

# STARS AND STRIPES®

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Review: Special ops' focus on fighting led to ethics concerns

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Episodic misconduct and ethical lapses among U.S. special operations forces, like the Navy SEALs and Army Green Berets, stem from a culture that puts too much emphasis on fighting and too little on developing good leaders, an in-depth review has concluded.

This imbalance has evolved from two decades of nearly continuous combat and has produced “potential cracks” in the foundation of the forces, the report released Tuesday said.

The report offers an unusually pointed look at shortcomings in a segment of the U.S. military that is known for daring missions such as the raids that killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011 and Islamic State founder Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Syria last October.

A number of recent cases of alleged misconduct have raised deep concern and marred the record of the special operations forces, which also include Delta Force commandos, as well as Air Force and Marine special operations troops. They are called on often for high-risk operations because of their elite training and agility.

President Donald Trump's controversial intervention in some recent disciplinary cases has added a political twist.

An Army Green Beret was facing trial last December for allegedly killing a suspected bomb-maker during a 2010 deployment to Afghanistan. But in November, Trump pardoned

Maj. Mathew Golsteyn, saying he had been treated unfairly.

Last May, Navy SEAL Adam Matthews was sentenced to one year in military prison for his role in the 2017 hazing-related death of an Army Green Beret in Africa. And in July, a Navy SEAL platoon in Iraq was ordered home amid charges of drinking and an alleged sexual assault, and two senior leaders were fired.

The review released Tuesday concluded that while there is no “systemic ethics problem,” the sustained war tours since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and limited time for force development have set the conditions at times for unacceptable conduct. It acknowledged that previous internal assessments have come to similar conclusions, yet the problems persist.

The review left no doubt that the force has suffered from lapses in leadership and accountability.

It said that this evolved from an imbalance between the demands to deploy to war zones and the need to properly develop troops.

The result was a “vicious cycle” that normalized a culture in which leadership development was lacking.

“The review team uncovered not only potential cracks in the SOF (special operations forces) foundations at the individual and team level, but also through the chain of command, specifically in the core tenets of leadership, discipline and accountability,” the report said.

## Number of confirmed virus cases in China tops SARS

Associated Press

BEIJING — Countries began evacuating their citizens Wednesday from the Chinese city hardest-hit by a new virus that has now infected more people in China than were sickened in the country by SARS.

The number of confirmed cases jumped to 5,974, surpassing the 5,327 in mainland China during the SARS outbreak in 2002-2003.

The death toll rose to 132, which is still lower than the 348 people who were killed in China by SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome. Scientists say there are still many questions to be answered about the new virus, including just how transmissible and severe it is.

Chartered planes carrying about 200 evacuees each arrived in Japan and the United States early Wednesday, as other countries planned similar evacuations from the city of Wuhan, which authorities have shut down to try to contain the virus.

The first cases in the Middle East were confirmed Wednesday, a family of four from Wuhan that was visiting the United Arab Emirates. Airlines around the world announced they were cutting flights to China, and Hong Kong was suspending rail travel to and from the mainland at midnight.

The number of cases in China rose 1,459 from the previous day, a smaller increase than the 1,771 new cases reported Tuesday. Australia and Singapore were among those reporting new cases, as the number outside China topped 70. The vast majority are people who came from Wuhan.

Australia, New Zealand and Britain were among the latest countries to announce they are planning evacuations.

British Airways said it was

suspending all flights to and from mainland China after the U.K. government warned against unnecessary travel to the country. The airline has daily flights from London to Shanghai and Beijing.

British health secretary Matt Hancock tweeted that “anyone who returns from Wuhan will be safely isolated for 14 days, with all necessary medical attention.” The measures are a step up from the devastating 2014-16 Ebola outbreak, when returning travelers from West Africa were asked to monitor themselves for symptoms.

Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh, said the steps are justified to prevent the introduction of the virus and its spread.

“There's always a balance between the draconian measures of public health and what people might want to do, and obviously it's regrettable if people who turn out not to have the virus are quarantined unnecessarily,” he said.

In China's Hubei province, 17 cities including Wuhan have been locked down, trapping more than 50 million people in the most far-reaching disease control measures imposed.

The new virus is from the coronavirus family, which includes those that can cause the common cold as well as more serious illnesses.

The source of the new virus and the full extent of its spread are still unknown. However, the World Health Organization said most cases reported to date “have been milder, with around 20% of those infected experiencing severe illness.”

Scientists expect many crucial questions about the virus' behavior will be answered in the coming weeks as the outbreak evolves and it becomes clearer how people are infected.

# Gallagher attacks SEALs who testified

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

SAN DIEGO — A retired Navy SEAL whose war crimes trial made international news has launched a video attack on former SEAL teammates who accused him of murder and shooting civilians, and who testified against him at his San Diego court-martial in June.

In a three-minute video posted to his Facebook page and Instagram account on Monday, retired Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, 40, referred to some members of his former platoon as “cowards” and highlighted names, photos and — for those still on active duty — their duty status and current units, something former SEALs say places those men — and the Navy’s mission — in jeopardy.

