

Trump's 2nd trial opens with riot video

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial opened Tuesday in the Senate with video of the Jan. 6 attack on Congress and the defeated former president whipping up a rally crowd — "We're going to walk down to the Capitol!" — as he encouraged a futile fight over his presidency.

The lead House prosecutor told senators the case would present "cold, hard facts" against Trump, who is charged with inciting the siege of the Capitol to overturn the election he lost to Democrat Joe Biden. Senators sitting as jurors, many who themselves fled for safety that day, watched the jarring video that showed the chaotic scene, rioters pushing past police to storm the halls, Trump flags waving.

"That's a high crime and misdemeanor," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., in opening remarks. "If that's not an impeachable offense, then there's no such thing."

Trump is the first president to face impeachment charges after leaving office and the first to be twice impeached. The Capitol siege stunned the world as rioters stormed the building to try to stop the certification of Biden's victory, a domestic attack on the nation's seat of government unlike any in its history.

Trump's lawyers are insisting that he is not guilty of the sole charge of "incitement of insurrection," his fiery words just a figure of speech as he encouraged a rally crowd to

"fight like hell" for his presidency. But prosecutors say he "has no good defense" and they promise new evidence.

Security remains extremely tight at the Capitol, a changed place after the attack, fenced off with razor wire and armed National Guard troops on patrol.

With senators gathered as the court of impeachment, sworn to deliver "impartial justice," the trial is starting with debate and a vote over whether it's constitutionally permissible to prosecute Trump after he is no longer in the White House. First, senators were voting on a resolution laying out the trial schedule for the days ahead.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said it was the senators' "solemn constitutional duty" to conduct a fair trial of "the gravest charges ever brought against a president."

Presiding is the chamber's senior-most member of the majority party, Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont.

An acquittal is likely, but the trial will test the nation's attitude toward his brand of presidential power, the Democrats' resolve in pursuing him and the loyalty of Trump's Republican allies defending him.

Trump's defense team has embraced the question of constitutionality, which could resonate with Republicans eager to acquit Trump without being seen as condoning his behavior. They argue in filings that the trial is "patently ridiculous."

But the House prosecutors will cite the

nation's founders to declare a president "must answer comprehensively for his conduct in office from his first day in office through his last." There is no "January exception" just before he leaves office, they will argue, according to aides granted anonymity to discuss the arguments ahead of the trial.

It appears unlikely that the House prosecutors will call witnesses.

Instead, House managers prosecuting the case will show videos of the violence, including never-before-seen evidence, and chart a succinct story beginning with Trump's false claims the election was stolen and ending with the attempt at insurrection.

Trump's defense team has said it plans to counter with its own cache of videos of Democratic politicians making fiery speeches.

"We have some videos up our sleeve," Senior Trump adviser Jason Miller said on a podcast Monday.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that Biden will be busy with the business of the presidency and won't spend much time watching the televised proceedings.

"He'll leave it to his former colleagues in the Senate," she said.

A first test Tuesday was to be on a vote on the constitutionality of the trial, signaling attitudes in the Senate. The chamber is divided 50-50 between Democrats and Republicans, with a two-thirds vote, 67 senators, required for conviction.

Report details mental health discrepancies in ranks

By JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

Black, Hispanic and Asian troops report "significantly higher" rates of suicide attempts than their white counterparts, a new study that examined mental health disparities within the ranks has found.

Although there were no widespread differences between races and ethnicities in terms of overall behavioral health, the disparities in attempted suicide rates warrant Defense Department attention, the nonprofit research group Rand Corp.

said in a recent report.

Rand recommended the Pentagon "consider focusing attention on suicide attempts, particularly among non-Hispanic black, Hispanic and non-Hispanic Asian military personnel."

The higher rate of suicide attempts among Black and Hispanic troops when compared to whites is at odds with the pattern found in the civilian world, Rand said.

There were 1.76 suicide attempts among Black troops for each by a white service member. Outside the military, for

every white civilian suicide attempt there were .31 attempts by Black civilians, the report stated. Hispanic troops were more likely than white troops to attempt suicide at a similar rate, the study found. Overall, 2.6% of survey respondents reported a suicide attempt after joining the military.

Rand used various models to analyze the data and "found that, in comparison with white service members, non-Hispanic Asian and non-Hispanic black service members reported significantly higher likelihood of suicide attempt."

Military patches, coins reflect pandemic's impact

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

The coronavirus pandemic is being immortalized in a colorful array of unofficial military patches and challenge coins sold near U.S. bases in South Korea.

Some patches display biohazard symbols or virus clusters, one shows a bottle of beer named "Covid 19 Extra" and many feature logos for military units stationed on the peninsula.

One challenge coin — tokens often handed out by commanders to recognize troops' good work — features the U.S. and South Korean flags, along with the phrases "Katschi Kapshida" (Go Together) and "I Survived COVID-19."

Over the past year in South Korea, 500 U.S. service members contracted COVID-19, the potentially fatal respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus. Most

tested positive after they stepped off an airplane from the United States.

