

Dems call Trump 'inciter in chief' at trial

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Prosecutors in Donald Trump's impeachment trial said Wednesday they would prove that Trump was no "innocent bystander" but the "inciter in chief" of the deadly attack at the Capitol aimed at overturning his election loss to Joe Biden.

Opening the first full day of arguments, the lead House prosecutor promised to lay out evidence that shows the president encouraged a rally crowd to head to the Capitol, then did nothing to stem the violence and watched with "glee" as a mob stormed the iconic building. Five people died.

"To us it may have felt like chaos and madness, but there was method to the madness that day," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md.

The day's proceedings were unfolding after an emotional Tuesday start to the trial that left the former president fuming when his attorneys delivered a meandering defense and failed to halt the trial on constitutional grounds. Some allies called for yet another shakeup to his legal team.

Trump is the first president to face an impeachment trial after leaving office and the first to be twice impeached. The riot fol-

lowed a rally during which Trump urged his supporters to "fight like hell," words his lawyers say were simply a figure of speech. He is charged with "incitement of insurrection."

Senators, many of whom fled for safety the day of the attack, watched Tuesday's graphic videos of the Trump supporters who battled past police to storm the halls, Trump flags waving. More video was expected Wednesday, including some that hadn't been seen before.

The prosecutors are arguing that Trump's words weren't just free speech but part of "the big lie" — his relentless efforts to sow doubts about the election results. Those began long before the votes were tabulated, revving up his followers to "stop the steal" though there was no evidence of substantial fraud.

Trump knew very well what would happen when he took to the microphone at the outdoor White House rally that day, almost to the hour that Congress gavelled in to certify Biden's win, said Rep. Joe Neguse, D-Colo.

"This was not just a speech," he said.

Trump's supporters were prepped and

armed, ready to descend on the Capitol, Neguse said. "When they heard his speech, they understood his words."

Security remained extremely tight Wednesday at the Capitol, fenced off with razor wire and patrolled by National Guard troops.

The difficulty facing Trump's defense team became apparent at the start of the trial as they leaned on the process of the trial, unlike any other, rather than the substance of the case against the former president.

Republicans made it clear that they were unhappy with Trump's defense, many of them saying they didn't understand where it was going — particularly lead defense lawyer Bruce Castor's opening. Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, who voted with Democrats to move forward with the trial, said that Trump's team did a "terrible job." Maine Sen. Susan Collins, who also voted with Democrats, said she was "perplexed." Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska said it was a "missed opportunity" for the defense.

Six Republicans joined with Democrats to vote to proceed with the trial, but the 56-44 vote was far from the two-thirds threshold of 67 votes that would be needed for conviction.

Report: Navy failed to follow virus procedures on Roosevelt

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The coronavirus outbreak aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt was exacerbated by the failure of Navy commanders to follow procedures meant to stop the spread of infectious diseases, according to a Defense Department report.

The semi-redacted report, published Monday by the Defense Department's inspector general, examined whether the Navy was prepared to deal with an infectious outbreak, such as the coronavirus, on its ships. Investigators found the service and commands, including U.S.

Fleet Forces and Pacific Fleet, which were examined in the report, did have "policies, plans, and procedures" established, but the guidelines were not being properly followed before or after the pandemic began.

"Prior to the [coronavirus] pandemic, we found that four out of five Navy component commands did not conduct a biennial pandemic influenza & infectious disease exercise in accordance with the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations requirements," investigators concluded in the report.

The report focused on the outbreaks at sea aboard the Roosevelt, an aircraft carrier, and the

destroyer USS Kidd.

Investigators did so because of the high number of cases relative to each ship's crew size.

The other ships that had at least one case among the crew were at their homeport, according to the report. Adm. Mike Gilday, the chief of naval operations, stated in an administrative message in October that more than 190 ships had at least one case.

The report redacted the official number of ships that have had a coronavirus case, as well as their names. It also redacted the official number of personnel who became infected in the two outbreaks at sea, despite previ-

ous reporting on those cases.

The outbreak aboard the Roosevelt occurred following a port call in Vietnam despite a pandemic being declared by the World Health Organization on March 11. The first case was reported March 24 and as the outbreak grew, the ship had to de-tour its deployment to Guam.

The report highlights several missteps by commanders in handling the Roosevelt outbreak, which included releasing sailors prematurely from quarantine and continuing to keep gyms open despite the need for social distancing. Those decisions led to more infections, according to the report.

Navy leaders address 2 racist incidents

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senior U.S. Navy commanders met with sailors on ships on the West Coast on Monday and Tuesday, after two recent racist incidents triggered one of the first military stand-downs to address extremism in the ranks.

The meetings came after a noose was found on one ship, and hate speech was found written on a wall on another ship. But the discussions with sailors and admonishments by leadership were spurred by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's recent orders for all military commanders to meet with troops in the next 60 days to talk about extremism and racism.

"We cannot be under any illusions that extremist behaviors do not exist in our Navy," Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations,

said in a message to the force. "We must better understand the scope of the problem, get after this issue, and eliminate conduct that is driven by extremist beliefs. No doubt, this is a leadership issue. We will own this."