Gallagher was accused of several war crimes by some of his platoon subordinates, in-

cluding that he shot civilians and stabbed a wounded Islamic State fighter in the neck, killing him, while in Iraq in 2017. He pleaded not guilty and was acquitted of most charges, but was convicted of posing for a photo with an ISIS fighter’s corpse, a crime for which the jury reduced his rank.

The case and its fallout received extensive media coverage, especially among conservative outlets such as Fox News, where network personalities lobbied President Donald Trump on-air for months to intervene on Gallagher’s behalf.

Trump intervened in the case several times, including ordering Gallagher released from confinement before trial and restoring the SEAL’s rank post-conviction.

Two former SEALs who

served in Gallagher’s platoon in Iraq during his 2017 deployment spoke to the Union-Tribune on Monday about the video. Neither testified at Gallagher’s court-martial.

David Shaw, a former petty officer first class, said that he questioned Gallagher’s decision to publicize information that’s normally kept quiet for operational security.

“Attempting to call attention to (those SEALs’) status in the way it’s been done does not serve the mission or the interests of the Navy,” Shaw said when reached by phone. “To attempt to out (their) status raises questions about the decision to do so.”

Shaw also defended his former teammates and their decisions to testify against their chief.

“Each and every one of the

guys who came forward were performers of the highest caliber and people of the highest reputations within the platoon,” Shaw said. “(One) was selected to serve at the most premier institution at Naval Special Warfare, and that tells you everything you need to know about his performance and speaks volumes about his character.”

The video appears to be a trailer for an unspecified future project. Tim Parlatore, one of Gallagher’s attorneys, declined to say Monday what that project is or when it will be published.

Navy Capt. Tamara Lawrence, a spokeswoman for Naval Special Warfare Command in San Diego, said in a statement late Monday that the Navy, as a practice, does not identify active-duty SEALs.

## TBI cases from Iranian attack on Iraqi base now said to be 50

By WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The Pentagon on Tuesday added 16 service members to the list of those suffering traumatic brain injury from a Jan. 8 Iranian missile attack on al Asad Air Base in Iraq, raising the total to 50.

The Pentagon has increased the number of service members injured at least four times since the missile strike, with the last announcement of a total of 34 on Friday.

In the immediate wake of the attack, President Donald Trump and the Pentagon said there had been no U.S. injuries.

Of the 16 service members newly announced with traumatic brain injury, 15 have returned to duty in Iraq, Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Thomas Campbell said in a statement.

Thirty-one of the 50 service members injured were treated

in Iraq and returned to duty, he said. Another 18 have been taken to Germany for further treatment.

One service member who had been moved to Germany for other health reasons was diagnosed with traumatic brain injury after arriving there, he said.

Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said Friday that eight of the injured troops had been taken to the United States to receive treatment as outpatients at either their home stations or at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland.

Campbell said Tuesday no information was available whether additional service members had been sent stateside.

The Pentagon said previously it will review its injury reporting requirements in light of the shifting accounts of casualties from the missile strike.

## France urges US to keep up West Africa counterterrorism

*The Washington Post*

French Defense Minister Florence Parly pressed the Trump administration this week to continue U.S. military assistance to the French-led counterterrorism mission in West Africa, arguing against tentative plans to reduce U.S. deployments as part of a broader Pentagon realignment.

“We will do our utmost, and I’ve made the case with [Defense Secretary] Mark Esper, for continuation of U.S. assistance, because it achieves so much with comparatively little in such a sensitive time,” Parly told reporters Tuesday after meetings with Esper, White House national security adviser Robert O’Brien and other senior officials.

Parly is the latest of a steady stream of French officials to visit in recent weeks, as the Pentagon moves toward a decision as early as the end of next

month.

France has said that a reduction in the U.S. contribution could seriously undercut the overall French effort. “If the U.S. decided to withdraw from Africa, it would be bad news for us,” President Emmanuel Macron said this month at a summit with leaders of five countries in the region.

As counterterrorism has moved further down the list of priorities, President Donald Trump has also called for an end to “endless wars,” particularly in places where he has deemed conflict to be “tribal” and not directly affecting the United States.

Allies operating in the parts of the world most immediately affected by potential U.S. withdrawals, in the Middle East and Africa, have said they are willing to increase their contributions in those areas but expect the United States to continue its own involvement.

# GOP strains to contain Bolton book fallout

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's impeachment trial is shifting to questions from senators, a pivotal juncture as Republicans lack the votes to block witnesses and face a potential setback in their hope of ending the trial with a quick acquittal.

Despite Trump's defense team's plea for it to "end now," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell privately told senators he doesn't yet have the votes to brush back Democratic demands for witnesses now that revelations from John Bolton, the former national security adviser, have roiled the trial.

Republican senators are trying to figure out a way to deal with fallout from Bolton's forthcoming book, which provides a potential eyewitness account of Trump's actions at the heart of the impeachment charges.

But ideas being floated are fizzling almost as soon as they arise — among them,

a witness "swap" with Democrats or issuing a subpoena for Bolton's manuscript.

GOP senators are sternly warned by party leaders that calling Bolton as a witness could entangle the trial in lengthy legal battles and delay Trump's expected acquittal.

