

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Dems focus on abuse of power charge

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democrats declared that “no president” has ever abused power the way Donald Trump did in his Ukraine dealings as they opened their second day of arguments Thursday in the historic impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate.

The Democratic prosecutors pressing their case before skeptical Republican senators are focused on the first article of impeachment, abuse of power, arguing Trump sought a political investigation from Ukraine for his own gain to sway the 2020 election in his favor.

“The president’s conduct is wrong. It is illegal. It is dangerous,” Rep. Jerrold Nadler of New York, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee,

told the senators.

“No president has ever used his office to compel a foreign nation to help him cheat in our elections,” he said. “Prior presidents would be shocked to the core by such conduct, and rightly so.”

Republican senators, who hold a majority in the chamber and will vote on Trump’s conviction or acquittal, exhibited no shock.

The Democrats were putting forward “admirable presentations,” said Roy Blunt, of Missouri. “But they’ve basically got about one hour of presentation, and they gave it six times on Tuesday and eight times yesterday. There’s just not much new here.”

Rep. Adam Schiff, the Democratic chairman of the House

Intelligence Committee, agreed as he stood before restless senators forced to sit silently for another long day there would be “some repetition of information” from the overview heard on day one. But he promised a stitching together of the facts to an inevitable conclusion.

“You’ve now heard hundreds of hours of depositions and live testimony from the House,” Schiff said. “We will now show these facts and many others and how they are interwoven ... to a finding of guilt and conviction.”

House Democrats impeached Trump last month, arguing he abused his office by asking Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden while withholding military aid. They also charged him with obstructing

Congress by refusing to turn over documents or allow officials to testify in the probe.

Republicans have defended Trump’s actions as appropriate and cast the process as a politically motivated effort to weaken the president in the midst of his reelection campaign.

The Democrats’ challenge is clear as they try to convince not just the senators but an American public divided over the Republican president in an election year. The top Senate Democrat, Chuck Schumer said Schiff has been outlining a compelling case about Trump’s pressure on Ukraine and the scheme to cover up the charges and many Republicans are hearing it for only the first time. He contended they can’t help but be “glued” to his testimony.

Iran looks to cash in on anti-US sentiment in neighboring Iraq

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Iran has long sought the withdrawal of American forces from neighboring Iraq, but the U.S. killing of an Iranian general and an Iraqi militia commander in Baghdad has added new impetus to the effort, stoking anti-American feelings that Tehran hopes to exploit to help realize the goal.

The Jan. 3 killing led Iraq’s parliament to call for the ouster of U.S. troops, but there are lingering questions over whether Iran will be able to capitalize on the sentiment.

An early test will be a “million-man” demonstration against the American presence, called for by influential Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and scheduled for Friday.

It is not clear whether the protesters will try to re-create a New Year’s Eve attack on the

U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad by Iran-supported militias in the wake of U.S. airstrikes that killed 25 militiamen along the border with Syria. Iran might simply try to use the march to telegraph its intention to keep up the pressure on U.S. troops in Iraq.

But experts say Iran can be counted on to try to seize what it sees as an opportunity to push its agenda in Iraq, despite an uprising that is targeting government corruption as well as Iranian influence in Iraq.

“Iran is unconstrained by considerations of Iraqi sovereignty, domestic public opinion, or legality when compared to the Western democracies,” said David Des Roches, an expert with The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

“This is Iran’s strategic advantage; they should be expected to press it.”

A withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq would be a victory for Iran, and Tehran has long pursued a two-pronged strategy of supporting anti-U.S. militias that carry out attacks, as well as exerting political pressure on Iraqi lawmakers sympathetic to its cause.

Despite usually trying to keep attacks at a level below what might provoke an American response, Iran-backed Kataeb Hezbollah fired rockets at a military base in Kirkuk in December, killing a U.S. contractor and wounding several U.S. and Iraqi troops. The U.S. responded first with deadly airstrikes on Iran-affiliated militia bases in western Iraq and Syria, then followed with the drone attack that killed Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Iran’s most powerful military officer, and Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as

they left Baghdad’s airport.

The severity of the U.S. response surprised Iran and others, and it had the unanticipated result of bolstering Tehran’s political approach by prompting the Iraqi parliament to pass the nonbinding resolution pushed by pro-Iran political factions calling for the expulsion of all foreign troops from the country. In response, President Donald Trump has threatened sanctions on Iraq.

“What they want to do is get rid of U.S. troops in what they see as a legitimate political manner,” said Dina Esfandiary, a London-based expert with The Century Foundation think tank. “If Iraqis themselves are voting out U.S. troops, it looks a lot better for Iran than if Iran is a puppet master in Iraq trying to get rid of them — and on top of that it would be a more lasting decision.”

Navy's CMV-22B Osprey takes 1st flight

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

The Navy's new Osprey, designed to replace the aging fleet of aircraft that ferry personnel and supplies between the shore and carriers at sea, has taken flight for the first time, Boeing Co. and Bell Textron Inc. announced this week.