Noting the two incidents where "symbols of hate and violence" were found on ships, he warned that racism, disrespect and injustice can prevent the Navy from reaching its potential as an American fighting force.

Navy officials said that in the first incident, a noose was found on a Black sailor's bunk in late January on the USS Lake Champlain, a Navy cruiser. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service looked into the matter, and a sailor eventually confessed and was taken off the ship. The ship was at the pier in San Diego when the incident happened, but it is now at

sea.

In the second incident, hate speech was written on a bathroom wall on the USS Carl Vinson, an aircraft carrier. It was discovered over the weekend and it is under investigation. Officials declined to say what words were written.

Adm. John Aquilino, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, abruptly flew from his headquarters in Hawaii to San Diego this week to address the issue. He spoke with sailors on the two ships as well as others in the fleet, and held a number of meetings with commanders Monday and Tuesday.

In a video addressing a room full of crew members of the Carl Vinson, Aquilino said: "Extremism in our Navy is unacceptable. We will not tolerate it. OK? It's that simple."

He told the sailors that when missiles start flying and "we start dropping bombs on people, nobody's going to care who their shipmate is and what color, race, gender, creed that they are."

In a statement, he added, "I have policies in the Pacific Fleet that we do not care what race you are, what creed you are, what god you pray to, what sexual orientation you are, or what gender you are." And he told them that sailors deserve a safe place to work.

Austin, the Pentagon's first Black defense chief, put out orders last week to his military leaders, saying they have to spend time talking to their troops about extremism in the ranks. Over the weekend, he specified that each commander must set aside a one-day stand-down within the next 60 days to address the problem.

Ukraine plans two naval bases in Black Sea region

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Ukraine is moving forward with plans to build two new naval bases in the Black Sea region, an area of tension with Russia that may see greater U.S. military and NATO involvement this year.

One base will be built along the Black Sea and the other in the Sea of Azov, a linked waterway that has been a flashpoint between Russia and Ukraine, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said at NATO headquarters in Brussels on Tuesday.

The United Kingdom is "helping us financially" and work on the projects will begin soon, Shmyhal said.

The comments came during a joint news conference with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who touted U.S. and alliance efforts in the region. The

Black Sea is likely to be an area of focus when Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin takes part in his first NATO defense ministers' meeting next week in Brussels.

The Navy destroyers USS Porter and USS Donald Cook have been operating with allies and with Ukraine's navy in the Black Sea since January. On Tuesday, both warships, along with a P-8A reconnaissance plane, joined with two Turkish frigates and F-16 fighters in an integrated surface, air and subsurface warfare drill. On Wednesday, the destroyers departed after 17 days, one of the Navy's largest deployments in the Black Sea in recent years.

NATO's Black Sea push comes amid concerns about Russia's military buildup and record of aggression in the region, most notably its annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

Navy rejects China's claim US drills were 'symbolic'

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

The commanders of two U.S. aircraft carrier strike groups in a conference call Wednesday dismissed Chinese critiques of their drills this week in the South China Sea.

The strike groups operated side-by-side Tuesday, honing their tactical proficiency and ability to work together, Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander of the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group, told reporters during the call. Verissimo said the two-carrier rendezvous occurred more from convenience than any intent to provoke the Chinese, who lay claim to most of the area and object to U.S. naval presence there.

"The fact that we came together in the South China Sea was based on our navigation plan and making the most efficient route to

and from our areas," Verissimo said.

The Theodore Roosevelt patrolled the area while the USS Nimitz last week began its journey home to Bremerton, Wash., after an extended deployment in the Middle East. The Nimitz has been deployed for nearly 250 days.

Nimitz strike group commander Rear Adm. James Kirk said the dual-carrier operation was "not in response to any nation or event," but meant to "improve our readiness levels in the region."

China's state-run Global Times newspaper on Wednesday claimed the exercise had "more symbolic and political meanings rather than military significance" given "the power of China's anti-ship ballistic missiles."

Verissimo dismissed the charge: "From my view at the tactical level, it's not symbolic."

Dems push school funding, wage increase

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats muscled past Republicans on portions of President Joe Biden’s pandemic plan, including a proposed \$130 billion in additional relief to help the nation’s schools reopen and a gradual increase of the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

Democrats on the Education and Labor Committee say schools won’t be able to reopen safely until they get an infusion of federal funding to repair building ventilation systems, buy protective equipment and take other steps recommended by federal health officials. The plan faces opposition from Republicans who want to tie new school funding to reopening.

The panel met Tuesday to craft its portion of a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package that tracks with Biden’s plan for battling the pandemic and reviving a still

staggering economy. Democrats hope to rush the bill to Biden for his signature by mid-March, using a special budget-related process allowing certain legislation to be approved by a simple majority.

Rep. Bobby Scott, chair of the Education and Labor Committee, dismissed complaints from Republicans who objected to use of the process.