One key Republican, Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine, gave fresh momentum Wednesday to a one-for-one witness deal saying it's "very important that there be fairness, that each side be able to select a witness or two." But Democrats dismissed those offers, especially as Republicans want to draw Joe Biden's son, Hunter, deeper into the proceedings.

"It's irrelevant. It's a distraction," said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer.

Bolton writes in a forthcoming book that Trump told him he wanted to withhold military aid from Ukraine until it helped with investigations into Democratic rival Joe Biden. That assertion, if true, would undercut a key defense argument and go to

the heart of one of the two articles of impeachment against the president.

"I think Bolton probably has something to offer us," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska.

Trump disagreed in a tweet Wednesday in which he complained that Bolton, after he was fired, "goes out and IMMEDIATELY writes a nasty & untrue book. All Classified National Security."

The president had tweeted shortly after midnight about his former adviser, asking why Bolton didn't complain earlier. Bolton left the White House last September and says he offered his resignation.

The uncertainty about witnesses arises days before crucial votes on the issue. In a Senate split 53-47 in favor of Republicans, at least four GOP senators must join all Democrats to reach the 51 votes required to call witnesses, decide whom to call or do nearly anything else in the trial. Several Republicans apparently are ready to join Democrats in calling witnesses.

## Trump shores up support for new GOP congressman

Associated Press

WILDWOOD, N.J. — Moving on several fronts toward shoring up support for his reelection bid, President Donald Trump capped off a busy Tuesday by heaping praise on the newest Republican member of Congress and savaging Democrats he said are engaged in "demented hoaxes" like his impeachment trial.

On the day his legal team wrapped up its opening arguments on the Senate floor, Trump spoke to an enthusiastic audience in New Jersey in support of Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who recently switched from the Democratic Party to the GOP after break-

ing ranks over impeachment.

"While we are creating jobs and killing terrorists, the congressional Democrats are obsessed with demented hoaxes, crazy witch hunts and deranged partisan crusades. That's all they know how to do," Trump said.

Trump's visit to Democratic-leaning New Jersey generated a boisterous audience that lined the streets to greet him. He called Van Drew on stage, saying, "Jeff had the guts to defy the left-wing fanatics in his own party."

Trump highlighted the economy during much of his speech, noting that 7 million jobs have been created since his election.

He also continued to boast of the U.S. drone strike in Baghdad that killed Iran's most powerful general, Qassem Soleimani, on Jan. 3.

"We stopped him cold, yet Washington Democrats like crazy Bernie Sanders and nervous Nancy Pelosi, they opposed our actions to save American lives. They opposed it," Trump asserted to a roar of boos.

Pelosi and other Democrats have questioned the strategy behind Trump's order to kill Iran's general, which was made without prior approval from Congress. They pointed to potential consequences of heightened tensions that could endanger U.S. troops and lead to war with Iran.

## Boeing continues to see losses from 737 Max grounding

The Washington Post

Boeing reached new financial lows in 2019 as the 737 Max — a once-promising line of commercial jets whose flawed control systems played a role in two deadly crashes — remains at the center of a historic safety crisis with no end in sight.

Boeing closed out the fourth quarter with \$17.9 billion in revenue, the company announced Wednesday, a 37 percent drop from the fourth quarter of 2018.

The losses stem from the continued worldwide grounding of Boeing's Max jets

and a production halt this year in the wake of two fatal crashes.

The company's stock price has lost about 13 percent of its value over the past year at a time when the market has surged.

Once a cash-generating machine that was the envy of its competitors and a darling of Wall Street, Boeing has been forced to borrow billions of dollars to cover the cost of building airplanes it can't deliver to customers. CNBC reported Monday Boeing has secured more than \$12 billion in loans from lenders to provide cash for operations over the next two years.

It has been forced to compensate airlines for the cost of flight cancellations, taking a \$5.6 billion charge in July. And a bruising congressional inquiry has pointed to deeper problems with the company's management culture, leading to the ouster of its two highest-ranking executives.

Boeing's new CEO, David Calhoun, will be under intense pressure to navigate the company back to financial health.

The 737 Max has been out of commission for more than 10 months as regulators remain unconvinced it is safe to fly.

# Report calls for new Indo-Pacific strategy

BY WYATT OLSON

*Stars and Stripes*

The U.S. and its allies must establish new rules, norms and institutions in the Indo-Pacific region as a means of blunting China's growing military and economic might there, recommends a congressionally mandated report released on Tuesday.

The report, "Rising to the China Challenge: Renewing American Competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific," authored by the think tank Center for New American Security, was a requirement in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act to assess how best to implement the Pentagon's defense strat-

egy in the Indo-Pacific.

The U.S. has sought to maintain the post-World War II order of a "free and open" Indo-Pacific defined by free trade, recognition of international law, transparency and good governance.

The report's comparison of that to a potential China-led order was stark. Features would include "the People's Liberation Army controlling the South and East China Seas; regional countries sufficiently coerced into acquiescing to China's preferences on military, economic, and diplomatic matters; an economic order in which Beijing sets trade and investment rules in its favor, with dominance over leading

technologies, data and standards; and Beijing with de facto rule over Taiwan and agenda-setting power over regional institutions."

