @benrodriguez had tweeted after the song's release.

"Yes, my family tells me that, too," a Navy Band member says in response.

One commenter offered the band \$20 to "shut the [expletive] up," to which a band member shakes his head and exclaims, "Twenty bucks?!"

One Twitter critic asked whether there was any chance the U.S. Space Force could fire the song into the sun.

A Navy Band member chuckles after reading the suggestion and says, "Ehh, I feel the same way."

After a band member reads the message "@usnavyband I have now lost hope for humanity, thanks for that," she grimaces and says, "I'm sorry?"

The video ends with grudging respect for the tweeting creativity of @DarkLaughterTBD, who posted, "There will be plenty of time for work songs in Leavenworth when you're all brought to justice for making this."

"I gotta give it to you," says a band member. "That was pretty good."

## 2 Fort Bliss soldiers still in hospital for drinking antifreeze

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

AUSTIN, Texas — Nine of the 11 Fort Bliss soldiers who were hospitalized after drinking antifreeze during a training exercise at the west Texas Army base have been released from the hospital, base officials said Monday.

The troops drank the potentially lethal substance thinking it was alcohol and became ill Thursday afternoon. All of them spent at least one night at William Beaumont Army Medical Center at Fort Bliss. One soldier remained in intensive care Monday, while another continued to receive treatment in a noncritical unit, Fort Bliss said. Both have continued to improve.

Medical officials determined they ingested ethylene glycol, which is more commonly known as antifreeze. Even in small amounts, the chemical can cause immediate kidney failure. Other symptoms include nausea, agitation and confusion.

An administrative investigation and an investigation by the Army Criminal Investigation Command are underway to determine "the facts and circumstances that led to the incident," according to Fort Bliss.

# Biden seeking immigration policy reversals

*Associated Press*

SAN DIEGO — The Biden administration Tuesday announced steps to address harm to thousands of families that were separated at the U.S.-Mexico border, expanding efforts to quickly undo relentless changes to immigration policy over the last four years.

President Joe Biden planned to sign orders on family separation, border security and legal immigration, bringing to nine the number of executive actions on immigration during his first two weeks in office. Details were thin, but the moves aim to reverse many of former President Donald Trump's policies to deter immigration, both legal and illegal.

Alejandro Mayorkas, whose nomination as Homeland Security secretary awaits Senate confirmation, will lead a task force

on family separation, focused largely on reuniting parents and children who remain apart. It is unclear how many, but about 5,500 children have been identified in court documents as having been separated during Trump's presidency, including about 600 whose parents have yet to be found by a court-appointed committee.

"The task force will report regularly to the President and recommend steps to prevent such tragedies from occurring again," the Biden administration said in a statement.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which sued to reunite families, has asked the administration for legal status in the United States for families that have been separated, as well as financial compensation for those families and attorneys at government expense. ACLU attorney Lee Ge-

lernt said he would be "extremely disappointed" if the task force limits its scope to help finding parents of the remaining 600 children.

The review of border security includes a policy to make asylum-seekers wait in Mexican border cities for hearings in U.S. immigration court. It is a step toward fulfilling a campaign pledge to end the Remain in Mexico policy, known officially as Migrant Protection Protocols, which enrolled nearly 70,000 asylum-seekers since it began in January 2019.

The White House said it will "create a humane asylum system" by rescinding or reconsidering Trump policies that caused "chaos, cruelty and confusion." It warned that it will take time, which may cause grumbling among some pro-immigration advocates.

## Northeastern US digs out from two-day snowstorm

*Associated Press*

BOSTON — People of the northeastern U.S. shoveled themselves out Tuesday after a two-day snowstorm that shut down public transportation, canceled flights and closed coronavirus vaccination sites.

Some bands of snow were still moving through parts of Maine and Pennsylvania in the morning, but the worst was over, with more than 30 inches in parts of New Jersey and just a few inches in Boston.