“We must address the urgent needs of the people now,” said Scott, D-Va., “The multiple crises affecting our communities will grow worse every day if we do not act. We must recognize that we cannot afford to prioritize process over the urgent needs of people across this country.”

House Republicans attempted dozens of changes to the legislation at a hearing that stretched late into the evening. They proposed amendments to limit funding only to schools offering in-

person instruction, or to steer aid to families if their schools continued operating online. On the wage increase, they sought to exempt small businesses or certain rural areas. It appeared all of the amendments would be defeated.

Biden has made reopening most of the nation’s K-8 schools within his first 100 days in office a key goal. The issue has become increasingly heated as some school districts face gridlock with teachers who have refused to support reopening until their demands are met. Biden’s plan for \$130 billion in school funding is in addition to more than \$8 billion from previous relief packages.

In a tweak to Biden’s plan, the Democratic proposal would require schools to reserve at least 20% of the funding for efforts to address learning loss, including after-school programs and summer classes. The bill also match-

es Biden’s proposed \$40 billion for colleges and universities but, unlike the White House plan, makes private colleges eligible for relief.

Democrats also tucked in a new limit on for-profit colleges that the party has pushed for years. The proposal would prevent for-profit colleges from accepting more than 90% of their overall funding from federal sources. An existing federal law includes that cap for some federal sources but excludes funding from the GI Bill and other veterans programs.

Republicans blasted the legislation in its entirety, saying schools have already received billions in aid and are safe to reopen. They cited data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showing that social distancing and wearing a mask significantly reduce the spread of the virus in school settings.

Man with horns in riot apologizes

Associated Press

PHOENIX — An Arizona man who participated in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol while sporting face paint, no shirt and a furry hat with horns said he regrets storming the building, apologized for causing fear in others and expressed disappointment with former President Donald Trump.

In a statement released late Monday through his attorney, defendant Jacob Chansley said he has re-evaluated his life since being jailed for over a month on charges stemming from the Jan. 6 riot and realizes he shouldn’t have entered the Capitol building. Chansley, who previously said Trump inspired him to be in Washington that day, said Trump “let a lot of peaceful people down.”

Chansley said he’s coming to terms with events leading to the riot and asked people to “be patient with me and other peaceful people who, like me, are having a very difficult time piecing together all that happened to us, around us and by us. We are good people who care deeply about our country.”

Chansley’s attorney, Al Watkins, released the statement before the second impeachment trial of Trump was scheduled to begin

in the U.S. Senate.

Watkins, who unsuccessfully sought a pardon on Chansley’s behalf from Trump, said the Senate didn’t take up his offer to have his client testify on how he was incited by the former president.

The defense lawyer said his client’s apology wasn’t self-serving but rather a genuine expression of culpability. Still, he said he doesn’t think it’s right for the government to prosecute people who were incited.

“If you believe the government is correctly prosecuting the (former) president, you can’t at the same time hold criminally culpable those who were incited, because the people incited become victims,” Watkins said in an interview.

Chansley has pleaded not guilty to felony charges of civil disorder and obstructing an official proceeding, plus four other misdemeanor charges.

The U.S. Justice Department declined to comment Tuesday on Chansley’s apology.

Chansley was among hundreds of pro-Trump supporters who charged past outnumbered police officers and stormed the Capitol as Congress was meeting to certify Joe Biden’s electoral win.

1 dead, 4 hurt in Minnesota health clinic shooting

Associated Press

BUFFALO, Minn. — A 67-year-old man unhappy with the health care he’d received opened fire at a clinic Tuesday, killing one person and wounding four others, and bomb technicians were investigating a suspicious device left there and others at a motel where he was staying, authorities said.

All five victims were rushed to the hospital, and a hospital spokeswoman confirmed the one death Tuesday night. Three remained in stable but critical condition, and a fourth had been discharged.

The attack happened Tuesday morning at an Allina clinic in Buffalo, a community of about 15,000 people roughly 40 miles northwest of Minneapolis. Authorities said Gregory Paul Ulrich, of Buffalo, opened fire at the facility and was arrested before noon.

Though police said it was too early to tell if Ulrich had targeted a specific doctor, court records show he at one point had been ordered to have no contact with a man whose name matches that of a doctor at the clinic.

Poll: 1 in 3 adults skeptical of vaccine

Associated Press

NEW YORK — About 1 in 3 Americans say they definitely or probably won't get the COVID-19 vaccine, according to a new poll that some experts say is discouraging news if the U.S. hopes to achieve herd immunity and vanquish the outbreak.

The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that while 67% of Americans plan to get vaccinated or have already done so, 15% are certain they won't and 17% say probably not. Many expressed doubts about the vaccine's safety and effectiveness.

The poll suggests that substantial skepticism persists more than a month and a half into a U.S. vaccination drive that has encountered few if any serious side effects. It found that resistance runs higher among younger people, people without college degrees, Black Americans and Republicans.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's leading infectious-disease scientist, has estimated that somewhere between 70% and 85% of the U.S. population needs to get inoculated to stop the scourge that has killed close to 470,000 Americans.