The postwar order championed by America, however, "has proved insufficient in curbing China's ability and desire to challenge vital U.S. interests in the region," the report said.

Prioritizing the "China challenge" will require U.S. "willingness to make hard tradeoffs in other regions and with other issues," the report said.

"Managing the China challenge should be an organizing principle of U.S. foreign policy, not just one among many other pressing priorities in the world," the report said.

While this more robust strategy would require a whole-of-government approach, the report said, it is crucial for the U.S. to sustain conventional military deterrence with China.

"While the United States still retains an overall military advantage over China, the gap has closed considerably over the last two decades and, absent urgent change, the regional balance may tip in China's favor by the late 2020s or early 2030s," the report said. "In certain scenarios, the military balance may already disadvantage the United States. In short, the United States needs a new American way of war."

## Air Force faces gaps in aerial refueling

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

*Stars and Stripes*

Boeing's failure to deliver its new KC-46 Pegasus aerial refuelers on schedule could force the military to rely either on private defense contractors or keep using aging tankers to meet its needs, the U.S. Transportation Command's top officer said.

"We've got to figure out a way to mitigate the delayed fielding of the KC-46," Gen.

Stephen Lyons said Tuesday, while speaking at the Atlantic Council in Washington.

The Air Force has already planned on the retirement of a select number of its KC-135 Stratotankers and KC-10 Extenders, even as the Boeing-run KC-46 program struggles to develop and field new tankers, he said.

"If we're not careful we're going to see a real dip ... in taskable tails for the joint force," Lyons said, referring to

the number of mission-ready tankers. He said he was working with the Air Force to fill in the gaps, "so we have continuous coverage of the joint force while we work through the issues ... with the KC-46."

The Air Force has been seeking to replace its Eisenhower-era KC-135 since the early 2000s. The service has 153 of the refuelers in active-duty units and another 243 in the National Guard and Reserve, the Air Force says on its website.

The Air Force has taken delivery of 30 tankers for training purposes, while Boeing continues to fix some of the aircraft's problems, including an issue with the cameras used to guide the extended 59-foot boom into a fuel receptacle on the receiving plane.

Leasing commercial tankers would "take pressure off the force," Lyons said, but limits include not being able to employ private tankers in a combat environment.

## 49ers' Kittle to honor fallen soldier in Super Bowl

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

*Stars and Stripes*

A player in this year's Super Bowl will be playing in honor of a soldier killed in Iraq, as part of a program that gave the soldier's family a trip to the big game.

George Kittle, star tight end for the San Francisco 49ers, met with the family of Sgt. Mick LaMar last Friday ahead of Sunday's clash with the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl

LIV in Miami.

The visit and the tickets to the Super Bowl left Josie LaMar, Mick's widow, "over-the-moon excited," she said, as her husband was a big 49ers fan.

"We're looking forward to enjoying the game and saying, 'George Kittle is playing for our dad, my husband,'" Josie said in a phone call on Tuesday. "My husband's name is being honored, his service to our country is being honored and who better than from George

Kittle from his favorite team."

Josie said she will be rooting for the 49ers with her son, Nicolas, 16, who was only 7 when his father died in 2011.

Kittle and other players teamed up with a program by the financial services company USAA and organizations such as Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors to bring service members, veterans and families to the Super Bowl.

"I have a lot of family in the military, so it's something that

I just respect, and the sacrifice that they give is the ultimate sacrifice," Kittle told ESPN. "So if I can ever give back and make a family's day or just make them smile a little bit, then I've just done a little part in their lives."

NFL players Christian McCaffrey, Von Miller, Deshaun Watson, Jarvis Landry, James Conner, Ryan Tannehill and coach Ron Rivera also participated in the program.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## After 3 months on the lam, emu back home

**NM** LAS CRUCES — A former state lawmaker's emu that was missing since Thanksgiving is safely back at its home near Las Cruces.

Former state Rep. Brad Cates learned his emu had resurfaced thanks to a barrage of images people shared on social media, the Las Cruces Sun-News reported.

Pictures of the emu around a subdivision near Cates' home prompted inquiries from a state livestock inspector and a game warden. Later that day, Cates, with some help, corralled the 150-pound emu named "Hey You!"

## Angler snags apparent live grenade in river

**IN** GARY — A man fishing from a northwestern Indiana bridge reeled in an apparent live grenade, prompting a road closure until the device was removed by a bomb squad.

A Gary police officer who was called to the Little Calumet River bridge to investigate learned that a man who had been fishing from the bridge pulled up what appeared to be a live grenade, The (Northwest Indiana) Times reported.

The bomb squad took possession of the grenade without incident, said Gary Police Lt. Dawn Westerfield.

Authorities were investigating how and when the grenade ended up in the river.

## Police probe removed sign that led to crash

**DE** BRIDGEVILLE — Delaware State Police are investigating whether somebody intentionally threw

a street sign into the middle of a road shortly before a driver crashed while trying to avoid it.

A truck driver was heading east when he approached an intersection and found a stop sign post lying in the middle of the street, Delaware State Police said.