The CMV-22B Osprey is the Navy's version of the tilt-rotor aircraft used by the Ma-

rine Corps and Air Force. The variant was designed with increased fuel capacity for long-range flights.

The CMV-22B has a range of 1,150 nautical miles, about 290 nautical miles more than that of the Marine Corps' MV-22B Osprey.

The CMV-22B's first flight took place on Tuesday at Bell's Amarillo Assembly Center in Texas, according to the announcement. The company will

deliver the first CMV-22B to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 21 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River in Maryland for a developmental test early this year.

As a carrier onboard delivery aircraft, the Navy's Osprey will move personnel, supplies, mail and other cargo to and from an aircraft carrier. It can carry up to 6,000 pounds.

Compared to the MV-22B Osprey, the Navy's version

also has a "beyond line-of-sight high-frequency radio, improved fuel dump capability, a public address system for passengers and an improved lighting system for cargo loading," according to the fact sheet.

The MV-22B Osprey was first deployed in 2007, and the Air Force's CV-22B Osprey followed two years later, according to a Navy fact sheet.

San Diego now home to 3 aircraft carriers

The San Diego Union-Tribune

San Diego is poised to become the home port of three Nimitz-class nuclear aircraft carriers in 2020, tripling the carrier footprint in the region and bringing a \$1.6 billion per year boost to the local economy.

The additional ships and the roughly 3,000 sailors attached to each will bring additional strain to an already tight housing market and may threaten more traffic on the already congested city of Coronado streets, Interstate 5 and the San Diego Coronado Bridge.

Currently, only the Theodore Roosevelt is based in San

Diego. That will soon change, however, as the Abraham Lincoln arrived in San Diego Thursday after completing a record-setting 10-month around-the-world deployment. The Carl Vinson, which is undergoing maintenance in Bremerton, Wash., will also be returning to San Diego this summer.

Mark Balmert, a retired rear admiral and the executive director of the San Diego Military Advisory Council, compares the situation to a new company bringing thousands of jobs to San Diego.

"We're all the way down to one [carrier], so to go up to three, it's a big impact," Balm-

ert said. "If it were a company opening with several thousand people, it would be big news — they buy homes, rent places to live and buy cars."

The newly arriving sailors will be entering a housing market that's already strained, said Gary London, a San Diego land use economist.

"Occupancy in San Diego County is at 95%," London said. "In terms of units that are affordable to sailors, we have an absolute shortage. They're not profitable for builders to build them."

Along with the strain on the housing market, two more carriers — and the thousands of

daily commuters that come with them — will strain the roads in and out of Coronado.

Kevin Dixon, a spokesman for Naval Air Station North Island, said that the Navy had a plan to alleviate some of the traffic.

"The Navy will implement the staggering of carrier work day start times when two carriers are in port," Dixon said in an email. "In addition, the Navy has agreed to explore funding options and road improvements at four intersections [and] will continue to subsidize transit and vanpooling for military and civilians working on the base."

Firefighting plane crash kills 3 Americans in Australia

Associated Press

SYDNEY — Three American crew members were killed on Thursday when a C-130 Hercules aerial water tanker crashed while battling wildfires in southeastern Australia, officials said.

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian confirmed the crash deaths in the state's Snowy Monaro region, which came as Australia grapples with an unprecedented fire season that has left a large

swath of destruction.

Oregon's Coulson Aviation said in a statement that one of its Lockheed large air tankers was lost after it left Richmond in New South Wales with retardant for a firebombing mission.

It said the accident was "extensive" but had few other details.

"The only thing I have from the field reports are that the plane came down, it's crashed and there was a large fireball

associated with that crash," said Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said she had conveyed Australia's condolences to U.S. Ambassador Arthur Culvahouse Jr.

"Our hearts go out to their loved ones. They were helping Australia, far from their own homes, an embodiment of the deep friendship between our two countries," she said in a statement.

"Thank you to these three, and to all the brave firefighters from Australia and around the world. Your service and contribution are extraordinary. We are ever grateful," she added.

Australian Transport Safety Bureau, the national air crash investigator and state police will investigate the crash site, which firefighters described as an active fire ground.

"There is no indication at this stage of what's caused the accident," Fitzsimmons said.

Airlines may ban emotional-support animals

Associated Press

The days of passengers bringing their pets on airplanes as emotional-support animals could be ending. The U.S. Department of Transportation on Wednesday proposed that only specially trained dogs qualify as service animals, which must be allowed in the cabin at no charge.

Airlines could ban emotional-support animals including untrained dogs, cats and more exotic companions such as pigs, pheasants, rabbits and snakes.

Airlines say the number of support animals has grown dramatically in recent years. They lobbied the Transportation Department to crack down on what they consider a scam — passengers who call their pets emotional-support animals to avoid pet fees that generally run more than \$100 each way.

“This is a wonderful step in the right

direction for people like myself who are dependent on and reliant on legitimate service animals,” said Albert Rizzi, founder of My Blind Spot, an advocacy group for people with disabilities.

He said some people “want to have the benefits of having a disability without actually losing the use of their limbs or senses just so they can take their pet with them.”