Other virus-related morale patches are relatively simple.

A photograph, apparently of a Pacific Air Forces airman posted on Facebook last week, shows a patch that reads "Vaccinated."

Air Force rules about dress and appearance provided by public affairs officials Friday state that morale patches are not authorized on uniforms.

Unofficial patches have been sold at bazaars on bases in Iraq and Afghanistan in recent decades, however, and deployed troops have been known to wear them on the battlefield.

For example, a U.S. soldier supporting Iraqi troops during the Battle of Mosul in November 2016 was spotted wearing a "Hip-pie Killer" patch on his helmet.

The Velcro era means it's easy

to swap out patches, said Cord Scott, a professor of history, government and film for the University of Maryland Global Campus — Asia, who is based in South Korea.

"I know that some units are trying to get away from things like the Punisher patches (which depict a skull), but for the COVID patches, these are things you might see on a backpack rather than on uniforms," he said in a telephone interview Thursday.

The pandemic patches are a time marker, Scott added.

"You're showing you were in a specific unit at a specific time and went through something," he said.

In Japan, for example, challenge coins were used to commemorate Operation Tomodachi, the U.S. military relief effort following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

Coins featuring images of President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un were minted in South Korea in 2018 in anticipation of one of their meetings.

Unit emblems and symbols make collector's items of military patches and coins.

"Then you throw the coronavirus pandemic on top of it," said Scott, who said he has his own stash of patches and recently sent some to the Pritzker Military Museum & Library in Chicago.

The coronavirus patches will likely be displayed in museums years from now, he said.

"The patches and coins are also significant, as they reflect a time which 100 years from now may not be politically correct or understood without context," he said.

Nimitz, Roosevelt groups train in South China Sea

By **CAITLIN DOORNBOS**
Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carriers USS Nimitz and USS Theodore Roosevelt and their strike groups met in the contentious South China Sea for joint operations on Tuesday, according to a Navy statement.

"The ships and aircraft of the two strike groups coordinated operations in a highly trafficked area to demonstrate the U.S. Navy's ability to operate in challenging environments," the statement said.

Two-carrier exercises are relatively rare, though they have seen a recent uptick in frequency. As of Tuesday, just nine have taken place in the Indo-Pacific region since 2001 — four since June.

The Navy last conducted dual carrier operations in the South

China Sea in July, when the Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan operated together twice.

China claims about 90% of the South China Sea as its territorial waters despite an international ruling in 2016 to the contrary. The U.S. in July formally rejected Beijing's assertions in the region and regularly sends the Navy to challenge Chinese claims there.

The two-carrier exercise comes days after the Navy sent the USS John S. McCain on a back-to-back Taiwan Strait transit and freedom-of-navigation operation in the South China Sea on Thursday and Friday, respectively.

The Nimitz was in the area Tuesday after leaving the Middle East last week. The ship is headed back to its Bremerton, Wash., homeport after nearly 250 days deployed.

DARPA seek proposals for missile-shooting drones

Stars and Stripes

U.S. fighter jets and bombers may one day be able to carry and launch long-range drones that can fire their own air-to-air missiles against enemy aircraft.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency awarded contracts Monday for preliminary design work on its "LongShot" program to defense firms General Atomics, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman.

The goal is to develop a new unmanned aerial vehicle "that can significantly extend engagement ranges, increase mission effectiveness and reduce the risk to manned aircraft," DARPA said in a statement.

The drones would be capable of firing more than one missile at air targets, the statement said. The agency's 2021 budget requested \$22 million for the initial work.

A plane equipped with Long-

Shot technology could approach its target at a slower speed, while the drone flies ahead to shoot down enemy aircraft, DARPA said last year. This would allow the aircraft to conserve fuel and fire its own missiles closer to the adversary, which "reduces reaction time, and increases probability of kill," DARPA's budget document said.

The system would also allow a warplane to engage enemy aircraft at extremely long distances, potentially making the launch plane safer from counterattacks.

It remains unclear whether the drone will incorporate stealth characteristics and whether it will be reusable for other missions.

The program also aims to develop a demonstration system capable of controlled flight before, during and after weapon ejection, the agency said.

Dems offer \$1.4K checks in new virus relief

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats proposed an additional \$1,400 in direct payments to individuals as Congress began piecing together a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package that tracks President Joe Biden's plan for battling the pandemic and reviving a still staggering economy.

Democrats on the Ways and Means Committee would expand tax credits for families with children, for lower-earning people and those buying health insurance on marketplaces created by the 2010 Affordable Care Act. The panel, which plans to approve the measure by week's end, would also provide health care subsidies for some unemployed workers.

Monday's Ways and Means un-

veiling of its piece of the package — at over \$900 billion, nearly half of Biden's entire plan — came with Congress' Democratic leaders hoping to rush the legislation to the president for his signature by mid-March, when existing emergency unemployment benefits expire. Their schedule reflects a desire by Biden and congressional Democrats to show they can respond swiftly and decisively to the crisis, even if, as seems likely, they must muscle past solid Republican opposition.