Lara Pagano, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in College Park, Md., noted that while several areas in the mid-Atlantic saw measurable snowfall for a few consecutive days, that hasn't shat-

tered records. For example, she said the most consecutive days with measured snowfall for Washington is four, while the mark is five for New York City and six for Philadelphia.

"While this storm has been a prolonged event, it's not a record-setter in that sense, but it does rank up there pretty high, of course," she said.

The sprawling, lumbering storm had already walloped the eastern United States by Monday. More than 17 inches of snow dropped on Manhattan's Central Park, and as much as 30 inches was reported in northern New Jersey.

High tide caused flooding early Tuesday

in coastal areas of Massachusetts, where the storm had already disrupted the second phase of the state's vaccine rollout as a Boston site that was supposed to open Monday for residents ages 75 and older did not; some other mass vaccination sites remained open.

Several areas of Massachusetts were hit with 18-plus inches of snow, including the central Massachusetts communities of Fitchburg, Lunenburg and Ashburnham.

Much of southern New Hampshire got about a foot of snow. Parts of northern New Hampshire, where the state's ski resorts and most of the snowmobile trails are, got 9 to 10 inches.

## GOP's McConnell blasts 'loony lies' by Ga. lawmaker

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell denounced newly-elected Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene on Monday, calling the far-right Georgia Republican's embrace of conspiracy theories and "loony lies" a "cancer for the Republican Party."

"Somebody who's suggested that perhaps no airplane hit the Pentagon on 9/11, that horrifying school shootings were pre-staged, and that the Clintons crashed JFK Jr.'s airplane is not living in reality," said McConnell, R-Ky., referring to a handful of

conspiracy theories that Greene has publicized in the past. "This has nothing to do with the challenges facing American families or the robust debates on substance that can strengthen our party."

McConnell's explicit condemnation adds to pressure on House Republicans to take action against Greene even as she is claiming renewed support from former President Donald Trump. It comes as House Democrats moved Monday to strip Greene of her committee assignments if Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., refuses to do so himself.

Thus far, however, GOP leaders in the House have been reluctant to criticize Trump supporters, like Greene, out of concern that they could alienate the former president's most ardent voters, underscoring a bitter divide over how the out-of-power party should navigate the two years until the next congressional elections.

Greene responded to McConnell late Monday with a broadside on Twitter, suggesting that "the real cancer for the Republican Party is weak Republicans who only know how to lose gracefully. This is why we are losing our country," she wrote.

# Russia, Myanmar pose tests for Biden

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A military coup in Myanmar and a mass crackdown on dissidents in Russia are presenting early tests for the Biden administration as it tries to reestablish American primacy as a worldwide pro-democracy leader.

Having taken office with a pledge to restore ironclad U.S. support for human rights, freedom of speech and political openness, President Joe Biden is being confronted with two serious challenges in two disparate parts of the world that had either been neglected or the subject of inconsistent messaging during the Trump era.

After investing decades of time, energy and money into promoting democracy in both Myanmar and Russia, the U.S. now faces challenges in each that could affect the global balance of power, with the Myanmar turmoil potentially strengthening China's hand.

And, while neither situation can be directly tied to domestic political uncertainty in the United States, experts believe foreign governments might be taking cues from the vestiges of America's perceived rudderlessness in the final months of President Donald Trump's term.

"It is not always about us," said Dan Fried, a former senior U.S. diplomat for Europe. "Each has its own dynamic, but they certainly take cues from us. What links the two is that during the campaign, the Biden team talked about support for democracy being a North Star — a guiding point for democracy."

Biden's aides have rejected suggestions that the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol fueled by Trump will hurt U.S. influence in

the long run. But they have acknowledged it as a factor as Biden tries to reassert American moral leadership after four years of Trump's perceived diffidence.

"The United States remains a country in the world that is looked to for ... leadership, and it's going to take some time, but he's certainly committed to doing that," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said of Biden on Monday.