The main trade group for large U.S. airlines praised the proposal. Nicholas Calio, president of Airlines for America, said, “The proposed rule will go a long way in ensuring a safer and healthier experience for everyone.”

Flight attendants had pushed to rein in support animals, and they too were pleased.

“The days of Noah’s Ark in the air are hopefully coming to an end,” said Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants. She said some of her union’s

members were hurt by untrained pets.

Veterans groups also sided with the airlines, arguing that a boom in untrained dogs and other animals threatens their ability to fly with properly trained service dogs. Last year, more than 80 veterans and disability groups endorsed banning untrained emotional-support animals in airline cabins.

On the other side are people who say that an emotional-support animal helps them with anxiety or other issues that would prevent them from traveling or make it more stressful. They aren’t a very organized group, but there are lots of them.

Southwest Airlines handles more than 190,000 emotional support animals per year. American Airlines carried 155,790 emotional support animals in 2017, up 48% from 2016, while the number of checked pets dropped 17%. United Airlines carried 76,000 comfort animals in 2017.

Trump to add more countries to travel ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Wednesday the U.S. would soon be imposing visa restrictions on more countries — though it’s not clear yet how many nations will be affected by his expansion of the travel ban.

Seven additional nations were listed in a draft of the proposed restrictions — but the countries were notified by Homeland Security officials that they could avoid being included if they make changes before the announcement is made, according to two administration officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity

to discuss ongoing negotiations.

The tentative list featured Belarus, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Tanzania, according to the officials and a person familiar with the draft proposal. But several countries are believed to have taken action or demonstrated good faith efforts to comply in order to avoid inclusion, the officials said. The steps include better border security, better sharing of identification information among nations and better travel document security, one official said.

It’s not clear how many nations will wind up on the final list.

Trump told reporters at the World Eco-

nomics Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that he’s doing it to protect the United States.

“We’re adding a couple of countries to it,” he said. “We have to be safe. Our country has to be safe. You see what’s going on in the world. Our country has to be safe. So we have a very strong travel ban and we’ll be adding a few countries to it.”

Five of the countries on the draft list have either Muslim majorities or substantial Muslim minorities.

The current ban suspends immigrant and non-immigrant visas to applicants from five majority-Muslim nations: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, as well as Venezuela and North Korea.

US updates rules limiting visas for pregnant women

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Thursday published new visa rules aimed at restricting “birth tourism,” in which women travel to the United States to give birth so their children can have U.S. citizenship.

Applicants will be denied tourist visas if they are determined by consular officers to be coming to the U.S. primarily to give birth, according to the rules in the Federal Register. It is a bigger hurdle to overcome, proving they are traveling to the U.S. because they have a medical need and not just because they want to give birth here. Those with medical needs will be treated

like other foreigners coming to the U.S. for medical treatment and must prove they have the money to pay for it — including transportation and living expenses.

The practice of traveling to the U.S. to give birth is fundamentally legal, although there are scattered cases of authorities arresting operators of birth tourism agencies for visa fraud or tax evasion. And women are often honest about their intentions when applying for visas and even show signed contracts with doctors and hospitals.

The State Department “does not believe that visiting the United States for the primary purpose of obtaining U.S. citizenship for a child, by giving birth in the United

States — an activity commonly referred to as ‘birth tourism’ — is a legitimate activity for pleasure or of a recreational nature,” according to the new rules, which take effect Friday.

While the new rules deal specifically with birth tourism, the Trump administration also has turned away pregnant women coming over the U.S.-Mexico border as part of a broader immigration crackdown. Those women were initially part of a “vulnerable” group that included others like small children who were allowed in, while tens of thousands of other asylum seekers have been returned over the border to wait out their cases in Mexico.

Coronavirus case near Tokyo spurs alert

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The U.S. military has warned its personnel in Japan to watch out for symptoms of a deadly pneumonia-like virus after a man from Kanagawa prefecture, home to thousands of sailors and soldiers, contracted the disease in China this month.

Wuhan, a city of more than 11 million people in east-central China, planned to shut down outbound flights and trains Thursday to contain the disease that has sickened hundreds and killed 17 in the country, The Associated Press reported Thursday.

The Air Force's 374th Medical Group at Yokota posted an alert to social media the same day, stating that the World

Health Organization had been informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan. "A novel (new) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was identified as the causative virus by Chinese authorities on 7 January 2020," the alert states.

The alert cited four cases reported outside of China, including patients in South Korea, home to 28,500 U.S. troops, and Japan, where another 50,000 service members are stationed, as well as thousands of civilian defense workers and family members.

"A local man from Kanagawa Prefecture developed a fever while visiting Wuhan, China, between January 3-6, 2020. The man was hospitalized upon return to Japan. He has since been released from the hospi-

tal," the alert states.

Kanagawa prefecture is home to Yokosuka Naval Base, home of the 7th Fleet and the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. Other U.S. facilities in the prefecture include Naval Air Facility Atsugi and Camp Zama, home of U.S. Army Japan. Yokota, the home of U.S. Forces Japan, is close to the border of Kanagawa in western Tokyo.