"While it is still our hope that Republicans will join us in doing right by the American people, the urgency of the moment demands that we act without further delay," said Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass.

Texas Rep. Kevin Brady, the

top Republican on that committee, criticized Democrats for driving ahead on the massive measure "without bipartisan compromise." He said the GOP wants to focus on vaccine distribution and more targeted relief for workers, families and small businesses — essentially previewing amendments Republicans are expected to propose during committee votes this week, some of which might win Democratic backing.

House Education and Labor Committee Democrats also previewed their plans Monday. Their \$350 billion package includes \$130 billion to help schools reopen safely, \$40 billion for colleges battered by the pandemic and a plan to gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an

hour. The minimum wage increase faces an uphill climb, and even Biden has conceded it likely won't survive.

In one potential battleground within the party, the Ways and Means Democrats proposed limiting the full \$1,400 relief payments to individuals making \$75,000 or less, and phasing them out until they end completely at \$100,000.

The income levels at which people qualify for the direct payments has caused rifts among Democrats, with moderates arguing that relief should be more narrowly targeted to people most in need. Biden has said he will not allow the per-person payments to fall below \$1,400 but has indicated flexibility on the income thresholds.

Experts see wide vulnerability as city thwarts water supply hacker

Associated Press

A hacker gained entry to the system controlling the water treatment plant of a Florida city of 15,000 and tried to taint the water supply with a caustic chemical, exposing a danger cybersecurity experts say has grown as systems become both more computerized and accessible via the internet.

The hacker who breached the system at the city of Oldsmar's water treatment plant on Friday, using a remote access program shared by plant workers, briefly increased the amount of sodium hydroxide by a factor of one hundred (from 100 parts per million to 11,100 parts per million), Pinellas County Sheriff Bob Gualtieri said during a news conference Monday.

Sodium hydroxide, also called lye, is used to treat water acidity, but the compound is also found in cleaning supplies such as soaps and drain cleaners. It can cause irritation, burns and other complications in larger quantities.

Fortunately, a supervisor saw the chemical being tampered with — as a mouse controlled by the intruder moved across the screen changing settings — and was able to intervene and immediately reverse it, Gualtieri said. Oldsmar is

about 15 miles northwest of Tampa.

Oldsmar officials have since disabled the remote-access system and said other safeguards were in place to prevent the increased chemical from getting into the water. Officials warned other city leaders in the region — which was hosting the Super Bowl — about the incident and suggested they check their systems.

Experts said municipal water and other systems have the potential to be easy targets for hackers because local governments' computer infrastructure tends to be underfunded.

Robert M. Lee, CEO of Dragos Security, and a specialist in industrial control system vulnerabilities, said remote access to industrial control systems such as those running water treatment plants has become increasingly common.

"As industries become more digitally connected we will continue to see more states and criminals target these sites for the impact they have on society," Lee said.

Tarah Wheeler, a Harvard Cybersecurity Fellow, said communities should take every precaution possible when using remote access technology for something as critical as a water supply.

Koala rescued after causing pileup on Australian freeway

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — A koala has been rescued after causing a five-car pileup while trying to cross a six-lane freeway in Australia.

Police said the crash in heavy Monday morning traffic in the city of Adelaide caused some injuries, but no one required an ambulance.

The animal's rescuer said she got out of her car to investigate what had caused the pileup. Nadia Tugwell, with her coat in hand, teamed up with a stranger clutching a blanket in a bid to capture the marsupial. A concrete highway divider had blocked the koala's crossing.

"The koala was absolutely not damaged in any way," Tugwell said. "It was very active, but very calm."

Once the koala was in her trunk, Tugwell drove to a gas station to turn the animal over to wildlife rescuers. In the interim, the koala was able to climb from the trunk into her SUV's cabin.

"It decided to come to the front toward me, so I said, 'OK, you stay here. I'll get out,'" she said.

The koala later was released in a forest — well away from the freeway.

Vaccine drive speeds up as US infections drop

Associated Press

The drive to vaccinate Americans against the coronavirus is gaining speed and newly recorded cases have fallen to their lowest level in three months.

More than 4 million more vaccinations were reported over the weekend, a significantly faster clip than in previous days, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Nearly one in 10 Americans have now received at least one shot. But just 2.9% of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated, a long way from the 70% or more that experts say must be inoculated to conquer the outbreak.

Newly confirmed infections have declined to an average of 117,000 a day, the lowest point since early November. That is a steep drop from the peak of nearly 250,000 a day in early January.

The number of Americans in the hospital with COVID-19 has also fallen sharply to about 81,000, down from more than 130,000 last month.

Health officials say the decline in hospitalizations and new cases most likely reflects an easing of the surge that was fueled by holiday gatherings, and perhaps better adherence to safety precautions.

The drop-off in new cases comes as fewer tests for the virus are being reported. But experts say the decline in cases is real. It is more pronounced than the apparent slowdown in testing, and it is accompanied by other encouraging signs.