She spoke after Biden released a statement saying he would be looking at reimposing sanctions on Myanmar, also known as Burma, that had been lifted after the country's partial return to democracy during the Obama administration.

U.S. State Department officials said Tuesday the detention of Myanmar's civilian leaders was a coup, and promised sanctions and other measures targeting "the very small circle of military generals" responsible.

In Myanmar, the army took control of the government after a brief experiment with limited democracy, detaining former opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and giving China an even bigger potential opening into a neighboring country where the West had exerted great effort to blunt Beijing's significant influence.

"This is a setback for Myanmar and for democratic governance across Asia," said Danny Russel, a former assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, who is now vice president for International Security and Diplomacy at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "It's part of an unfortunate slide toward authoritarianism and it's quite worrying. It sets an appalling example for other countries."

"It's certainly an early crisis for the Bi-

den administration, and it's really crystallized the contrast between its support for democracy and the Chinese support for authoritarianism," he said.

Tensions in Myanmar have been building for some time but have been largely under the radar of a Washington preoccupied with the coronavirus after decades of public and private pressure on Yangon to institute democratic reforms.

In Russia, despite Trump's political machinations, the situation has been at a slow boil for some years after attempts to draw Moscow into the democratic fold beginning with the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union. Confronting the Russians will be more difficult.

There, President Vladimir Putin is using an iron fist to try to quell demonstrations in support of opposition figure Alexei Navalny, flying in the face of warnings from Washington and Europe.

"It's a challenge for Biden, but they're not challenging him directly," said Fried, who is now with the Atlantic Council. He said that sanctions might not be effective in the long run but that they will get attention.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in an interview aired Monday that new sanctions against Russia are being considered, not only for the Navalny crackdown but also for a major cyberattack, election interference and purported bounties offered to the Taliban for targeting American troops in Afghanistan.

"We're looking into all of these things," Blinken told NBC News. "All of them are under review. And depending on the findings of those reviews, we will take steps to stand up for our interests and stand against Russian aggressive actions."

## Russia hints it may return to overflight treaty if US does

*Associated Press*

MOSCOW — Russia may consider returning to an international pact allowing surveillance flights over military facilities if the United States reverses its exit, the top Russian diplomat said Tuesday.

Moscow announced last month that it would leave the Open Skies Treaty following the U.S. departure from the pact last year, adding that Russian proposals to keep the treaty alive after the U.S. withdrawal have been given the cold shoulder by Washington's allies.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said after Tuesday's talks in Moscow with Swedish Foreign Minister Ann Linde, the current chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, that Moscow could still mull the return.

"If the United States fully returns to observing the treaty, the Russian Federation would be ready to constructively consider that new situation," Lavrov said.

He noted that while Russia has declared its intention to quit, it hasn't yet

formally submitted the relevant notice to other parties.

Lavrov's statement comes days after Moscow and Washington reached a last-minute agreement to extend their last remaining nuclear arms control pact, the New START treaty, that was due to expire on Feb. 5.

When President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin had a call last week, the Kremlin said they discussed the Open Skies pact along with other issues. It didn't elaborate.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

### Employees throw food to drive away robber

**IN** PLAINFIELD — Owners and workers at a small bakery and cobbler shop in suburban Indianapolis hurled baked goods and other objects at a masked robber to drive him away over the weekend.

WISH-TV reported that Matthew Marshall, 25, of Plainfield, was later arrested and charged with criminal confinement and robbery.

Marshall is accused of entering the Two Chicks Whisky Business, locking the door and grabbing his hip as if to signal he was armed, according to a Plainfield Police Department statement.

The items thrown at him prompted him to flee, and he only got out with money from a tip jar, the police statement said. One witness took a photograph of the fleeing suspect, which later helped police identify him.

### Zoo announces birth of 2 polar bear cubs

**MI** DETROIT — An 8-year-old polar bear named Suka has successfully given birth to two cubs, though one is being raised by humans after early health issues, the Detroit Zoo announced in a recent press release.