Nearly 33 million Americans, or about 10% of the population, have received at least one dose, and 9.8 million have been fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The poll of 1,055 adults, taken Jan. 28 through Feb. 1, provides insight into the skepticism.

Of those who said they definitely will not get the vaccine, 65% cited worries about side effects, despite the shots' safety record over the past months. About the same percentage said they don't trust COVID-19 vaccines. And 38% said they don't believe they need a vaccine, with a similar share saying that they don't know if a COVID-19 vaccine will work and that they don't trust the government.

Alaska

JUNEAU — A disaster declaration intended to aid Alaska's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is set to expire this week-end unless action is taken to extend it.

Health and emergency officials warn a failure to extend could restrict the state's ability to distribute vaccines and set back progress in combating the illness.

Three weeks into the legislative session, the politically divided House has yet to organize, and until it does, it can't consider or act on bills. Members of the Republican-led Senate have chafed at Gov. Mike Dunleavy's proposal for an extension through September and say they are looking at whether they can provide the tools Dunleavy needs to respond to the pandemic separate from a declared disaster.

The pushback is fueled, in part, by anger in places like Anchorage, where local officials have imposed restrictions on businesses to curb the spread of COVID-19, though that action is not dictated by the state declaration. Some lawmakers also think Dunleavy, a Republican, overstepped in issuing new declarations without legislative involvement in recent months.

Illinois

CHICAGO — The Chicago Teachers Union has approved a deal with the nation's third-largest school district to get students back to class during the coronavirus pandemic, union officials announced early Wednesday.

The vote by the union's roughly 25,000 members ends the possibility of an immediate teacher lockout or strike. The agreement follows months of negotiations — which had intensified in recent weeks — with plans that included more teacher vaccinations and metrics to allow school closures when CO-

VID-19 infections spike.

The union said 13,681 members voted to approve the agreement and 6,585 voted against it. In a statement, the union described the agreement as the “absolute limit to which CPS was willing to go at the bargaining table to guarantee a minimum number of guardrails for any semblance of safety in schools.”

Union President Jesse Sharkey also criticized the agreement in an email to members that was released by the union.

“This plan is not what any of us deserve. Not us. Not our students. Not their families,” the email said. “The fact that CPS could not delay reopening a few short weeks to ramp up vaccinations and preparations in schools is a disgrace.”

But in a statement, Mayor Lori Lightfoot and CPS CEO Janice Jackson defended the agreement, saying it “ensures families have options to choose in-person learning and make a plan that is best for them.”

Further, after weeks of pointing to \$100 million that has been spent to make schools safe, Lightfoot and Jackson said that the vote itself by the union “reaffirms the strength and fairness of our plan, which provides families and employees certainty about returning to schools and guarantees the best possible health and safety protocols.”

The first wave of students and staff, in pre-K and special education, is due back Thursday, with parents still having the option of remote learning. Those students briefly returned last month, but then stopped amid the escalating fight with the union, which voted to continue remote teaching and reject the district's plans.

Ohio

COLUMBUS — Nursing home workers who declined the coronavirus vaccine during the first round of shots will be given

another opportunity to take it, Gov. Mike DeWine said Tuesday as he outlined plans for providing ongoing access to the vaccine in the state's long-term care facilities.

Only about 4 of every 10 nursing home and assisted-living facility employees have received it, the governor has said. Workers have cited distrust of the vaccine and concern about side effects.

Providing that second opportunity is part of the state's plan to make vaccines available for new residents and employees of nursing homes and assisted living facilities now that the initial round of shots is over. Details are coming next week.

The goal is “continuing access to this life-saving vaccine,” DeWine said.

More than 1 million Ohioans received at least the first vaccine shot as of Tuesday, or about 9% of the population, according to the state Department of Health.

Oregon

PORTLAND — For more than two months restaurants in the state's most populous counties have been closed to indoor dining, in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19. But on Friday, that will change.

Gov. Kate Brown announced Tuesday that 10 counties, including the Portland tri-county area, will be moving from the “extreme risk” tier to a lower risk category as COVID-19 cases decrease in the state — allowing restaurants to open for indoor dining and gyms to increase capacity.

“Thanks to Oregonians who have stepped up and made smart choices, we have made incredible progress in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and saving lives in Oregon,” Brown said Tuesday. “This is welcome news, as we'll start to see more businesses open up and Oregonians being able to get out a bit more.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Rescuers save man who tried to jump from bridge

CA VALLECITO — A man trying to jump off a Northern California bridge Monday was saved when a sheriff's deputy gripped his arm as the man dangled 150 feet above the waters of a lake, authorities said.

The man was pulled back over the railing and taken to a hospital for a mental evaluation.

The Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office received a report shortly after midnight that a man had threatened to jump off a local bridge, prompting repeated checks of two bridges in the Sierra Nevada area, the office said.

Shortly before 3 a.m., the man's car was found near the Parrotts Ferry bridge, which soars over the New Melones Lake near Vallecito. The man was found standing on the bridge around 10 a.m.

Authorities talked to him for about 10 minutes but then he climbed over the railing and tried to jump, authorities said.

