

Dems push for swift removal of Trump

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Warnings flashing, Democrats in Congress laid plans for swift impeachment of President Donald Trump, demanding decisive, immediate action to ensure an “unhinged” commander in chief can’t add to the damage they say he’s inflicted or even ignite nuclear war in his final days in office.

As the country comes to terms with the violent siege of the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters that left five dead, the crisis that appears to be among the final acts of his presidency is deepening like few other periods in the nation’s history. With less than two weeks until he’s gone, Democrats want him out — now — and he has few defenders speaking up for him in his own Republican party.

“We must take action,” House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared Friday on a private conference call with Democrats.

And one prominent Republican, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, told the Anchorage Daily News that Trump simply “needs to get out.”

The final days of Trump’s presidency are spinning toward a chaotic end as he holes up at the White House, abandoned by many

aides, top Republicans and Cabinet members. After refusing to concede defeat in the November election, he has now promised a smooth transfer of power when Democratic President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in on Jan. 20. But even so, he says he will not attend the inauguration — the first such presidential snub since just after the Civil War.

In Congress, where many have watched and reeled as the president spent four years breaking norms and testing the nation’s guardrails of democracy, Democrats are unwilling to take further chances with only a few days left in his term. The mayhem that erupted Wednesday at the Capitol stunned the world and threatened the traditional peaceful transfer of power.

Pelosi said she had spoken to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley “to discuss available precautions for preventing an unstable president from initiating military hostilities or accessing the launch codes” for nuclear war. She said Milley assured her longstanding safeguards are in place.

The president has sole authority to order the launch of a nuclear weapon, but a military commander could refuse the order if

it were determined to be illegal. Trump has not publicly made such threats, but officials warn of grave danger if the president is left unchecked.

“This unhinged president could not be more dangerous,” Pelosi said of the current situation.

Biden, meanwhile, said he is focused on his job as he prepares to take office. Asked about impeachment, he said, “That’s a decision for the Congress to make.”

The Democrats are considering lightning-quick action. A draft of their Articles of Impeachment accuses Trump of abuse of power, saying he “willfully made statements that encouraged — and foreseeably resulted in — imminent lawless action at the Capitol,” according to a person familiar with the details who was granted anonymity to discuss them.

The articles are expected to be introduced on Monday, with a House vote as soon as Wednesday.

If Trump were to be impeached by the House and convicted by the Senate, he might also be prevented from running again for the presidency in 2024, or ever holding public office again. He would be the only president twice impeached.

Twitter bans Trump, citing risk of violent incitement

Associated Press

Twitter banned President Donald Trump’s account Friday, citing “the risk of further incitement of violence” following the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday.

Twitter has long given Trump and other world leaders broad exemptions from its rules against personal attacks, hate speech and other behaviors. But in a detailed explanation posted on its blog Friday, the company said recent Trump tweets amounted to glorification of violence when read in the context of the Capitol riot and plans circulating online for future armed protests around the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

The social platform has been under growing pressure to take further action

against Trump following the Wednesday violence. On Thursday, Facebook suspended Trump’s account through Jan. 20 and possibly indefinitely. Twitter merely suspended Trump’s account for 12 hours after he posted a video that repeated false claims about election fraud and praised the rioters who stormed the Capitol.

Trump’s Twitter persona has long functioned as a mix of policy announcements, often out of the blue; complaints about the media; disparagement of women, minorities and his perceived enemies; and praise for his supporters, replete with exclamation marks, all-caps, and one-word declarations such as “Sad!”

He has fired numerous officials on Twitter and his posts, like his speeches at rallies, are a torrent of misinformation.

The official account for the President of the United States, @POTUS, remains live. In fact, Trump, who issued a statement Friday evening that denounced Twitter as an enemy of free speech and floated the idea that he might build his own “platform,” also posted it on the @POTUS account, where it was quickly deleted.

Twitter says using another account to evade a suspension is against its rules, and that while it won’t ban government accounts like @POTUS or @WhiteHouse, it will “take action to limit their use.”

Twitter also permanently banned two Trump loyalists — former national security adviser Michael Flynn and attorney Sidney Powell — as part of a broader purge of accounts promoting QAnon conspiracy theory.

Safeguarding the switch

Talk of limits on Trump's nuke power raises old worry

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's concern about President Donald Trump potentially ordering the launch of a nuclear weapon in his final days in office highlights a little-known fact: Launch authority rests with the president alone.