The unnamed twin cubs are the first polar bears to be successfully born and raised at the zoo in more than 15 years.

The Detroit Free Press cited zoo officials as saying that the rare separation of sibling cubs will help researchers study outcomes of cubs raised by humans versus those raised by their po-

lar bear mothers.

The births were at a private maternity den specially fitted with infrared cameras, and one zoo official saw one female cub appearing weak. She was transferred to an animal-health complex for special treatment.

### 7 indicted in theft of \$100K from US Army

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — A New Orleans Police detective and an officer, along with five others, have been indicted for stealing more than \$100,000 from the U.S. Army.

Detective Chantelle Davis, 35, Officer Lynea Sanders, 41, and five members of the U.S. Army Reserve were indicted for allegedly claiming reimbursements for their service at military funeral honors ceremonies that never happened, the U.S. Attorney's Office said in a news release.

According to the indictment, Christopher O'Connor, 40, who is a former Army pay technician, submitted the fraudulent reimbursement claims on behalf of Davis, Sanders, Leroy Daniels Jr., 45, Derrick Branch, 36, Cody Francis, 31, and Terrence Howard, 54.

### Man admits cheating investors on tickets

**NJ** NEWARK — A New Jersey man faces prison after admitting he participated in a scheme that cheated investors of \$447,000 in a ticket resale scam.

Jeffrey Burd, 61, of Edison, pleaded guilty to wire fraud.

From January 2014 to June 2018, Burd told his victims he resold tickets to high-profile

events for a profit, prosecutors said. He induced his victims to provide him money so he could purchase the tickets and promised returns of up to 40% without any risk, authorities said.

### YouTubers charged with illegal street racing

**CA** LOS ANGELES — Authorities in Southern California have taken steps to end illegal street racing which was organized online by YouTube users.

The Irvine Police Department arrested five people and charged them with conspiracy to participate in illegal street races across Orange County, the Los Angeles Times reported.

An investigation by Irvine police into street racing took about six months, beginning around Jan. 31, 2020, when prosecutors allege that Rushdan Abdallah, 26, and another man raced through Orange County. In the following months, Abdallah allegedly met with three others for races on the two toll roads. The men posted videos of their driving exploits to YouTube.

### City to name May 20 as slave emancipation day

**FL** LAKELAND — A Florida city is planning to formally recognize May 20 as the date slaves were emancipated in the state.

The city commission plans to approve a resolution declaring May 20 as Florida Emancipation Day, The Ledger in Lakeland reported. That would mark the anniversary of when slavery became illegal in the state.

It's earlier than the June-

teenth date in which slaves in Texas were informed on June 19, 1865, that they were free.

In Florida, the date was May 20, 1865, when Union Brig. Gen. Edward McCook formally announced President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation from the steps of the Knott House in Tallahassee.

### Conductor spots man on tracks, stops train

**GA** MARIETTA — Authorities credit a freight train conductor with saving a man's life outside Atlanta.

The CSX conductor was entering the city with the mile-long train when he spotted someone laying on the tracks, Marietta police said. It was a homeless man who had fallen and was unable to get up.

The conductor was able to stop the train before reaching the man, police said. Emergency workers carried the man from the scene and he was taken to a hospital for treatment.

### Teen charged over false reports to school

**KY** MURRAY — A Wisconsin teenager was charged with calling in false reports of a gun being fired and a bomb threat at a Kentucky school, police said.

Kya Nelson, 19, was arrested in Racine, Wis., Sgt. Andrew Wiggins of the Murray Police Department told news outlets.

The reports were called in to Murray High School, which went on lockdown after a caller said someone fired a gun in the school. The bomb threat was received the next day.

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# Gronk, Kelce have redefined tight end

Associated Press

Gronk's still got it.

That silly, fun-loving personality that helped launch Rob Gronkowski into all-time fan favorite status in New England arrived at Super Bowl media day in vintage form.