Tuolumne County sheriff's Cpl. Andrew Long lunged through the railing and grabbed the man by one arm, holding on for about 30 seconds as he dangled over the water. Calaveras County Deputy Jason Markovitz and other members of the Tuolumne County sheriff's Search and Rescue unit then pulled the man to safety.

Man killed when cannon explodes at baby shower

MI GAINES TOWNSHIP — A 26-year-old Michigan man was killed in

an explosion that occurred during a baby shower, according to Gaines Township authorities.

A small cannon device that was fired in the backyard of a home by the homeowner blew up, spraying metal shrapnel that struck an unidentified Hartland man who was standing nearby. The man was taken in serious condition to Hurley Medical Center in Flint, where he later died.

Three parked cars and the garage where the baby shower was being held were also struck by shrapnel.

In recent years, some gender-reveal events — where devices eject confetti, balloons or other colored objects to announce a soon-to-be-born child's sex — have taken a dangerous turn.

Author helps kids publish pandemic-inspired book

ME LEWISTON — A group of budding young writers is about to publish a book with some help from Maine's most famous writer.

Stephen King's foundation covered the \$6,500 cost of publishing a 290-page manuscript by students participating in Farwell Elementary School's Author Studies Program.

The students started with "Fletcher McKenzie and the Passage to Whole," a story about a Maine boy by Gary Savage, and then reworked it to reflect their experiences during the pandemic.

Man unhurt after long slide down mountain

HI HONOLULU — A man was unharmed after sliding hundreds of feet

down a slope from the summit of Hawaii's highest mountain, authorities said.

The Hawaii County Fire Department estimated the man slid about 700 feet down an icy slope on Mauna Kea shortly after 7 p.m. Saturday.

The man, who is in his 20s, became separated from his group, stepped over a guardrail and slipped, authorities said.

Rescuers said he was in the early stages of hypothermia when they found him.

Pelican survives frostbite, sent to sanctuary

CT KILLINGWORTH — A pelican that got blown off course and was rescued in chilly Connecticut has been flown to Florida, where he is recovering from pneumonia and frostbite.

The brown pelican, nicknamed Arvy, was rescued from the icy Connecticut River on Jan. 27. The bird, whose species is not typically seen in the Northeast, was taken to a bird rehabilitation facility in Killingworth, suffering from severe hypothermia.

After about a week of nearly around the clock care, volunteer pilots flew Arvy to Busch Wildlife Sanctuary in Jupiter, Fla., where he will continue recuperating until he is well enough to be released into the wild.

Man accused of theft of catalytic converters

NH MANCHESTER — Police in Manchester investigating the theft of numerous catalytic converters since the fall have made an arrest.

In the latest case, David Vallee, 50, agreed to fix an oil leak on an acquaintance's car in December, police said.

Vallee was supposed to return the car in two days, but didn't. The car was eventually found in a hotel parking lot, with the catalytic converters missing. He was arrested on Saturday in absentia, because he was already being held on similar charges.

Vallee is also believed to have sold 29 stolen catalytic converters to a local scrap yard between October and December, making more than \$7,400.

Teacher may have saved a student from fire

MA BROCKTON — A Massachusetts fourth grade teacher may have saved a student after a fire broke out during online class.

Raymond School teacher Elizabeth Doyle said that after the class returned from lunch, Teresa Rosario, 9, was yelling that her fire alarm was going off, the Enterprise reported. Doyle said she muted the rest of the class to focus on Rosario.

"I could hear the fire alarm," Doyle said. "I asked her, 'Do you see fire? Do you see smoke? Do you smell smoke?' She's like, 'I smell smoke,' so I'm like, 'Oh, my God, is anyone home? Get out of the house. Get 'em out.'"

Rosario and her sisters exited the home. Doyle then called Rosario and the Brockton Fire Department.

The firefighters found a "contents fire" in the basement where an incense fell into a pile of clothes. The fire was contained to a small area.

— From wire reports



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NCAA hoops Top 25 has blue-collar feel

Associated Press

Move over, Duke and North Carolina. Make way, UCLA and Kansas.

The Top 25 has a decided blue-collar — rather than blue blood — look these days.

When the Bruins and Jayhawks slid out of the poll on Monday, with Kansas ending its record run at 231 consecutive weeks, it marked the first time those four schools, along with Kentucky, had not been ranked since Dec. 18, 1961.

Mike Krzyzewski was a teenager, Roy Williams in grade school and John Calipari barely out of diapers. Kansas coach Bill Self and UCLA counterpart Mick Cronin? Well, those two hadn't even been born yet.

"In basketball," Kansas guard Jalen Wilson said before the Jayhawks beat No. 23 Oklahoma State 78-66 on Monday night, "you sometimes have to focus on what's in front of you and not think about the past."

The present certainly doesn't belong to the powerhouses of the past. Of the 15

schools that have won multiple national championships, the only ones that graced the Top 25 this week were the Cowboys and fifth-ranked Villanova. The other 13 schools with their combined 54 national championships include Indiana, UConn and Michigan State.