The driver, a 32-year-old man from Seaford, swerved to avoid the sign but ran into a ditch and overturned, according to the statement.

He was taken to a hospital with serious injuries, the agency said.

The stop sign appeared to have been pulled from its location and intentionally thrown into the road before the driver crashed.

## Stolen tow truck hits vehicles, 1 hurt

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — A person driving a stolen tow truck struck a van and several parked cars on a Philadelphia street, leaving the van driver hospitalized.

The person driving the tow truck fled the scene on foot after the crash. It wasn't clear where the tow truck had been stolen from or why it was taken.

The tow truck initially hit the van and then struck four parked cars, authorities said, sending one vehicle up onto the front lawn of a house.

The driver then continued driving for another block before abandoning the vehicle in the roadway and running from the scene.

## 'Geriatric' male harbor seal, 35, dies at zoo

**DC** WASHINGTON — A male harbor seal considered geriatric for his species died at the Smithsonian's National Zoo.

Luke, 35, was humanely euthanized, according to a statement from the zoo. The zoo said he outlived the median life expectancy for his species, which is 25 years in the wild and 30 years in human care.

Luke had been experiencing ocular discomfort and had trouble orienting himself recently, according to the zoo's statement.

Animal care staff decided to euthanize him after using several methods to treat his symptoms, including antibiotics, weekly ear flushes and various eye drops.

## Vets museum to open Bob Hope exhibit

**OH** COLUMBUS — An exhibit exploring comedian Bob Hope's major tours and travels during World War II is set to open this month at the National Veterans Memorial and Museum in Ohio.

"So Ready for Laughter: The Legacy of Bob Hope" opens Friday and runs through April 17 at the museum in Columbus. The exhibit features nearly 50 artifacts and an original 11-minute documentary. This marks its first stop outside The National WWII Museum in New Orleans, where it originated.

## Brewery looks to sun to power beer making

**GA** ATHENS — A Georgia brewery has installed solar panels and aims to reduce its energy consumption by 30%.

Athens-based Terrapin Beer Co. recently cut the ribbon on the project, The Athens Banner-Herald reported.

The project involves 720 solar panels on Terrapin's roof and on its parking lots sunshades.

The solar panel array is part of Terrapin's larger sustainabil-

ity campaign called Terraprint. Deeds Creative and Cherry Street Renewable Energy are two of the company's partners on the overall effort.

There's now a TV screen in the tap room that shows customers how much solar energy is being used at any given time.

## Police search for suspects in coat heist

**NY** NEW YORK — Police in New York City were searching for six men they said broke into an upscale boutique and stole 52 coats valued at \$42,000.

The NYPD said that the heist occurred at the Mackage clothing store on Mercer Street in Tribeca.

Police said one of the suspects used a large object to break the glass front door of the shop before the six men went in and grabbed the coats.

## Couple says dog fought coyote

**IA** DES MOINES — State wildlife officials urged central Iowa residents to be vigilant in safeguarding pets after a Des Moines couple reported their German shepherd mix dog was attacked by a coyote.

The couple reported the attack happened less than a mile from the Drake University campus after they let their dog, Sildi, out in the backyard around dusk, television station KCCI reported.

Within minutes, they heard what sounded like a dog fight, rushed outside and found Sildi and the coyote fighting.

The coyote ran away when the couple came outside. The dog was treated for bite wounds to its face and head.

From wire reports

Your objective source for military news  
updated 24/7 from bases  
around the world.  
Now online at [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

STARS AND STRIPES®

# Loose locker room helps KC succeed

Associated Press

MIAMI — If you're planning to walk through the middle of the Kansas City Chiefs locker room between lunch and their usual afternoon practice, you might want to grab someone's shoulder pads and helmet and brace for impact.

There's a good chance you'll find yourself in the middle of a pickup basketball game involving 300-pound linemen.

It's a scene that plays out daily during the regular season, big bodies banging into each other as defensive tackles Chris Jones and Khalen Saunders try to post up under the hoop — hung just over the doorway leading into the showers. Usually, teammates will gather around them, playing the dual role of vocal fans and even more vocal referees.

"When you check in, it's non-stop competition," Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce explained this week. "Guys are always trying to play some type of game or compete in some type of way to get the upper hand on somebody else."

The pickup games illustrate a few points about the Chiefs team preparing to play in its first Super Bowl in 50 years: It has a fierce competitive streak that permeates the entire roster, whether it's on the field or off; the players genuinely like being around each other, even when they could leave during the lunch hour; and perhaps most of all, they have a loosey-goosey nature despite the pressure-cooker business and high-stakes nature of professional football.

That last point could serve them well as they deal with a week of media engagements, countless parties and distractions, and ultimately the strain that comes with prepping for their big game against the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday.

"The unique thing about this group is that they don't complain about anything," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "When they need to cut it loose and have fun, they cut it loose. But when they're at practice, they're all business."

It wasn't always that way.

Less than a decade ago,

under the failed tenures of general manager Scott Pioli and coach Todd Haley, the feeling in the locker room on a random Wednesday during the season was downright oppressive. Smiles were few, laughter even more rare, and the stress and tension that the Chiefs seemed to carry with them was almost palpable.