"We are seeing a real decline because it's been sustained over time and it's correlated with decreasing hospitalizations," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist at Johns Hopkins University. "That tells you that there does seem to be something afoot."

COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. are still running at close to all-time highs, at an average of about 3,160 per day, down about

200 since mid-January. The death toll overall has eclipsed 460,000.

Alabama

MONTGOMERY — Hundreds of people showed up for COVID-19 vaccinations at mass sites across Alabama on Monday as the state drastically expanded the eligibility to receive immunizations despite a limited supply of doses.

In Montgomery, long lines of cars surrounded an old shopping mall where shots were available on a first-come, first-serve basis. About 500 people received shots to guard against the coronavirus in less than three hours, officials said.

Starting Monday, those who were qualified for vaccinations in Alabama included everyone 65 and older; educators; grocery store workers; some manufacturing workers; public transit workers; agriculture employees; state legislators and constitutional officers. Only health care workers, first responders, nursing home residents and people 75 and older were eligible previously.

California

SAN DIEGO — California is not receiving nearly enough COVID-19 vaccine to meet overwhelming demand and that won't change in the near term, Gov. Gavin Newsom conceded Monday, and counties increasingly are using their limited supplies to focus on people who need second shots to complete their inoculations.

About 800,000 Californians are fully immunized now but millions of others who are eligible have yet to get their first doses. Newsom said the state received just over 1 million doses of vaccine last week and the next weekly shipment will be only slightly larger.

"We need to see that ramped up," Newsom said during a news conference at San Diego's Petco Park, which is serving as a mass vaccination center. "We're go-

ing to need to see more doses coming into the state of California in order to keep these mass sites operational and to keep things moving."

San Diego County has four mass vaccination sites and, with its other facilities, could vaccinate 20,000 people a day. But it's doing half that because of supply shortages.

Louisiana

BATON ROUGE — Louisiana is seeing the ranks of its homeschooled students grow larger during the coronavirus pandemic.

The number of homeschooled students was 33,001 in October, the latest data available from the state, a 4% increase over the previous year and a 10% hike for homeschooled students who hope to qualify for college scholarships.

The number of students taught at home has grown by 23% in the past five years and 76% in the past decade, according to a report from The Advocate. Homeschooled students make up 5% of the state's total student population.

Classrooms were closed in March during the first wave of the pandemic, forcing educators to rely on virtual education, with mixed results. In the current school year, 64% of students are getting in-person instruction, according to the state education department, but some schools have been plagued by stops and starts because of virus spikes and students being sent home to quarantine.

Michigan

LANSING — A judge dismissed disorderly conduct charges Monday against six hairstylists who were ticketed last spring during a protest at the Michigan Capitol.

The women were cutting hair to protest Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's decision to keep barber shops and salons closed for nearly three months because of

the coronavirus pandemic. The women argued that the tickets had to be dismissed after the state Supreme Court in October said many Whitmer orders were issued under an unconstitutional law.

Lansing District Judge Kristen Simmons granted the request. The attorney general's office didn't respond to the dismissal request and didn't attend the hearing, said David Kallman, an attorney for the women.

Mississippi

JACKSON — About 2% of the COVID-19 vaccinations given so far in Mississippi have gone to people with out-of-state addresses, state health officials said Monday.

"We don't want to create barriers," the state health officer, Dr. Thomas Dobbs, said in response to questions during an online news conference. "To get a vaccine in Mississippi, you're supposed to be a resident or work here. If you get a vaccine here and you don't do either, when you fill out the application, you're being dishonest. Right? So, there is a step in the process where we have to depend upon people's ethical behavior. It's obviously unethical to be misleading and lie on your enrollment."

Missouri

KANSAS CITY — Missouri tasked nine regional groups across the state with making sure Black and Latino communities have equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, but the effort got off to a slow start.

Nearly two months into the vaccine rollout, four of the groups still aren't operational, KCUR reported Monday.

The theory behind the state's plan was that a regional organization would know best how to reach at-risk community members. But regional officials say the effort is being hampered by a lack of state funding and confusion about what they see as vague state expectations.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Grandfather returns cuffs he stole 60 years ago

CA LOS ANGELES — A grandfather has returned a pair of handcuffs he stole from a Los Angeles police officer 60 years ago.

The 74-year-old man was a teenager living in Van Nuys when he saw a scuffle break out at a Bob's Big Boy restaurant between an LAPD juvenile officer and a "young ruffian," he wrote in a letter shared by police.

The officer's handcuffs came loose and skated across the floor, landing at his feet. He scooped them up and kept them for six decades, although the man said he "felt a little guilty" each time he looked at them.

Recently two of his grandsons, ages 6 and 9, were visiting and playing with plastic handcuffs when he decided to show them the real pair to impress them.

"They were aghast and asked me why I stole the handcuffs from a policeman. I, of course, had no good explanation and I told them it was the wrong thing to do and I wasn't proud of it," the letter said.