The Department of Defense has not yet provided guidance to military personnel about the virus, U.S. Forces Japan spokesman Capt. Michael Hopkins said in an email Thursday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a level 2 travel alert, meaning people should take enhanced precautions.

Health officials are always

concerned about the potential for an infectious disease to impact the military community, he said.

"Certainly, readiness is a concern, but we also care about our dependents and families," Fisher said. "If our families are sick that also impacts our ability to do our jobs."

There's some evidence that the virus may spread from person to person, he added.

"We don't know how infectious it is but the things you would do to protect yourself from the common cold are the things that you should do to protect yourself from this virus," Fisher said.

Signs and symptoms of the virus include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

China shuts down more cities to contain the virus

Associated Press

BEIJING — Chinese authorities Thursday moved to lock down three cities with a combined population of more than 18 million people in an unprecedented effort to contain the deadly new virus that has sickened hundreds and spread to other parts of the world during the busy lunar new year travel period.

The train station and airport in Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, were shut down, and ferry, subway and bus service was halted. Normally bustling streets, shopping malls, restaurants and other public spaces in the city of 11 million were eerily quiet. Police checked all incoming vehicles but did not close off the roads.

Authorities announced similar measures would take effect Friday in the nearby cities of Huanggang and Ezhou. In Huanggang, theaters, internet cafes and other entertainment centers were also ordered

closed.

In the capital, Beijing, officials canceled "major events" indefinitely, including traditional temple fairs that are a staple of holiday celebrations, in order to "execute epidemic prevention and control." The Forbidden City, the palace complex in Beijing that is now a museum, announced it will close indefinitely on Saturday.

Seventeen people have died in the outbreak, all of them in and around Wuhan. Close to 600 have been infected, the vast majority of them in Wuhan, and many countries have begun screening travelers from China for symptoms of the virus, which can cause fever, coughing, trouble breathing and pneumonia.

The open-ended lockdowns are unprecedented in size, embracing more people than New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago combined.

Chinese officials have not said how long the shutdowns will last.

Court appeared to favor religious schools funding

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court's conservative majority appeared ready Wednesday to reinvigorate a Montana scholarship program and make it easier to use public money to pay for religious schooling in many states.

The court was sharply divided along ideological lines in arguments over a provision in Montana's Constitution that bars state aid to religious schools. Montana is among 37 states with similar "no aid" clauses for religious education.

Like other conservatives, Chief Justice John Roberts questioned a state Supreme Court ruling that struck down a scholarship program for private K-12 education that also makes donors eligible for up to \$150 in state tax credits. The scholarships can be used at both secular and religious schools, but almost all the recipients attend religious schools.

Parents who sued to preserve the program, created by the

legislature in 2015, argue that the "no-aid" clause in the state constitution violates their religious freedom under the U.S. Constitution. Several conservative justices appeared to agree.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, whose two daughters attend Catholic schools, referred to the "grotesque religious bigotry" against Catholics that he said motivated the original adoption of the Montana provision and others like it in the 1800s, although Montana's constitution was redone in 1972.

The liberal justices saw the case very differently. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was among those who said that by ending the program for private secular and religious schools alike, the Montana court was treating all parents the same.

Richard Komer, representing the parents, said that ending the program for everyone was, in essence, a fig leaf intended to mask discrimination against parents who prefer religious education for their children.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Cold-stunned iguanas falling from trees

FL MIAMI — The National Weather Service routinely warns people about falling rain, snow and hail, but temperatures are dropping so low in South Florida the forecasters warned residents Tuesday about falling iguanas.

"This isn't something we usually forecast, but don't be surprised if you see Iguanas falling from the trees tonight as lows drop into the 30s and 40s. Brrrrr!" NWS Miami tweeted.

The low temperatures stun the invasive reptiles, but the iguanas won't necessarily die. That means many will wake up as temperatures rise.

Lawmakers give OK to taking ballot selfies

WI MADISON — Wisconsin voters could legally take selfies with their marked election ballots under a bill the state Senate approved Tuesday.

Wisconsin is one of 18 states with a law barring the showing of a completed ballot, but it is rarely enforced. The Senate approved the bill on a voice vote. It goes next to the state Assembly.

The measure's supporters call the ban archaic, especially in an era in which voters are increasingly posting pictures of themselves with their marked ballots on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. But county election clerks warned last year that changing the law could open the door to undoing the secrecy of the ballot.

The Wisconsin County Clerk Association registered against the bill. Clerks warned lawmakers that making it commonplace to show a marked

ballot could lead to employers, unions or others forcing people to prove they voted a certain way to receive a benefit or avoid being punished.

'Unluckiest guy': Snake bites hunter on head

MS JACKSON — In a scene that could provoke nightmares, a Mississippi hunter walking to a truck soon found himself racing to the hospital after a venomous snake struck him in the head, a rare attack that had one scientist calling the hunter "the unluckiest guy in America."

Tyler Hardy of Philadelphia, Miss., said he was jumping across a flooded ditch Jan. 15 when a copperhead snake coiled on a tree limb bit him above his ear.