Four received votes, but the remaining nine received none from the 63-member media panel making up the electorate.

There are plenty of reasons for so many big-name schools taking so many knocks on the chin.

Talent is spread more thinly than ever as elite recruits eschew the name on the front of the jersey for the opportunity to play right away, and transfers have made it even more difficult for top schools to stash talent away. Meanwhile, schools such as Gonzaga and Baylor that are not considered traditional blue bloods have developed into the modern-day version of them, led by popular coaches who have built a recruiting pipeline and are

now winning enough to keep it flowing.

That's all without discussing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused several schools to regularly halt practices.

"Nobody wants the pauses, everyone wants to play. That was a byproduct of not having the chance to play," UConn coach Dan Hurley said after a loss to Seton Hall. "When you go pause, it hurts. It's not an excuse, it's just a reality."

The reality these days? Many of college basketball's brand names will be fighting just to make the NCAA Tournament.

"If we get a chance to get to the tournament," Bruins coach Mick Cronin said after a loss to rival Southern California, "we have to practice not hanging our head and not looking at the scoreboard and playing every play like it matters."

No. 1 gets a breather

Gonzaga played BYU on Monday night but then has a break after its game Thursday

night at Santa Clara was postponed due to the pandemic. That means the Bulldogs won't take the floor again until facing San Francisco on Saturday.

Top 25 tilts

Texas Tech lost a marquee game Tuesday night to No. 14 West Virginia. Other games involving two ranked teams this week include No. 25 Rutgers visiting slumping No. 15 Iowa on Wednesday night; fifth-ranked Villanova visiting No. 13 Creighton on Saturday; and third-ranked Michigan traveling to No. 21 Wisconsin on Sunday.

Off the radar

Loyola Chicago is back in the poll for the first time since 1985 at the expense of Missouri Valley rival Drake, which rattled off 18 straight wins to start the season before losing to Valparaiso to fall from the Top 25. Now, the two are set to square off with back-to-back games in Des Moines, Iowa, for control of the Valley this weekend.

West Virginia completes sweep of Texas Tech

Associated Press

LUBBOCK, Texas — Sean McNeil scored a career-high 26 points and No. 14 West Virginia finished a regular-season sweep of seventh-ranked Texas Tech with an 82-71 victory over the Red Raiders on Tuesday night.

The Mountaineers (14-5, 7-3 Big 12) won their third consecutive game and ended a four-game skid in Lubbock 15 days after a thrilling 88-87 win at home when Miles McBride hit the go-ahead jumper in the final seconds.

McNeil was 5-for-7 from three-point range, including one with the shot clock about to expire late in the second half.

McBride scored 18 of his 20 points in the second half coming off a career-best 31 points in a win over Kansas.

Mac McClung scored 17 points before fouling out for the Red Raiders (14-6, 6-5), who saw a three-game winning streak end

a day after reaching their highest ranking of the season.

No. 11 Alabama 81, South Carolina 78: John Petty Jr. scored 20 points and the visiting Crimson Tide held off the Gamecocks to bounce back from their first Southeastern Conference loss of the season.

Alabama (16-5, 11-1 SEC) was off to its best league start in 65 years before falling to 10th-ranked Missouri this past Saturday.

Justin Minaya cut South Carolina's deficit to 79-78 with 2 seconds left, but James Rojas was quickly fouled and made both free throws to seal the victory.

AJ Lawson led the Gamecocks (5-8, 3-6) with 21 points, making five three-pointers.

No. 13 Texas 80, Kansas State 77: Andrew Jones scored 24 points and the visiting Longhorns held off the Wildcats.

Greg Brown added 17 points and Courtney Ramey had 14 for Texas (12-5, 6-4 Big

12), which snapped a three-game skid.

Mike McGuirl missed a three-point attempt from half court in the waning seconds for Kansas State (5-16, 1-11), which has lost 11 straight.

Nijel Pack scored 22 points and McGuirl had 18 for the Wildcats.

No. 19 Creighton 63, Georgetown 48: Christian Bishop scored 17 points and the visiting Bluejays capitalized on the Hoyas' worst shooting performance in a decade.

Creighton (15-5, 11-4 Big East) avenged an 86-79 home loss to Georgetown (5-10, 3-7) last Wednesday and won its fifth in six games.

The Hoyas shot 27.6%, their worst mark since making 25% of their field goals in a loss to Cincinnati on Feb. 23, 2011.

Mitchell Ballock had 14 points and had four of the Bluejays' six three-pointers.

Jamorko Pickett led Georgetown with 16 points and 12 rebounds.

MLB players to wear electronic tracers

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Major League Baseball players, on-field staff and nonplaying personnel who require access to them at ballparks must wear electronic tracing wristbands from the start of spring training and will face discipline for violations.

Players will be encouraged to get vaccines but are not required to get them.

That was part of upgraded health protocols agreed to by Major League Baseball and the players' association to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

The 108-page operations manual, agreed to Monday night and obtained by The Associated Press, expands on the 101-page version used during the shortened 2020 season.