Man finds WWII-era mortar in basement

NC DURHAM — A North Carolina man's discovery of a World War II-era mortar round in his home prompted police to close several area roads.

Dr. Ralph Haynes, of Durham, told WTVD-TV that he found the 60 mm mortar round from 1942 behind a pillar in a basement crawlspace during a home renovation project. Haynes said he believes the shell had probably been there

since the 1950s, based on the old air-conditioning unit it was near.

Haynes said the mortar round still had its firing pin intact, so he carefully moved it to a separate garage before calling the Durham Police Department, which later informed the Durham County Bomb Squad.

Partially clothed woman held in pitchfork attack

VA STAFFORD — Authorities in Virginia said a partially clothed woman broke into a Stafford County home and attacked a man with a pitchfork.

Stafford Sheriff's Maj. Shawn Kimmritz said deputies went to a home in Stafford in response to a report of breaking and entering. He said that a half-naked, muddy woman had knocked down a door and attacked the resident.

Kimmritz said the man suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries after being jabbed in the arm with the pitchfork. He said she fled to a nearby home and attacked deputies after they arrived.

Authorities charged Madison Brooke Snyder, 31, of Courtland in Southampton County, with burglary with a deadly weapon, aggravated malicious wounding and three felony counts of assault on a law enforcement officer.

Police: People threatened after talking to officers

GA THOMASVILLE — Police in a south Georgia town said they're providing extra security after people who talked to police about a shooting received threats.

Thomasville Police Sgt. Scott

Newberry told the Thomasville Times-Enterprise that a mother reported that her three daughters are being threatened after a shootout at their apartment complex.

Newberry said those threatening the daughters believe they talked to police about the gunfire. Threats about shooting into the women's apartments were reported to the complex manager at Villa North, but he said the women are declining to talk to police.

Driver arrested after woman jumps out, dies

WA LA CENTER — A woman has been arrested on suspicion of leaving a passenger who jumped to her death from the woman's car while they were traveling on a southwest Washington freeway.

The Washington State Patrol arrested Lacey Cabrera on suspicion of hit and run resulting in death, The Oregonian/OregonLive reported.

Investigators said she and Kendra Fain were arguing while driving on Interstate 5 and that Fain, of Sutherlin, Ore., jumped out of the car while the vehicle was moving at highway speeds.

Cabrera drove away without calling 911, according to the state patrol. State troopers said Fain was discovered on I-5 north of La Center, Wash. Emergency crews pronounced her dead at the scene.

Firetruck stolen while crew responded to call

FL NORTH FORT MYERS — A fire truck was stolen from a Florida fire station while the crew was responding to a call.

The Bayshore Fire Rescue department returned from the call to find a brush truck was missing. The department took to Facebook to try to get help tracking the vehicle. Several people posted sightings of the truck, which was eventually found about 80 miles away in Manatee County.

Fire Chief Lawrence Nisbet posted a video on Facebook after the truck was found thanking people for their help.

The truck wasn't damaged. There was no immediate information about a potential suspect.

Bat infestation troubles county's offices

IN VINCENNES — County employees in a southwestern Indiana county are ducking for cover these days amid a bat infestation that periodically sends the flying mammals fluttering through their offices.

The Knox County Commissioners said a former jail building in downtown Vincennes that houses the county's probation department, E-911 and community corrections is infested with bats that have been plaguing employees in all three departments.

The bat-removal proposal would involve creating a one-way door out, encouraging a space for the bats to leave but without allowing them access back inside, the commissioners president, Trent Hinkle, said. Once it's determined that all the bats have left the building, the entire area will be cleaned, sealed and insulated to prevent their return.

— From wire reports

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Bucs, Bolts turn Tampa into Titledown

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Fans, many of them not wearing masks, poured into downtown streets and packed bars and nightclubs around the city to celebrate another professional sports title for Tampa Bay, which is building a reputation as a home of champions.

Los Angeles has reigning world champs in baseball's Dodgers and basketball's Lakers, however, it's difficult to top the collective success of this region's Super Bowl-winning Buccaneers, Stanley Cup champion Lightning and World Series runner-up Rays while playing through challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's hard enough to win a title in any sport, let alone the same city being able to nab two and almost get another at the same time," Lightning coach Jon Cooper said Monday.

Super Bowl Sunday was a travel day for the Lightning, who flew to Nashville, where they watched Tampa Bay's 31-9

route of the Kansas City Chiefs as a group at their team hotel.

"Congrats@Buccaneers! Thanks for the birthday present," captain Steven Stamkos, who turned 31, wrote on Twitter, where he also posted a photo of teammates posing in Bucs gear in front a giant television screen showing Tom Brady celebrating after the game.

"You feel like you've got a stake in the game when it's your home team. That was the cool part about watching the game and watching all the guys in the room cheer. It was a really cool feeling," Cooper said. "I know we're not part of the NFL, but you feel a part of it. So it was great. Impressive. What a showing. It was fun to watch."