"I thought somebody had shot me or hit me with an ax. It knocked the fire out of me. I just could not believe the force the snake had when it hit me," Hardy told The Clarion Ledger.

When Hardy shined a light to determine what hit him, he said the snake struck at him again and fell out of the tree. Hardy and his hunting partner both identified the snake as a copperhead.

When the two hunters got to the hospital, Hardy received an antivenom treatment and then was airlifted to a medical center in Jackson. He was released a day later.

Victim uses phone app to find her stolen car

KS WICHITA — A woman who was attacked and had her car stolen at a Wichita church used an app to help police find her car and two suspects in the case.

The 53-year-old victim was walking into Trinity Lutheran

Church on Sunday when two people attacked her and drove away with her Ford Escape, KAKE-TV reported.

On Monday, she called 911 and said she was tracking the vehicle with a Ford app, Officer Charley Davidson said. Police tracked the vehicle to a Quik Trip and arrested Ryan Dittmer, 21.

Woman wins lifetime hunting, fishing license

VT MONTPELIER — A Vermont woman is entitled to hunt and fish for free for the rest of her life.

Elizabeth Grady, 42, of Underhill, won the 2019 Vermont Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License Lottery, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department announced.

More than 13,000 tickets were purchased for the annual drawing. Sales of the \$2 tickets brought in more than \$26,000 that can be leveraged with federal funds to produce more than \$104,000 to support the department's mission to conserve fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats, the department said.

Sheriff on the lookout for cattle rustler

TN GREENEVILLE — Authorities in northeastern Tennessee are looking for a cattle rustler.

Sheriff's deputies were investigating the theft of 36 head of cattle from a farm in Greene County, news outlets reported.

The victim told investigators that someone pulled onto his property late on Jan. 16 and took the animals, Deputy Frank Cedillo said in a report. A neighbor told the victim he heard two trucks pull onto the property, but thought it was the owners, the report said.

The animals have a combined value of \$40,000. The owner says he's been watching cattle sales in the vicinity since the theft.

Deal will bring bighorn sheep to reservation

ND BISMARCK — A new agreement between the state and Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation means bighorn sheep could be roaming the reservation in the next couple weeks.

North Dakota Game and Fish director Terry Steinwand said 30 to 40 bighorns will be brought to North Dakota once they are captured on a Montana reservation. They'll be released in the Mandaree and Twin Buttes areas.

The Bismarck Tribune said the state-tribal agreement includes a provision for a ram hunting season. North Dakota Game and Fish Wildlife Division Chief Jeb Williams said that will depend on how well the animals do in their new habitat.

Man accidentally shoots his scrotum while in bed

RI PROVIDENCE — A Rhode Island man accidentally shot himself in the scrotum while sitting on his bed, police said.

Providence police officers found Edward Martinez, 22, in a hallway wearing no pants with a gunshot wound to his scrotum Thursday night, said Commander Thomas Verdi.

Martinez told police he took his pants off after he fired the gun and located the wound, the Providence Journal reported. He was taken to Rhode Island Hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

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Rookie Zion dazzles in Pelicans debut

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Zion Williamson's sublime 17-point surge in a span of barely more than three minutes could very well become part of New Orleans' pro sports lore — even if the final score won't.

For the Pelicans, a narrow loss to a well-coached, savvy San Antonio Spurs team carried far less weight than the burgeoning form of a young superstar in the making.

"The way he came out was very poised," veteran Pelicans guard Jrue Holiday said of Williamson. "The way he played ... bringing energy, especially down the stretch, was something that I guess you don't really see from somebody so young. But even on top of that, we are almost in February and he hadn't played a game yet, so for him to be able to come out here and do that his first game is pretty elite."

Extraordinary hype, fueled by social media, has followed the affable, 6-foot-6, 285-pound Williamson since his high school days in Spartanburg, S.C. It only increased during his one stellar season at Duke, making him the consensus No. 1 overall NBA draft pick well before the Pelicans won the draft lottery and the right to select him.

Pro basketball fans had to wait an extra three months to see how Williamson's rare combination of size and skill would translate in a meaningful NBA game because of the cautious and comprehensive approach the Pelicans took to their prized rookie's rehabilitation from arthroscopic surgery on his right knee.

But it took only one game for Williamson to do something extraordinary.

He made all four three-pointers he attempted in the fourth quarter Wednesday, stirring the Smoothie King Center crowd into a jubilant frenzy. In between, he laid in an alley-oop lob and put back an offensive rebound with a reverse layup.

"It was nice to experience those emotions," Williamson said. "I was happy to be out there and be able to run out there again, but what was going through my mind was just, 'Be calm.'"

Williamson's final statistical line was 22 points on 8-for-11 shooting to go with seven rebounds and three assists in 18:08 on the court.

"The way he plays, that's something he can do every day," Holiday said. "Adding Zion is a big part to what we want to do

here and our success."

Fans wanted to see more, but coach Alvin Gentry said he couldn't heed their chants of "We want Zion!" during the final five minutes of a 121-117 loss.