Romeo Crennel tried to lighten the mood a bit during his only season in charge, but it's hard to be lighthearted in the midst of a 2-14 season marked by as much off-the-field turmoil as there were issues between the lines.

It wasn't until Reid showed up from Philadelphia that things changed. He gave his players broad freedom to express themselves, whether that meant the way they dressed or how they acted or even where they spent their free time. All Reid asked was that they stay out of trouble, set a good example and take care of business when it was time to get serious.

"There's a certain way we handle opportunities like this where we're in front of the

media," Kelce said during the team's pre-practice availability Tuesday, "but he wants you to be yourself and that's the best thing you can do in his position is let you be yourself, how you're most comfortable."

Kelce is one of the biggest characters on the team — remember his reality TV show, "Catching Kelce"? He often wears outlandish outfits and his fashion sense is, to put it mildly, unique. But Kelce also exemplifies the almost uncanny way the Chiefs can flip a switch from silly to serious, as evidenced by his four consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons.

The Chiefs showed their appreciation for their coach — and the way he treats them — when they donned his trademark Hawaiian-style shirt for the trip to Miami. Other teams might deplane the week before the Super Bowl wearing suits and an all-business attitude, but the Chiefs bounced across the tarmac as if they were headed to Disney World.

## Shanahan faces scrutiny over blown Super Bowl

Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Kyle Shanahan's play calls from his first trip to the Super Bowl as an offensive coordinator have been heavily scrutinized.

That's to be expected after Shanahan's Falcons blew a 28-3 lead to the New England Patriots and lost in overtime three years ago in part because Atlanta was unable to run out the clock or add to the lead.

Shanahan is back in the title game as head coach for the San Francisco 49ers. That's led to a rehashing of that game in Houston even if Shanahan has put it far behind him.

"Not much at all anymore, to tell you the truth," he said this week when asked if he still goes over that game. "You do it every second. The days after

were real tough. Losing a Super Bowl is extremely tough for everybody, especially when you lose one when you have a 28-3 lead. The way it came down on me personally, I didn't react to that, the way people would expect, because there were definitely parts in that Super Bowl that I would love to have back and stuff I was very hard on myself, but the whole narrative of if I would've just ran it, we would've won. I know that wasn't the case."

Shanahan said there's just one play call he'd like to have back from that day and it's not calling for a third-down pass midway through the fourth quarter that led to a sack-fumble that allowed the Patriots to make it a one-possession game.

The call he'd like back came on the next drive after the Fal-

cons had used two long pass plays to move the ball down to the New England 22 with less than five minutes left.

Three straight runs could have forced the Patriots to burn their timeouts and led to a field goal that would have given Atlanta an 11-point lead that might have been too much for even Tom Brady to overcome.

But after losing a yard on a first-down run, Shanahan called for a pass play that he still regrets.

"They played a different coverage, didn't get the call I wanted so I didn't like the call," he said. "I was hoping we could just get rid of it, but they had a pretty good rush and got a sack."

Now backed up to the 35, Shanahan called for another pass to get back into field-goal

range on third down only to have a 9-yard gain negated by a holding penalty. An incompletion on third down led to a punt from the 45.

"I wish I didn't call that play on second-and-11 that led to that sack," Shanahan said.

Now the coordinator who called one too many pass plays in his first trip to the Super Bowl is back to the title game as a head coach with one of the most run-dominant play scripts in NFL history. The 49ers have run the ball on about three-quarters of their plays so far this postseason, the highest rate of runs in the playoffs since Don Shula's Dolphins threw the ball just 31 times with Hall of Famer Bob Griese at quarterback on the way to the championship following the 1973 season.

# Thiem works his way past No. 1 Nadal

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Outplayed at his own brand of physical tennis for much of the match, Rafael Nadal finally claimed a set to try to start a comeback against Dominic Thiem.

Nadal marked the moment by hopping in a crouch at the baseline and vigorously pumping his right arm four times.

Soon, though, he was back in trouble. And eventually, his bid to tie Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slam titles by winning the Australian Open was over with a quarterfinal loss Wednesday to Thiem — a younger version of Nadal.

Thiem's 7-6 (3), 7-6 (4), 4-6, 7-6 (6) victory over the top-seeded Nadal lasted 4 hours,

10 minutes because of so many lengthy, electrifying points. One rather memorable one featured Thiem stumbling onto his backside before popping up and keeping the ball in play until Nadal made a mistake.

"He's playing with a lot of energy ... (and) determination. So well done for him," Nadal said. "I honestly didn't play a bad match."

Thiem reached his fifth major semifinal and his first major semifinal somewhere other than at the French Open, Nadal's domain.

Of more significance: The outcome ended Nadal's career-best streak of making at least the semifinals at seven consecutive Grand Slam tournaments, a span during which he earned three trophies.

"If you want to have a chance against him, one of the all-time greats, everything needs to work in your game," the fifth-seeded Thiem said.

Asked what he wished he'd done differently against Thiem, Nadal replied: "Win any tiebreak."