No, there weren't any LOL-worthy dances or outrageous moments to send social media buzzing. But the 31-year-old Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end showed up to his video interview session Monday with a secret that had everyone chuckling when it was revealed.

So, Gronkowski was working his way back into shape last off-season — reunited with Tom Brady — after a year away while in retirement. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, players filmed remote workouts on their own and sent them to Bucs strength and conditioning coach Anthony Piroli to get credit for the day.

Fun at first, it got a bit monotonous for Gronkowski after about a week. So, he figured out a way around it. Of course.

"I would bring my shirt out and then I would bring another

shirt out, so when I'm running the sprints, I would film myself like 15 times for that workout session," said Gronkowski, who had 45 catches for 623 yards and seven touchdowns this season. "But I would run in a couple of different shirts because you only had to send in like two or three reps. So then when the next time came, I didn't have to film myself because I already filmed myself running in a different shirt every time on that one day.

"And he hasn't had a clue to this day that I was tricking him about half the time during those virtual workouts."

Well, now he does.

Typical Gronk. Give him an opening — for a joke or a big play — and he's all over it.

"Every day's a new day with him," Buccaneers tight ends coach Rick Christophel said. "He's just a joy to be around."

Same for Travis Kelce, the Kansas City Chiefs' record-breaking tight end whose larger-than-life personality — his touchdown celebrations are wildly popular views on social media — has put him on par

with Gronkowski.

Especially on the field. And to Kelce, that's good company to be in.

"The guy is an unbelievable person, talent, you name it," Kelce said. "I might be one of the biggest Gronk fans out there. Let it be told, man."

Kelce broke George Kittle's NFL record for yards receiving by a tight end this season with 1,416. He also has the most 1,000-yard receiving seasons at the position, doing it in five straight years. Kelce's consistently dominant production also earned him a four-year, \$57 million contract extension last summer.

That's something even Gronkowski, who has 566 career receptions for 8,484 yards and 86 touchdowns and a slew of his own records — along with three Super Bowl rings — can appreciate.

"I've got nothing but major respect for Travis Kelce," Gronkowski said. "He has helped transform the tight end position. He has helped put the tight end position on the map. Speaking of contract-wise, he

has helped the tight end position get paid the way that they deserve to get paid."

Truth is, Gronkowski is the prototype for an era of tight ends that became focal points of offenses. He was a hulking, physical matchup nightmare for defenses in his prime with the Patriots. Gronkowski would punish people as a blocker — and also run through, over and past defenders week after week.

Kelce is exactly that for the Chiefs with 612 catches for 7,881 yards and 48 TDs in eight seasons. But he's a leaner, swifter type of tight end who lines up more like a wide receiver with Patrick Mahomes routinely looking for him to make big plays.

"Tight ends that can get out of breaks and can separate, those are the most dangerous ones: the Gronks, the (Jason) Wittens, the Antonio Gates, the Kelces," said Bucs outside linebackers coach Larry Foote, who played against both Gronkowski and Kelce. "You can't really defend it. You've just got to be ready to drive and break and tackle."

Or you'll pay.

## Brady would 'definitely consider' playing past 45

Associated Press

Tom Brady keeps raising the bar about how long he could keep playing quarterback in the NFL.

As the 43-year-old Brady prepares for his record 10th Super Bowl and first since joining Tampa Bay this past off-season, he said he's already considering surpassing his previous goal and playing beyond age 45.

"Yes, definitely. I would definitely consider that," Brady said Monday in his first news conference at Super Bowl week. "It's a physical sport. Just the perspective I have on that is, you never know kind of when that moment is, just because it's a contact

sport. There's a lot of training that goes into it. It has to be 100% commitment from myself to keep doing it."

Brady still has that commitment, working closely with long-time trainer Alex Guerrero on workouts, diets and other preparation that has allowed Brady to thrive at an age when most of his peers are long retired.

Brady said the days of being a high school or college kid living on pizza and fast food are long in the past.