The Lightning made their entire postseason run in NHL playoff bubbles set up in Canada, hoisting the Stanley Cup for the second time in franchise history in September.

The following month, Major League Baseball's Rays captured their second American League pennant in a bubble set-

ting in California before losing to the Dodgers in six games during a neutral-site World Series played in Texas.

The Bucs' first NFL title in 18 years was especially sweet because they won three straight road playoff games to become the first team to play a Super Bowl in their home stadium.

Attendance was limited to about 25,000 in 65,000-seat Raymond James Stadium due to COVID-19 protocols. That didn't stop the community from celebrating the hometown team's appearance on football biggest stage.

Many partied while defying a local order mandating masks even be worn outdoors during Super Bowl week, and drawing sharp criticism from some public officials.

"The pressure was on us. The Lightning won the Stanley Cup and the Rays went to the World Series. Unfortunately, they didn't pull it off, but we were still rooting for them. Hopefully they get a chance to go back again," Bucs linebacker Lavonte David said.

David said.

"It was our time now. We had to step up to the challenge for the city. It was definitely long overdue. Those guys had our backs throughout the season, both the Tampa Bay Rays and the Tampa Bay Lightning. They were rooting us on."

Some of the Lightning players wore Bucs jerseys on the team's flight to Nashville, too.

Lightning forward Tyler Johnson wore a No. 13 Mike Evans jersey on the team flight.

"We try to watch the Super Bowl every year. This is probably the first where everyone was rooting for the same team," Johnson said. "Normally we have some rivalries and some bets against one another. This one, we all wanted the Bucs to win."

And the Buccaneers recognized that.

"It's definitely a family thing. All organizations stick together for this city," David said. "We were able to step up to the plate and bring one home for Tampa Bay."

NTSB blames pilot error for Bryant helicopter crash

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — The pilot of a Sikorsky helicopter that crashed into a foggy Calabasas hillside one year ago, killing Kobe Bryant and eight others onboard, became disoriented while flying in cloudy conditions, federal regulators said Tuesday.

The National Transportation Safety Board on Tuesday noted that pilot Ara Zobayan suffered spatial disorientation while he navigated through clouds and foggy-covered terrain on the Jan. 26, 2020, flight from Orange County to Camarillo, Calif.

NTSB Chairman Robert Sumwalt said Zobayan was flying under visual flight rules yet the "pilot continued his flight in-

to clouds." Zobayan was "legally prohibited" from flying through cloud cover but did so anyway, Sumwalt said.

The aircraft was not in a controlled flight pattern when it crashed into the hillside near Las Virgenes Road and Willow Glen Street at 9:45 a.m.

NTSB member Michael Graham said Zobayan ignored all his training and noted that as long as helicopters continue to fly into clouds while using visual flight rules "a certain percentage aren't going to come out alive."

Despite prior recommendations from the NTSB to install crash-proof flight and voice box recorders, the Sikorsky that Bryant was flying on did not

have such equipment. The Federal Aviation Administration did not require such features on the helicopter, nor was it required to have a safety management system.

Investigator Bill English told the board that Zobayan informed air traffic control he was "climbing to 4,000 feet" to get above the clouds. But English said the pilot was suffering from spatial disorientation because the helicopter banked left and away from the 101 Freeway while communicating with the controller that it had descended.

Zobayan misperceived altitude and acceleration, and suffered a somatogravic illusion, according to Dr. Djuan Sevillian.

He said the acceleration of the chopper could cause a pilot to sense the aircraft was climbing when it was not.

"Our inner ear can give us a false sense of orientation," Sevillian said, noting that a lack of visual cues worsens the problem and the pilot suffers what is known as "the leans."

In the year since the helicopter carrying Kobe Bryant crashed into a hillside on a foggy morning, killing all nine aboard, there has been plenty of finger-pointing over the cause or causes of the tragedy.

Bryant's widow blamed the pilot. She and relatives of the other victims also faulted the companies that owned and operated the helicopter.

Source: MLB deadening ball amid home run surge

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball has slightly deadened its baseballs amid a yearslong surge in home runs.

MLB anticipates the changes will be subtle, and a memo to teams last week cited an independent lab that found the new balls will fly 1 to 2 feet shorter when hit over 375 feet. Five teams also plan to add humidors to their stadiums, raising the total to 10 of 30 MLB stadiums equipped with humidity-controlled storage spaces.

A person familiar with the note spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday because the memo, sent by MLB executive vice president of baseball operations Morgan Sword, was sent privately. The Athletic first reported the contents of the memo.

The makeup of official Rawlings baseballs used in MLB games has come under scrutiny in recent years. A record 6,776 homers were hit during the 2019 regular season, and the rate of home runs fell only slightly during the pandemic-shortened

2020 season — from 6.6% of plate appearances resulting in homers in 2019 to 6.5% last year.

A four-person committee of scientists commissioned by MLB concluded after the 2019 season that baseballs had less drag on average than in previous seasons, contributing to the power surge. Their report blamed the spike in part on inconsistencies in seam height.