Thiem had been 0-5 against Nadal at the majors, including losses in the final at Roland Garros each of the past two years.

But this one was different. The defining statistic: Thiem won exactly twice as many points that featured nine or more shots, 24-12.

"Just an unbelievable match. Like, epic," Thiem said. "A very high level from both of us."

Thiem managed to hang in there with Nadal on physical

baseline exchanges, trading groundstroke for groundstroke and picking the proper spots to move forward.

Or to describe it another way: Thiem was out-Nadal-ing Nadal, the ultimate grinder who never met a point that was too long or too grueling.

"Even from difficult positions," Nadal said, praising Thiem's quickness and power, "he was able to produce amazing shots."

Thiem will play No. 7 Alexander Zverev on Friday for a berth in the title match.

Zverev reached his first major semifinal anywhere by overcoming a terrible start Wednesday and putting together a 1-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka.

## NBA roundup

# Bucks, minus Antetokounmpo, win behind Middleton

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Khris Middleton scored a career-high 51 points in the absence of injured teammate Giannis Antetokounmpo, leading the Milwaukee Bucks to a 151-131 victory over the Washington Wizards on Tuesday night.

Middleton, hoping to be chosen an All-Star reserve for the second straight year on Thursday, helped the Bucks hold off a second-half Wizards rally. Middleton also had 10 rebounds and six assists.

Milwaukee (41-6) scored a franchise-record 88 points in the first half, finished with its highest total of the season and won its ninth straight game despite the absence of Antetokounmpo, who sat out with a right shoulder injury.

Bradley Beal led Washington (15-31) with 47 points, his second straight 40-point game and sixth of the season.

**76ers 115, Warriors 104:** Wearing No. 24 in honor of Kobe Bryant, Joel Embiid scored 24 points in his first game in three weeks, leading host Philadelphia to the victory.

Embiid and the rest of the Sixers wore No. 24 and No. 8 Bryant jerseys in warmups in honor of the Los Angeles Lakers star, who was killed Sunday in a helicopter crash. Embiid was granted permission from Hall

of Famer Bobby Jones to wear the retired No. 24 instead of his usual 21 for his first game since he tore a ligament in a finger in his left hand.

**Celtics 109, Heat 101:** Gordon Hayward had 29 points and nine rebounds, and Boston led nearly the entire way in a win at Miami.

Jaylen Brown scored 25 points for the Celtics, and Kemba Walker added 16 points and eight assists. Daniel Theis finished with 10 points and 11 rebounds.

Goran Dragic led the Heat, who lost at home to an Eastern Conference opponent for the first time in 14 games this season.

**Pelicans 125, Cavaliers 111:** Zion Williamson scored 14 points — all inside — in an uneventful NBA road debut, helping New Orleans to the victory.

Playing in just his fourth game, Williamson added nine rebounds in 30 minutes, his most as a pro. He didn't do anything spectacular or particularly crowd pleasing, but that hardly mattered to the Pelicans, who are just happy to have the hyped rookie on the floor and healthy.

**Raptors 130, Hawks 114:** Kyle Lowry had 12 points and 11 assists while becoming his team's career assists leader, and host Toronto earned its season-best eighth straight win.

Serge Ibaka had 24 points and 10 rebounds and Pascal Siakam added 24 points as the Raptors won their 10th in a row over Atlanta.

**Suns 133, Mavericks 104:** Devin Booker scored 20 of his 32 points in the third quarter, Deandre Ayton had a season-high 31 points and Phoenix never trailed in a win at Dallas.

Booker started the scoring in the third before the ball had even been thrown in, making a free throw after the last of three first-half technicals against the Mavs was called against Tim Hardaway Jr. after the halftime buzzer.

**Grizzlies 104, Nuggets 96:** Dillon Brooks scored 24 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 23 points and 12 rebounds, leading host Memphis to its third straight win. Ja Morant had 14 points as the Grizzlies led from start to finish. Jaren Jackson Jr. had 10 points and blocked a career-high seven shots.

**Hornets 97, Knicks 92:** Terry Rozier had 30 points and 10 rebounds, and host Charlotte snapped an eight-game losing streak.

Miles Bridges added 15 points in the Hornets' first win since Jan. 4. Willy Hernangomez had 12 points and 10 rebounds for his first double-double of the season.

## NHL roundup

## Perron, Blues down Flames in shootout

Associated Press

CALGARY, Alberta — For David Perron, Calgary has become his home away from home.

Up against a team he's always thrived against and in a building he enjoys playing in, Perron had a goal and an assist in regulation and added a shootout goal to help the St. Louis Blues beat the Calgary Flames 5-4 on Tuesday night.

Perron has 17 goals in 39 career games against the Flames, including 12 goals in 20 games at the Scotiabank Saddledome.

"I like the old barn, maybe. I don't know," said Perron, when

asked about his success historically against Calgary. "I always have fun coming up to Canada and playing here, even when I was back with the Oilers."

Alex Steen, Jaden Schwartz and Zach Sanford also scored in regulation for the Blues, who got their first win in the tiebreaker in four games this season. Jordan Binnington stopped 27 shots to improve to 23-8-5.