"Every covered individual must wear a Kinexon contact tracing device at all times while in club facilities and during club directed travel and while engaged in team activities, including group workouts and practices," the manual says. "Repeated failure to wear the devices or repeated failure to return the devices to the Kinexon device docking station may be a basis for discipline."

The manual states that violations of the MLB or club codes of conduct or of spring training home quarantine "are subject to potential discipline, including but not lim-

ited to suspension or forfeiture of salary for days spent away from the club while in mandatory self-isolation or quarantine resulting from the violation."

Player discipline would be subject to the just cause provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

"Vaccination for COVID-19 will be voluntary for all players. However, MLB and the MLBPA will strongly encourage players to undergo vaccination at the appropriate time," the manual states.

It adds "the parties, in consultation with their respective medical experts, will consider in good faith relaxing these protocols on a leaguewide, teamwide and/or individual basis" ... (to) the extent it is safe and appropriate to do so" when sufficient players are immunized.

As part of the agreement, the sides extended last year's experimental use of seven-inning doubleheaders and runners on second base at the start of extra innings.

Active rosters will return to 26 from opening day through Aug. 31 and 28 for the rest of the regular season, as originally intended for 2020, down from the 28 used throughout last season. Each team can travel with up to five taxi squad players for road games, and if all five are used, one must be a player designated before the season as a catcher. The taxi squad

players must return to the alternate training site after each trip.

A team experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak may expand its active roster without the added players having to be optioned, sent outright to the minors or placed on waivers when impacted players return.

MLB and the players' association combined to spend about \$35 million on COVID-19 testing and rules last year. There were 45 games postponed for COVID-19-related reasons but just two were not made up, between St. Louis and Detroit.

MLB said during the World Series that 91 of 172,740 samples (.05%) have been positive, of which 57 were players and 34 staff, a group that included 21 of the 30 teams.

There were COVID-19 positives for 58 consecutive days before Los Angeles Dodgers third baseman Justin Turner learned of his positive test and was pulled after seven innings of the sixth and final game of the World Series.

Players will undergo PCR testing for a second straight season, mostly by saliva samples but with a provision allowing nasal swabs. Blood samples will be occasionally collected for serology or rapid antibody testing. PCR testing will take place at least every other day starting in spring training.

Djokovic holds off spirited Tiafoe in Australia

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Frances Tiafoe had never played a No. 1, had never beaten anyone in the Top 5, and now he'd just won a tiebreaker against Novak Djokovic to level their second-round match at the Australian Open.

He nodded and motioned for more noise before plonking down in his court-side chair and saying what everyone watching already knew: "I love this. ... I love it!"

That lasted right up until the pivotal moment in the fourth set, serving at 3-all, 30-all, when he walked to the side of the court to get a towel, dry his face and didn't resume play before the countdown clock ran out. He was given a time violation by the chair umpire, and docked a serve.

He lost that game, and didn't win another.

The 23-year-old American, quarterfinalist here two years ago, threw everything he could at Djokovic. But it wasn't quite enough to beat the eight-time Australian Open champion, who won the 3 1/2-hour afternoon match 6-3, 6-7 (3), 7-6 (2), 6-3.

"I felt like that kind of broke the match, honestly," Tiafoe said. "And he ran off with it."

"Hats off to him, but that was a terrible ending to the match, to such a high-quality match."

Tiafoe shook his head after finishing the match with a double-fault, then jogged to the net to embrace Djokovic. He'll take plenty from this. He said he knows he can compete at this level.

"He pushed me to the very limit," Djokovic said. "He's a very quick player. It's unpredictable what comes next ... I'm really glad to overcome such a battle."

Djokovic served 26 aces, Tiafoe 23. Djokovic had the edge in terms of winners

(56-49).

After assessing the stats, Djokovic said he couldn't remember serving more aces, or seeing more serves pass him, in a match in a long time.

"Credit to him," the 17-time major winner said, "for forcing me to feel uncomfortable."

Djokovic also agreed in his on-court, post-match interview that Tiafoe got a tough call. It was hot and sunny — the temperature peaked at 90 degrees Fahrenheit — and Tiafoe had just lost a long rally.

"Those kinds of things are just unlucky," Djokovic said. "He deserved to have the first serve."

Tiafoe later said he was glad Djokovic acknowledged it, but he still thinks there needs to be "conversations" about allowing more time between points while COVID-19 pandemic restrictions mean ballkids can't hold the towels for players.

Mitchell, Jazz down Celtics for their 5th straight win

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — Donovan Mitchell had 36 points and nine assists to lead the Utah Jazz to their fifth straight victory, 122-108 over the Boston Celtics on Tuesday night.

Joe Ingles scored a season-high 24 points and added six assists for the Jazz. Rudy Gobert chipped in 18 points and 12 rebounds. Bojan Bogdanovic added 16 points and eight rebounds.

Utah (20-5) has won 16 of its last 17 games.

76ers 119, Kings 111: Joel Embiid had 25 points, 17 rebounds and helped Philadelphia turn up the defensive intensity in the fourth quarter to win at Sacramento.