Other changes returning

NEW YORK — Seven-inning doubleheaders and runners on second base to start extra innings will return for a second straight season under an agreement for 2021 health protocols reached Monday between Major League Baseball and the players' association.

The deal did not include last year's experimental rule to extend the designated hitter to the National League or expanded playoffs. After allowing 16 teams in the postseason last year instead of 10, MLB had proposed 14 for this year before withdrawing that plan last month.

Nadal, Barty win openers with ease

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Facing a break point late in the third set, Rafael Nadal sprinted to his left and hit a running forehand winner from way out wide.

A slow-motion fist pump was a very subdued celebration by his standards. The 20-time major champion wasn't going to let the lingering back soreness that bothered him ahead of the Australian Open stop him from getting through the first round as soon as he possibly could.

Laslo Djere, ranked 56th, watched the winner land, held out both hands, and no doubt wondered what more he needed to do to win a point.

Nadal finished off a 6-3, 6-4, 6-1 win in just under two hours Tuesday in his first competitive match of the year — he didn't play for Spain at the ATP Cup last week because of the back stiffness.

In her first match at a major in more than a year, top-ranked Ash Barty dropped only 10 points in a 6-0, 6-0 rout of Danka Kovinic.

Barty lost to Sofia Kenin in the semifinals last year and then skipped the U.S. Open and her title defense at the French Open.

Kenin struggled before beating 133rd-ranked wild-card entry Maddison Inglis 7-5, 6-4.

Islanders goalie Varlamov shuts out Rangers again

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Casey Cizikas and Matt Martin scored 2:05 apart in the third period to help Semyon Varlamov and the New York Islanders beat the New York Rangers 2-0 on Monday night at Madison Square Garden.

Varlamov made 30 saves for his third shutout this season — second against the Rangers — as the Islanders won their second consecutive game. Islanders coach Barry Trotz earned his 850th victory, passing Ken Hitchcock for third place on the NHL's career list.

Igor Shesterkin stopped 28 shots, but the Rangers' four-game point streak ended.

Varlamov became the first Islanders goalie to shut out the Rangers twice in one season.

He made 24 saves for a 4-0 victory in the Jan. 14 opener between the crosstown rivals.

Blue Jackets 3, Hurricanes 2: Jack Roslovic scored the tiebreaking goal late in the third period, Joonas Korpihalo had 22 saves and Columbus beat visiting Carolina to split a back-to-back series.

Scott Harrington and Cam Atkinson also scored for the Blue Jackets, who got their second win in three games.

With the score tied 2-2, Roslovic split two defenders and beat Alex Nedeljkovic with a backhand with 4:36 left for what was the prettiest goal in an evening that included some unusual ones.

Maple Leafs 3, Canucks 1: Auston Matthews and Alexander Kerfoot scored in an 11-

second span in the third period and host Toronto beat Vancouver.

Morgan Rielly also scored for the Maple Leafs. Frederik Andersen made 31 saves as Toronto completed a three-game sweep of the struggling Canucks.

Oilers 3, Senators 1: Tyler Ennis scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period and goaltender Mike Smith made 27 saves in his season debut as Edmonton won at Ottawa.

Josh Archibald scored into the empty net with 1:10 remaining after Connor McDavid won the puck in his own end. The assist extended McDavid's points streak to 10 games.

Lightning 4, Predators 1: Anthony Cirelli scored two

goals for Tampa Bay, which won at Nashville for its fifth straight victory.

The defending Stanley Cup champs extended the NHL's longest winning streak even with goaltender Andrei Vasilevskiy getting his first night off this season. Curtis McElhinney made 22 saves.

Coyotes 4, Blues 3 (SO): Clayton Keller scored the tying goal with seven-tenths of a second remaining in regulation and Christian Dvorak's shootout goal was the winner, leading Arizona to a win at St. Louis.

Conor Garland and Dvorak scored in regulation, and Darcy Kuemper made 39 saves as the Coyotes have won three consecutive games over the Blues in St. Louis.

Middleton, Antetokounmpo lead Bucks in win

Associated Press

DENVER — Khris Middleton found a not-so-new way to pick up easy assist after easy assist — just lob the ball toward the rim.

From there, high-soaring Giannis Antetokounmpo will do the rest.

Middleton had 29 points and a career-high 12 assists, Antetokounmpo scored 30 points and the Milwaukee Bucks won their fifth straight game by beating the Denver Nuggets 125-112 on Monday night.

“He’s a threat out there,” Antetokounmpo said of Middleton’s passing and scoring ability. “He’s going to find you.”

Usually a forward, Middleton had the ball in his hands even more often with point guard Jrue Holiday out due to the NBA’s health and safety protocols. The Bucks found out earlier in the day that Holiday wouldn’t be available.

They adjusted on the fly.

“You always have to be prepared and thinking about what you can do if somebody’s not able to go,” Milwaukee coach Mike Budenholzer explained. “Just proud of the guys.”