"I think football for me has obviously been my sport. It's a career, but it's really part of my daily life," Brady said. "Because a lot of the decisions I make, I'm

always thinking about 'How does this impact my football? How does it impact my off-season training?' It's pretty well documented that the approach that I've taken over a period of time, which certainly didn't all start at once. I think how I work out and how I recover is very important. The work I do with my body coach Alex is critical to the success that I've had."

That work has helped Brady post accomplishments unequaled in NFL history. He has 10 Super Bowl trips, six titles, three MVPs, the most TD passes in regular-season history (581) and the possibility of passing Drew Brees next season for the

most yards passing ever if Brees retires as expected this off-season.

What Brady has accomplished since turning 40 years old before the 2017 season would be an impressive enough career for most players. He has 20,776 yards passing in the regular season and playoffs, 142 TDs, one MVP, and a third trip to the Super Bowl, having won it following the 2018 season in New England and losing it the previous season.

He has more than doubled the output of any other quarterback after age 40, with Brees next on the list with 6,777 yards and 57 TDs.

# Bruins, down 3 goals, shock Capitals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — David Pastrnak connected on a couple of shots, Trent Frederic traded punches with Tom Wilson and the big, bad Boston Bruins finished their comeback this time.

Buoyed by their top scorer's first two goals of the season and a big rookie's fight against one of the toughest players in hockey, the Bruins erased a three-goal deficit to beat the Washington Capitals 5-3 on Monday night.

“(Frederic) had a great fight and gave huge energy to our bench, and it was unbelievable,” Pastrnak said. “On the scoring, obviously it felt great. Had a little trouble, I was missing the net a lot, so obviously it was a good one that finally hit the net.”

Boston erased a 3-0 deficit for the second straight game against Washington. After losing Saturday on Alex Ovechkin's overtime goal, the Bruins finished the job this time as Carlo beat Vitek Vanecek with 2:37 left in the third period and Brad Marchand sealed it with an empty-netter.

The Capitals lost in regulation for the first time this season, ending a franchise-best point streak to start a season at nine games.

Former Boston captain Zdeno Chara scored in his second game against his old team. Chara and Daniel Sprong combined for two goals in 11 seconds and John Carlson scored on the power play.

**Lightning 5, Predators 2:** Steven Stamkos' goal made him the franchise leader in power-play points, Yanni Gourde scored twice and Tampa Bay raced to a three-goal lead in the first period in a win over Nashville, remaining perfect on home ice.

Brayden Point and Ondrej Palat also scored for the Lightning. Stamkos' goal in the second gave him 301 points on the power play to pass Marty St. Louis for most in team history.

Andrei Vasilevskiy made 25 saves as Tampa Bay improved to 4-0 at home.

Eeli Tolvanen and Mikael Granlund scored for the Predators. Juuse Saros finished with 21 saves.

**Rangers 3, Penguins 1:** Chris Kreider scored a power-play goal in the third period, helping New York to a win over visiting Pittsburgh.

Artemi Panarin had a goal and two assists, Kevin Rooney scored and Igor Shesterkin made 25 saves as the Rangers snapped a three-game losing streak against

the Penguins.

Jason Zucker scored and Casey DeSmith made 21 saves for Pittsburgh in its fifth road loss this season.

**Canadiens 6, Canucks 2:** Jeff Petry had two goals and an assist, leading host Montreal past Vancouver.

It's the third time in less than two weeks that the Canadiens have routed the Canucks.

Nick Suzuki and Artturi Lehkonen each had a goal and an assist for Montreal, and Brendan Gallagher and Tyler Toffoli added scores.

Adam Gaudette and Jay Beagle scored for Vancouver, which had its four-game win streak halted.

The Canadiens' Carey Price had 27 saves. Braden Holtby stopped 34 of 40 shots for the Canucks.

**Flames 4, Jets 3 (SO):** Johnny Gaudreau scored the shootout winner and Calgary won at Winnipeg.

Gaudreau beat Connor Hellebuyck on a nice move between the pads in the fourth round and the Flames picked up their second straight win. Gaudreau, Andrew Mangiapane, and Christopher Tanev scored in regulation for Calgary.