"The medical people said that was it," Gentry said, alluding to precautionary restrictions placed on Williamson's playing time in the early days of his return to action.

"Me, personally, I don't want any restrictions," Williamson said. "But I'm not a doctor or a trainer, so I've just got to listen to them."

The Pelicans are back in action twice in four days, hosting Denver on Friday and Boston on Sunday. If Williamson's 19-year-old body responds well to his early action, his playing time is expected to lengthen.

"What you saw there is a taste of once we really get settled in and he gets settled in, you can see that there's a lot of things we can do with him," Gentry said. "There's a lot of potential there. It was good to see him do that, but you know I think there's a really, really high ceiling that he can reach."

NBA roundup

Goodwin, Collins lead Hawks over Clippers

Associated Press

ATLANTA — With Trae Young cheering him on from the bench, two-way player Brandon Goodwin did a pretty good impression of the Atlanta Hawks' star.

Goodwin scored 19 points — all in the fourth quarter — and the Hawks rallied from a 21-point deficit to stun the short-handed Los Angeles Clippers 102-95 on Wednesday night.

John Collins scored 33 points and grabbed 16 rebounds, but it was Goodwin who took control in the final period. He made 6 of 11 shots, including all three attempts beyond the arc, and dished off to De'Andre Hunter in the corner for a three-point shot that gave the Hawks a 99-93 lead with 1:43 remaining.

"Obviously, when I first got in there, I wasn't doing much," Goodwin said. "When that first three fell, I was kind of relieved.

I started to hit my shots."

Young, the NBA's third-leading scorer at 29.2 points a game, didn't dress because of a right thigh contusion. Recently acquired Jeff Teague started in his place, but the Hawks turned to a guy who has spent a good portion of the season in the G League with the game on the line.

"He controlled the offense and made big plays," Collins said. "To give us the minutes he did was extremely valuable."

Raptors 107, 76ers 95: Pascal Siakam had 18 points and 15 rebounds, Fred VanVleet scored 22 and host Toronto extended its winning streak to five games with a win over Philadelphia.

Lakers 100, Knicks 92: LeBron James scored 19 of his 21 points before halftime to quickly cut into Kobe Bryant's shrinking lead over him for the

No. 3 scoring spot in NBA history, and Los Angeles won at New York.

Heat 134, Wizards 129 (OT): Tyler Herro scored 25 points, Jimmy Butler scored nine of his 24 points in overtime and host Miami wasted a 21-point lead before beating Washington.

Celtics 119, Grizzlies 95: Jayson Tatum scored 23 points before leaving the game in the third quarter with a groin injury as host Boston routed Memphis.

Thunder 120, Magic 114: Dennis Schroder scored 31 points and Oklahoma City shot 60.5% against one of the NBA's better defenses and won at Orlando.

Rockets 121, Nuggets 105: Russell Westbrook had 28 points, 16 rebounds and eight assists, James Harden added 27 points and host Hous-

ton snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over short-handed Denver.

Pacers 112, Suns 87: T.J. Warren scored 25 points in his return to Phoenix, Domantas Sabonis added 24 and Indiana rolled past the Suns.

Pistons 127, Kings 106: Derrick Rose scored 22 points and Reggie Jackson added 22 points in his return to the lineup, as host Detroit dealt Sacramento its sixth straight loss.

Bulls 117, Timberwolves 110: Zach LaVine scored 25 points, Lauri Markkanen added 21 and host Chicago overcame a big performance by Karl-Anthony Towns to beat Minnesota.

Jazz 129, Warriors 96: Rudy Gobert had 22 points, 15 rebounds and three blocked shots, and Donovan Mitchell scored 23 to lead Utah to a win at Golden State.

NHL roundup

Columbus holds off Winnipeg

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Columbus Blue Jackets roll into their long winter break after six weeks of solid play and a season-high six-game win streak.

Columbus went back and forth with the Winnipeg Jets on Wednesday night before Oliver Bjorkstrand's second goal of the game with 5:38 left gave the Blue Jackets the lead and goalie Elvis Merzlikins held on the rest of the way for the 4-3 win.

It's been quite a turnaround for the Blue Jackets. They are 16-2-4 since Dec. 9 even though as many as 10 players were out with injuries at any one time — including Bjorkstrand, who has had a pair of two-goal games in a row since being sidelined 13 games with a rib/oblique injury.

"They should feel real good about themselves," Columbus coach John Tortorella said as the team breaks for the All-Star Game and then the NHL-required five-day hiatus. They don't play again for 10 days.

After sinking to near the bottom of the Metropolitan Division, the Blue Jackets are now in the second Eastern Division wildcard position.

Wild 4, Red Wings 2: Eric Staal and Mats Zuccarello each had a goal and an assist, and Devan Dubnyk stopped 25 shots to help host Minnesota get its third win in four games with a victory over Detroit.

Jordan Greenway and Jason Zucker also scored for the Wild, who are in the midst of a season-high seven-game homestand that continues after this weekend's All-Star break.

Red Wings winter Filip Zadina was credited with two goals, his first NHL multi-goal game, but both came on deflections off a Minnesota player. Jimmy Howard had 29 saves for Detroit, which heads into its break having lost six in a row overall and eight straight on the road.