Middleton’s 12th assist was a thing of beauty — a pinpoint pass to Antetokounmpo for a dunk with 1:39 remaining to give the Bucks a 120-110 lead. He had a similar play earlier in the fourth.

Lakers 119, Thunder 112 (OT): LeBron

James had 28 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists for his third triple-double of the season, and host Los Angeles defeated Oklahoma City to win its fifth in a row.

It was the team’s second straight overtime win after beating Detroit in two overtimes on Saturday. The Lakers tied their longest winning streak of the season despite being without Anthony Davis, who sat out with right Achilles tendinosis.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander narrowly missed matching James’ triple-double for the Thunder. He finished with 29 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds. Darius Bazley added 21 points and a career-high 16 rebounds.

Spurs 105, Warriors 100: Dejounte Murray had 27 points, 10 rebounds and eight steals, and DeMar DeRozan added 21 points and 10 assists as host San Antonio beat Golden State.

Stephen Curry scored 32 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. had 24 for the Warriors, who were without injured centers James Wiseman and Kevon Looney. Draymond Green had 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

Hornets 119, Rockets 94: LaMelo Ball made a career-high seven three-pointers and finished with 24 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds as host Charlotte defeated short-handed Houston.

Miles Bridges had another strong outing with 19 points and 10 rebounds, and Gordon Hayward added 19 points for the Hornets,

who opened the fourth quarter on a 19-1 run.

Raptors 128, Grizzlies 113: Fred VanVleet and Pascal Siakam each scored 32 points and Toronto put together a second-half rally to win at Memphis.

Norman Powell added 29 points for the Raptors, who began their comeback after coach Nick Nurse was ejected in the third quarter. VanVleet also had nine assists for Toronto.

Mavericks 127, Timberwolves 122: Kristaps Porzingis had 27 points, 13 rebounds and six blocks, Luka Doncic scored 26 points and Dallas held off visiting Minnesota.

Tim Hardaway added 24 points off the bench as the Mavericks won their second straight at home after a six-game skid at the American Airlines Center.

Wizards 105, Bulls 101: Bradley Beal scored 35 points and Washington held on for a rare win at Chicago.

Beal, the NBA’s leading scorer, hit three free throws in the final 9.8 seconds. Rui Hachimura added 19 points and a season-high 10 rebounds on his 23rd birthday, and the Wizards improved to 6-15 despite resting Russell Westbrook.

Suns 119, Cavaliers 113: Devin Booker scored a season-high 36 points, Mikal Bridges added 22 and host Phoenix rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Cleveland.

No. 4 Buckeyes’ tight defense denies Terrapins

Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — As he heads toward the end of his college basketball career, Kyle Young is determined to expend all his energy during every minute he’s on the court.

If he keeps playing this way, the Ohio State senior and his teammates just might keep running deep into March.

Young scored a career-high 18 points, Duane Washington Jr. also had 18 and the fourth-ranked Buckeyes used a relentless defensive effort to wear down Maryland in a 73-65 victory Monday night.

Young, a spirited 6-foot-8 forward, went 7-for-12 from the

floor and grabbed four rebounds over 34 minutes. Coming off a 16-point effort against Iowa, Young sparked several key runs to help Ohio State (16-4, 10-4 Big Ten) secure its fifth straight win.

“It’s my fourth year, and I’ve been through a lot with these guys,” Young said. “As my time here is winding down, you don’t want to take anything for granted. I want to give it all I’ve got.”

Washington played well, too, but his face lit up when asked to talk about his feisty teammate.

“Kyle Young is the hardest-working dude I’ve ever played with,” Washington said. “Tonight he got his career high. I’m super happy for him.”

Kansas 78, No. 23 Oklahoma State 66: David McCormack scored all but two of his 23 points after halftime, Marcus Garrett had 17 and the host Jayhawks rolled past the Cowboys in their first game since their Top 25 run ended at 231 consecutive weeks.

Christian Braun added 15 points, Jalen Wilson had 11 and Ochai Agbaji 10 for the Jayhawks (13-7, 7-5 Big 12), who climbed to No. 3 early in the season but had lost five of their last seven to fall out of the poll for the first time since Feb. 2, 2009.

Cade Cunningham finished with 26 points for Oklahoma State (12-6, 5-6) but was just 7-for-18 from the field, and fellow

freshman Avery Anderson III had 13 points but also committed four turnovers.

UNLV 69, Air Force 64: David Jenkins Jr. had 26 points as the Runnin’ Rebels edged the visiting Falcons.

Jenkins Jr. hit 6 of 8 three-pointers. Bryce Hamilton had 14 points for UNLV (8-9, 5-5 Mountain West Conference). Cheikh Mbacke Diong added nine rebounds and four blocks.

A.J. Walker had 20 points for Air Force (4-14, 2-12), which has lost seven straight games. Nikk Jackson added 18 points.

The Runnin’ Rebels are 2-0 against the Falcons this season. UNLV defeated Air Force 68-58 on Saturday.