Tobias Harris and Seth Curry each added 22 points as the Sixers used a 10-0 run to take control of the game in the fourth and win for the sixth time in seven games.

Heat 98, Knicks 96: Jimmy Butler and Bam Adebayo did all of their team's scoring for much of the second half, Butler finishing with a game-high 26 points, and Miami beat visiting New York to finish off a sweep of a home-and-home series.

RJ Barrett had a chance to tie it on the game's final play, but his layup bounced off the rim and Miami won three straight for the first time this season. Kelly Olynyk scored 20 points for the Heat, Adebayo had 19 and Tyler Herro finished with 15 — including the three-pointer with 1:04 left that put Miami up for good.

Warriors 114, Spurs 91: Stephen Curry scored 32 points and visiting Golden State snapped San Antonio's three-game winning streak.

The Warriors ended a five-game losing streak in San Antonio. Eric Paschall had 15 points and Andrew Wiggins added 14 for Golden State.

Pelicans 130, Rockets 101: Reserve Josh Hart had 20 points and a career-high 17 rebounds to help his team overcome Zion Williamson's early foul trouble, and host New Orleans beat Houston to extend its winning streak to four games.

Trail Blazers 106, Magic 97: Damian Lillard scored 36 points and Portland extended its winning streak over visiting Orlando to eight games.

Grant scores 32 to pace Pistons in win over Nets

Associated Press

DETROIT — The Brooklyn Nets are dealing with a bit of a challenge while Kevin Durant is sidelined.

It's not going well at the moment.

Jerami Grant equaled a career high with 32 points and the Detroit Pistons took advantage of Durant's absence Tuesday night, beating the Nets 122-111.

It was the third straight loss for Brooklyn, which is without Durant because of coronavirus protocols. He can't return until later this week.

Coach Steve Nash wasn't pleased with his team's response Tuesday, especially at the start. The Nets fell behind the last-place Pistons by 20 points in the second quarter.

"This is professional sports. The other team is talented and capable, and we're short-handed," Nash said. "We've got a lot to clean up. Number one thing is just that attitude and that competition level and that connectivity."

Detroit snapped a four-game losing streak and showed the same type of spirit that was on display in its previous game, a double-overtime loss against the Lakers.

Blackhawks edge Stars in OT for 2nd time this week

Associated Press

DALLAS — Pius Suter scored 2:15 into overtime Tuesday night to give the Chicago Blackhawks their second straight 2-1 win over the Dallas Stars in the extra period.

The rookie skated toward the net and slid the puck beneath goalie Jake Oettinger's stick to complete a comeback win.

Mattias Janmark also scored for Chicago, which is 6-1-4 in its last 11 games.

Roope Hintz scored for the Stars, who are 0-1-2 in their past three.

In a matchup of rookie goaltenders, Kevin Lankinen made 34 saves for the Blackhawks, and Oettinger stopped 27 shots.

Lightning 6, Predators 1: Steven Stamkos had two goals and an assist, Mathieu Joseph scored twice and Andrei Vasilevskiy made 32 saves to lead streaking Tampa Bay to a win at Nashville.

Ondrej Palat and Yannick Gourde also scored for the Stanley Cup champions, who have won six straight games — the longest

active streak in the NHL. Four of those wins have come against the Predators in the last 11 days.

Rocco Grimaldi had the lone goal for Nashville, which has lost five of six. Juuse Saros made 24 saves.

Oilers 3, Senators 2: Defensemen Darrell Nurse, Evan Bouchard and Tyson Barrie provided the scoring and Edmonton won at Ottawa to move past .500 for the first time this season.

It was the fourth game between the teams in 10 days. The Oilers (8-7-0) won the first three — 8-5 and 4-2 in Edmonton and 3-1 Monday at the Canadian Tire Centre. They will meet five more times in the regular season.

Panthers 2, Red Wings 1: Sergei Bobrovsky made 31 saves and Patric Hornqvist was credited with the eventual winning goal when a teammate's shot bounced off his shoulder and into the net as Florida beat visiting Detroit.

Bobrovsky improved to 4-0-1 this season.

Alex Wennberg also scored for the Panthers.

Filip Zadina scored for the Red Wings. Thomas Greiss stopped 20 shots in his eighth straight appearance.

Flames 3, Jets 2: Elias Lindholm scored a power-play goal with less than two minutes remaining in the third period, leading host Calgary past Winnipeg. Lindholm's game winner came at 18:18 of the third as the Flames defeated the Jets in regulation for the first time in five games this season.

Golden Knights 5, Ducks 4: Zach Whitecloud scored the first game-winning goal of his career late in the third period to lift host Vegas over Anaheim. Chandler Stephenson, Jonathan Marchessault, Alex Tuch and Nicolas Roy also scored for the Golden Knights.

Sharks 4, Kings 3 (SO): Logan Couture scored in a shootout after teammate Evander Kane tied the game with 44.3 seconds remaining in regulation, and San Jose won at Los Angeles.