Giants' Manning set to retire

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Eli Manning is ending a 16-year NFL career that saw him recognized as a great quarterback, a leader, a solid citizen and the man who led the New York Giants back to prominence with two Super Bowl titles.

Manning, who set almost every Giants passing record in a career solely based in New Jersey's Meadowlands, has retired, the Giants said Wednesday. He will formally announce his retirement on Friday and there is little doubt the team will retire his No. 10 jersey.

"For 16 seasons, Eli Manning defined what it is to be a New York Giant both on and off the field," John Mara, the Giants' president and chief executive officer said in a statement.

"Eli is our only two-time Super Bowl MVP and one of the very best players in our franchise's history. He represented our franchise as a consummate professional with dignity and accountability. It

meant something to Eli to be the Giants quarterback, and it meant even more to us. We are beyond grateful for his contributions to our organization and look forward to celebrating his induction into the Giants Ring of Honor in the near future."

The recently turned 39-year-old's future had been in doubt since the end of the season. Manning's contract with the Giants expired after the 4-12 season and there was little chance he would be returning after losing his long-time starting job to rookie Daniel Jones.

Manning said he wanted to think about his future after the season and roughly three weeks after the season ended, he decided his career was over.

He leaves the NFL with as many Super Bowl titles as his brother, Peyton, who retired after leading the Denver Broncos to a title after the 2015 season.

The Giants acquired Manning from San Diego on draft day in 2004 after the Ole Miss

quarterback told the Chargers he did not want to play for them and forced the deal that general manager Ernie Accorsi gladly accepted.

It started a major turnaround for a team that was 4-12 the previous season.

Manning replaced Hall of Famer Kurt Warner as the starter for then-new coach Tom Coughlin after nine games. They won the NFC East the following season.

Within three seasons, the Giants won their first NFL championship since the 1990 season and Manning got his first Super Bowl MVP award, knocking off the previously unbeaten New England Patriots. The second came after the 2011 season when Manning and company again beat Tom Brady, Bill Belichick and the Pats.

"Eli Manning not only is the quarterback on those great teams, but he is the MVP of the Super Bowls," Coughlin said. "He's an incredible big-game performer."

Kyrgios gets through to third round

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Love him or hate him — and make no mistake, there are plenty in each camp — Nick Kyrgios never allows for a dull moment when he's on a tennis court, whether it's shot selection, showmanship, momentum swings, barking at his entourage or mocking another player not even involved in the match at hand.

All of the above happened during his ever-eventful 6-2, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 victory over Gilles Simon in the Australian Open's second round Thursday night.

That included a moment when Kyrgios — currently on six months' probation from the ATP for verbally abusing tennis officials — poked fun at the man he might meet in the fourth round, Rafael Nadal. After being warned for taking

more than the allotted 25 seconds between serves, Kyrgios mimicked how Nadal fidgets before a point, as if to remind the chair umpire that there are folks who more egregiously waste time.

When a reporter asked Nadal about Kyrgios' imitation of the 19-time major champion, the Spaniard replied: "I really don't care. I'm here to play tennis."

About the only boring segment of the proceedings came during the in-stadium interview, when an allusion was made to later rounds and Kyrgios, an Australian seeded 23rd, told the Melbourne Arena crowd, "I'm not thinking ahead. ... I'm just taking it one match at a time at the moment."

After Kyrgios wrapped up, the No. 1-seeded Nadal was still in the early stages of what became a 6-3, 7-6 (4), 6-1 win

against Federico Delbonis over at Rod Laver Arena.

Those results were the most intriguing of Day 4 at the year's first Grand Slam tournament, especially given the distaste Kyrgios and Nadal have for each other in a raucous rivalry that provided one of the highlights of Wimbledon in 2019.

Among the noteworthy winners were U.S. Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev, who took a medical timeout because of a nosebleed late in the second set of his 7-5, 6-1, 6-3 victory over Spanish qualifier Pedro Martinez, along with two-time French Open finalist Dominic Thiem, No. 7 Alexander Zverev, No. 10 Gael Monfils and a trio of women who have been ranked No. 1 and own Grand Slam titles: Simona Halep, Angelique Kerber and Garbine Muguruza.

Big 12 suspends 4 players after brawl

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Big 12 suspended four players from Kansas and Kansas State a combined 25 games Wednesday for their roles in a melee that spilled off the court and into a section of disabled seating in Allen Fieldhouse near the end of the third-ranked Jayhawks' win over the Wildcats.

Kansas forward Silvio De Sousa, who already was suspended indefinitely by Jayhawks coach Bill Self, was given a 12-game suspension by the league office. His teammate, David McCormack, was suspended two games while Kansas State forward James Love received an eight-game suspension and Antonio Gordon got a three-game suspension.

Both schools also were reprimanded by the Big 12 for

violations of its sportsmanship policy.

"This kind of behavior cannot be tolerated and these suspensions reflect the severity of last night's events," Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlsby said. "I am appreciative of the cooperation of both institutions in resolving this matter."