Sean Monahan scored twice, and Matthew Tkachuk and Mark Jankowski also had goals for the Flames, who were 5-0 in shootouts. Cam Talbot finished with 30 saves.

The Flames were 3-for-3 on the power play during regu-

lation, and got a fourth man-advantage in overtime, but squandered it.

"It's obviously a big kill," said Blues captain Alex Pietrangolo. "Four-on-three's are never easy, especially late in the game when you're tired, legs and brain are a little tired. Good time for us to step up and kill that."

Perron and Ryan O'Reilly scored on St. Louis' first two shootout attempts, while Monahan and Tkachuk missed their tries.

**Senators 5, Sabres 2:** Mike Reilly scored the go-ahead goal 8:48 into the third period, and Ottawa snapped a seven-game

road skid.

Tyler Ennis had a goal and assist and Jean-Gabriel Pageau also scored for the Senators, who had gone 0-4-3 on the road since a 5-2 win at Edmonton on Dec. 4. Mark Borowiecki sealed the victory by blocking Marcus Johansson's point shot and banking the puck off the boards and into an empty net with 2:06 remaining. Nikita Zaitsev added another empty netter with 6 seconds left.

Craig Anderson stopped 37 shots.

Sabres captain Jack Eichel scored his career-best 29th of the season and Sam Reinhart also scored for Buffalo.

## College basketball roundup

## Virginia ends No. 5 Florida State's 10-game streak

Associated Press

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Kihei Clark scored 15 points, including a go-ahead layup with 59 seconds left, and Virginia ended No. 5 Florida State's 10-game winning streak, 61-56 on Tuesday night.

Mamadi Diakite had 19 points and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers, who have won two straight after losing four of their previous five. That stretch raised questions about whether the defending national champions would even make the NCAA Tournament this year.

The game was tied 11 times and neither team could get any separation over the final 10 minutes. Virginia trailed 56-55 before Clark drove down the left side of the lane, reached across and banked his shot in on the right side. After Devin Vassell missed a jumper for the Seminoles, Diakite hit a pair of free throws with 13.9 seconds left for the Cavs (14-6, 6-4 Atlantic Coast Conference).

Florida State (17-3, 7-2) had two chances to tie it, but Wyatt

Wilkes missed badly on a three-point try from the top of the key and Trent Forrest also missed from the left corner. Braxton Key added a pair of free throws for the Cavs.

Vassell led the Seminoles with 17 points. The loss was FSU's first since Dec. 3 at Indiana.

**No. 9 Duke 79, Pittsburgh 67:** Vernon Carey Jr. had 26 points and 13 rebounds as the Blue Devils beat the Panthers after both teams honored Kobe Bryant during a pregame ceremony at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Tre Jones contributed 14 points and Duncan Goldwire scored 13 as Duke (17-3, 6-2 Atlantic Coast Conference) won its second straight game after dropping consecutive decisions to Clemson and Louisville. Pitt (13-8, 4-6) was led by Au'Diese Toney's game-high 27 points, but lost for the fourth time in six games.

**No. 8 Villanova 79, St. John's 59:** Saddiq Bey scored 23 points, Collin Gillespie had 17 points and 13 rebounds, and

the visiting Wildcats won their seventh straight game, easily handling the Red Storm.

Justin Moore, starting for injured forward Jermaine Samuels, added 11 points and fellow freshman Jeremiah Robinson-Earl had 13 points and 14 rebounds as balanced Villanova (17-3, 7-1 Big East) won for the 13th time in 14 games.

**No. 16 Butler 69, Georgetown 64:** Kamar Baldwin heated up after halftime for the second consecutive game, helping the visiting Bulldogs overcome another deficit to beat the Hoyas.

Baldwin scored 12 of his 13 points in the second half, and now Butler (17-4, 5-3 Big East) has won two consecutive games after dropping three in a row in Big East play.

**No. 17 Auburn 83, Mississippi 82 (20T):** Isaac Okoro converted a big three-point play with 1:41 left in the second overtime, and the visiting Tigers topped the Rebels.

Okoro had 14 points and nine rebounds for Auburn (18-2, 5-2 SEC), which trailed by as

many as 19 early in the second half. Anfernee McLemore led the Tigers with 19 points, and Samir Doughty had 17.

**No. 25 Rutgers 70, Purdue 63:** Caleb McConnell scored 16 points, making all 12 of his free-throw attempts, and the host Scarlet Knights nearly blew a 17-point lead before holding off the Boilermakers.

Rutgers (16-5, 7-3 Big Ten) built the lead to 44-27 before Purdue (11-10, 4-6) whittled the lead to three with a minute and a half to go. It was the closest the Boilermakers got.

**Fresno State 79, Air Force 68:** New Williams scored 25 points and Nate Grimes added 21 points, nine rebounds and three blocks as the visiting Bulldogs beat the Falcons.

Jarred Hyder had 10 points for Fresno State (7-14, 3-7 Mountain West Conference). Orlando Robinson added seven rebounds. Williams made six of the Bulldogs' 14 three-pointers and the team went 15-for-16 from the free-throw line.