## Union rejects plan, full MLB season to start on time

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball will proceed with an on-time start to spring training and the season after players rejected a plan Monday night to delay reporting by a more than a month.

“In light of the MLBPA's rejection of our proposal, and their refusal to counter our revised offer this afternoon, we are moving forward and instructing our clubs to report for an on-time start to spring training and the championship season, subject to reaching an agreement on health and safety protocols,” MLB said in a statement.

“We were able to complete a 2020 season through Herculean efforts and sacrifices made by our players, club staff and MLB

staff to protect one another,” MLB said. “We will do so again, together, as we work towards playing another safe and entertaining season in 2021.”

MLB proposed to the players' association on Friday that the start of spring training be pushed back from Feb. 17 to March 22, that opening day be delayed from April 1 to April 28 and that each team's schedule be cut from 162 games to 154. MLB believed the virus situation would improve during the month delay.

As part of the offer, MLB included the expansion of the playoffs from 10 teams to 14 and extending the designated hitter to the National League for the second straight season, a plan the union rejected Jan. 6.

Bruce Meyer, the union's director of collective bargaining,

called deputy commissioner Dan Halem on Monday to inform him the proposal had been rejected, two people familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. The people spoke on the condition of anonymity because that detail was not announced.

Halem then asked Meyer to make a counteroffer, and Meyer sent an email asking MLB to guarantee salary and service time in the event of an interruption, one of the people said.

Halem responded to Meyer on Monday and said MLB would agree to withdraw that part of the proposal but that each side would retain whatever rights it has under the labor and player contracts, the person said.

Meyer responded Monday night that the union will not make any more proposals, that

the union did not believe MLB's plan was designed to protect health and safety, and that players expect MLB to tell teams that it intends to start spring training and the season on time, the person said.

“The MLBPA executive board and player leadership reviewed and discussed the owners' proposal throughout the weekend and today,” the union said in its public statement.

While MLB's proposal said players would have received 100% of pay if all 154 games were played, the plan gave Commissioner Rob Manfred the right to interrupt the season.

“MLB's proposal offers no salary or service time protections in the event of further delays, interruptions, or cancellations of the season,” the union said.

# Booker hits go-ahead 3 in his return, Suns edge Mavs

Associated Press

DALLAS — Devin Booker hit a three-pointer with 1.5 seconds left in his first game since Jan. 22 and the Phoenix Suns rallied past the Dallas Mavericks for the second straight game, winning 109-108 on Monday night.

The Suns trailed by 11 in the second half before winning their third straight, including a 111-105 victory at Dallas on Saturday when they trailed by 15 in the third quarter.

The Mavericks dropped their sixth straight, their ninth in 11 games and their fourth straight defeat at home. Luka Dončić missed a 27-foot shot at the buzzer.

Booker, who had been out with a left hamstring injury, took a pass on the winning basket from Chris Paul, who finished with a season-high 34 points to go with nine rebounds and nine assists. Deandre Ayton had 10 points and 17 rebounds.

**Bucks 134, Trail Blazers 106:** Jrue Holiday scored 22 points, Bobby Portis added 21 and host Milwaukee snapped a two-game skid by trouncing Portland.

Holiday shot 10-for-14 and had seven rebounds and six assists. Portis shot 9-for-13 and had eight rebounds.

**Hornets 129, Heat 121 (OT):** Malik Monk came off the bench to score 36 points and make nine three-pointers, Devonte' Graham added 24 points and Charlotte rallied from a 10-point deficit in the final 2:47 of regulation to win at Miami in overtime.

Monk sent the Hornets to OT by making a three-pointer with 16.6 seconds left. Cody

Zeller had 19 points and 12 rebounds, Gordon Hayward scored 19 and LaMelo Ball finished with 14 points and seven assists for Charlotte in his first start.