De Sousa was the main instigator on the Kansas side Tuesday night, getting stripped of the ball as he was dribbling out the final seconds of an 81-60 win. He recovered to block a layup attempt by the Wildcats' DaJuan Gordon, then stood over the freshman in a taunting manner, triggering both benches to empty in a scrum that spilled into fans.

At one point, De Sousa was preparing to swing a stool when it was plucked from his hands,

and several players from both teams threw wild punches while a sellout crowd in Allen Fieldhouse watched in shock.

"I have suspended Silvio De Sousa indefinitely pending the final outcome of the review by KU and the Big 12 Conference," Self said shortly after discussing the incident on the league's weekly conference call with reporters. "As I said last night, we are disappointed in his actions and there is no place in the game for that behavior."

Kansas (15-3) has played six conference games, which means De Sousa's suspension from the Big 12 would last through the end of the regular season. The Jayhawks are a half-game back of top-ranked Baylor in the league standings, and they have a team that is capable of making a deep run in the NCAA Tournament.

"Obviously an unfortunate situation," said Dan Gavitt, the NCAA vice president for men's basketball. "It's a conference game, so it will be up to the Big 12 to determine what actions need to be taken. Other than that, it's too early to say how it might affect them (in the NCAA Tournament)."

Self said he spoke with a fan who was caught up in the melee, and that she was banged around "to the point where I'm sure we'll correspond with her today to see how she's feeling."

"Obviously it's embarrassing," Self said. "It's not something to be proud of."

Games between Kansas and Kansas State are always testy affairs, and for all but the final seconds their meeting at Allen Fieldhouse was rather subdued.

College basketball roundup

Louisville rallies from 11 down to top Georgia Tech

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Malik Williams had 13 points and grabbed two late rebounds leading to three free throws in the final 23 seconds, helping No. 6 Louisville hold off Georgia Tech 68-64 on Wednesday night.

Steven Enoch also had 13 points while Jordan Nwora and David Johnson each scored 10 for the Cardinals (16-3, 7-1 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won their fifth in a row. Louisville held Tech (8-11, 3-6) to 33% shooting in the second half after the Yellow Jackets made 62% before halftime.

The Cardinals trailed 43-32 early in the second half before outscoring Georgia Tech 22-9 over 10½ minutes to take the lead.

Michael Devoe had 21 points and Jose Alvarado scored 13 for the Yellow Jackets, who lost their third straight and fourth of five.

No. 7 Dayton 86, St. Bo-

naventure 60: Jalen Crutcher matched his career high with 23 points, Obi Toppin had four dunks, and the host Flyers — playing with their highest ranking in 52 years — showed off their versatility while pulling away from the Bonnies.

Crutcher's three-pointer started a 22-5 run that closed the first half and put Dayton (17-2, 6-0 Atlantic 10) up 47-29.

No. 10 Seton Hall 73, Providence 64: At Newark, N.J., Romaro Gill matched his career high with 17 points to make up for a rare subpar game by Myles Powell and the Pirates outlasted the Friars for their ninth straight victory.

Jared Rhoden added 15 points and eight rebounds to help Seton Hall improve to 15-4 overall and 7-0 in the Big East, its best start in the league. Powell, who was averaging 22.4 points, finished with 14, while Quincy McKnight had 11.

No. 16 Auburn 80, South Carolina 67: Devan Cambridge

scored 26 points, J'Von McCormick added 13 and the host Tigers beat the Gamecocks to stop a two-game skid.

Auburn (16-2, 4-2 Southeastern Conference) started off sluggish but ran away with it down the stretch due in large part to hot shooting off the bench.

No. 19 Iowa 85, No. 24 Rutgers 80: Luka Garza had 28 points and 13 rebounds as the host Hawkeyes held on in the closing seconds to beat the Scarlet Knights.

Connor McCaffery hit four free throws in the final 16 seconds, his only points of the night, to close out the win for Iowa (14-5, 5-3 Big Ten), which led by nine points three times in the second half before Rutgers (14-5, 5-3) rallied.

Tulsa 80, No. 20 Memphis 40: Jeriah Horne scored 21 points to help lead the Golden Hurricane to a surprisingly dominant win over the visiting Tigers.

Precious Achiuwa scored 10 points for Memphis (14-4, 3-2), which shot a season-low 28.8% from the floor.

Army 94, Lafayette 74: At Easton, Pa., Matt Wilson had 23 points as the Black Knights romped past the Leopards.

Lonnie Grayson added 21 points for Army (8-10, 3-4 Patriot League). Tommy Funk had 19 points and 11 assists, while Alex King added 14 points and seven rebounds. The point total was a season best for the Black Knights.

Navy 60, Boston University 58 (OT): Greg Summers scored 19 points and Cam Davis added 18 as the visiting Midshipmen defeated the Terriers in overtime.

Navy (11-7, 5-2 Patriot League) made 7 of 8 free throws in overtime and just one basket but it was a go-ahead jumper by Davis with 1:26 to play. Davis also scored with 42 seconds left in regulation to force the overtime.