**Lakers 107, Hawks 99:** Anthony Davis scored 25 points and LeBron James dominated down the stretch as Los Angeles closed out a nearly two-week trip with a victory at Atlanta.

The Lakers took control with a 16-0 run bookended around the end of the third quarter and the beginning of the fourth.

**Rockets 136, Thunder 106:** Eric Gordon scored 25 points and Houston hit an NBA record-tying 11 three-pointers in a 48-point first quarter, cruising to a win at Oklahoma City.

John Wall scored the first eight points for the Rockets and finished with 18 points, six rebounds and five assists. Christian Wood also scored 18 and added 11 rebounds in Houston's sixth straight victory.

**Kings 118, Pelicans 109:** De'Aaron Fox scored 38 points, including 17 straight points during the final seven minutes, and Sacramento erased a 10-point, fourth-quarter deficit to win at New Orleans.

Harrison Barnes scored 24 points and Richaun Holmes had 17 points, 10 rebounds and six blocks for the Kings.

**Cavaliers 100, Timberwolves 98:** Collin Sexton scored 26 points and Jarrett Allen had 23 points and 18 rebounds, leading Cleveland over Minnesota for a split of their home-and-home series.

**Bulls 110, Knicks 102:** Lauri Markkanen scored 30 points, Zach LaVine added 17 of his 21 in the second half and host Chicago beat New York.

# Grizzlies top Spurs for 7th straight win

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — Gorgui Dieng scored 19 points, Brandon Clarke had 18 and the Memphis Grizzlies routed the San Antonio Spurs 133-102 on Monday night to extend their winning streak to seven games.

"We've got a lot of depth," Memphis guard Tyus Jones said. "I think that was one of the things going into the year that we looked at. You've got to use that to your advantage night in and night out. It's a long season."

Jones had 11 points a career-high 14 assists. All 10 Grizzlies who played had at least one assist.

Kyle Anderson and De'Anthony Melton added 17 points each and Ja Morant had 13 points and eight assists as Memphis won its second straight game after a 12-day layoff due to the league's COVID-19 protocols.

Keldon Johnson had 25 points and 11 rebounds for San Antonio, which has dropped two straight after winning its previous three. The Spurs pulled their starters and key reserves midway through the fourth quarter with the Grizzlies up 111-90.

"They were just tougher in so many ways than we were," San Antonio coach Gregg Popovich said. "In a 48-minute game, I'd say that probably in the third quarter we looked like we looked lately for about six minutes. But, other than that, they sliced us and diced us and deserved the wins, for sure."

Memphis had nine players score in double figures as it completed a two-game sweep at San Antonio.

# No. 13 Texas Tech knocks off No. 9 Oklahoma

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — No. 13 Texas Tech put an end to an impressive streak that had quickly pushed Oklahoma into the Top 10, in an offensive struggle for both teams.

Terrence Shannon Jr. scored all 15 of his points after halftime, with four free throws in the final 39 seconds, and the Red Raiders pulled out a 57-52 victory Monday night. That ended a five-game winning streak by the No. 9 Sooners, who had won three in a row over Top-10 teams but were without

two starting guards because of COVID-19 protocols.

"Kind of an ugly game in some ways, but a beautiful game in others," Texas Tech coach Chris Beard said. "Two teams really defending at a high level. To hold two Big 12 teams to 33 percent shooting on both sides, there's a lot of really good defense going down."

Texas Tech (13-5, 5-4 Big 12) had its largest lead at 50-40 when Kevin McCullar made a three-pointer and then assisted on a

three by Shannon with 3:21 left.

"A big-time battle. Proud of our guys, defensively fought their tails off, just needed to help with a little more scoring," Sooners coach Lon Kruger said. "Tech's good defensively, too, a kind of the first one to 50 (points)-type mentality."

**No. 25 Drake 95, Illinois State 60:** Tremell Murphy scored 30 points and the host Bulldogs rolled past the Redbirds to win their first game as a ranked team in nearly 13 years.