It also resurfaces a question with no certain answer: What would happen if a military commander determined, based on legal judgment, that a president's nuclear launch order was illegal? The commander might refuse such an order, but then what?

Trump has given no indication he is considering using nuclear weapons, but Pelosi expressed worry that an "unhinged" president might start a war.

She said she spoke Friday to Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, about "available precautions" to prevent Trump from initiating military action or ordering a nuclear launch, and she told colleagues she was given unspecified assurances that there are longstanding safeguards in place.

A spokesman for Milley, Col. Dave Butler, confirmed that Pelosi called Milley. "He answered her questions regarding the process of nuclear command authority," Butler said, declining to reveal details.

Pelosi's concerns highlight the fact, dating to the dawn of the nuclear age in the 1940s, that the president has the sole authority to order a U.S. nuclear attack. None since Harry Truman has done so. The president is not required to gain the consent of anyone else — not within his administration, not in the military, not in the Congress. There are, however, some safeguards that could come into play.

Although it would be unprecedented, a military officer could refuse to obey a president's order to launch a nuclear weapon if a legal assessment concluded that it constituted an illegal act under the internationally recognized laws of armed conflict. This is a murky area, given that the circumstance has never arisen.

"If the military gets an illegitimate order from the president of the United States, the military can and should refuse that order

The president has the sole authority to order a U.S. nuclear attack. ... The president is not required to gain the consent of anyone else — not within his administration, not in the military, not in the Congress. There are, however, some safeguards that could come into play.

in a situation where it is widely seen that the president is unfit and incapable of making a rational decision," said Tom Z. Collina, co-author with former Defense Secretary William J. Perry of a book, "The Button," about nuclear dangers and presidential command authority.

Under existing procedures, a president who was considering the need to use nuclear weapons would be expected to consult with advisers, most likely to include the secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the commander of U.S. Strategic Command, which has operational control over the nuclear arsenal. Various assessments would be made, including the legal aspects of strike options.

The current arrangement in which sole authority to order a nuclear launch rests with the president is not written in law. It was created by Truman as a means to keep decisions about use of the world's most dangerous weapons in civilian rather than military hands. The authority is considered inherent in a president's constitutional role as commander in chief.

During the Cold War, the prospect of nuclear war meant having to respond within minutes to a wave of Soviet missiles zeroing in on the United States. Time would be of the essence. Thus it seemed to make sense to leave the decision to one person, without the need for time-consuming consultations with Congress.

But times have changed. Some argue that the traditional "sole-authority" approach must change, too.

"Once in office, a president gains the absolute authority to start a nuclear war," Collina and Perry wrote in a Politico opinion article published Friday. "Within min-

utes, Trump can unleash hundreds of atomic bombs, or just one. He does not need a second opinion."

Collina, Perry and others have been pushing for Congress to alter the nuclear command authority so that it is shared between the president and the Congress.

The issue has been raised repeatedly during Trump's presidency. In November 2017 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a public hearing on the subject — the first hearing of its kind in several decades.

Testifying at that hearing, a former commander of U.S. nuclear forces, retired Air Force Gen. Robert Kehler, was asked what would happen if a president ordered a nuclear strike, for whatever reason, and the four-star general at Strategic Command balked or refused, believing it to be illegal.

"You'd be in a very interesting constitutional situation," Kehler replied.

Also in November 2017, the Air Force general who was commanding Strategic Command at the time raised the possibility of having to refuse an illegal launch order. That officer, Gen. John Hyten, who is now the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stressed that in any circumstance the military is obliged to only follow legal orders.

"I provide advice to the president," Hyten said. "He'll tell me what to do, and if it's illegal, guess what's going to happen? I'm gonna say, 'Mr. President, that's illegal.' Guess what he's going to do? He's going to say, 'What would be legal?' And we'll come up with options of a mix of capabilities to respond to whatever the situation is, and that's the way it works. It's not that complicated."

Leader reveals firings at Fort Hood

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

FORT HOOD, Texas — Leaders responsible for Spc. Vanessa Guillen from her squad to her battalion were fired during the disciplinary action that took place last month at Fort Hood, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston told soldiers Thursday at the base.

Speaking to a group of about two dozen junior enlisted soldiers, Grinston used the firings as an example of how the Army is taking action to root out leaders who allow corrosive behavior to persist in the ranks.

Fourteen leaders faced disciplinary action following the Dec. 8 release of the Fort Hood Independent Review Committee report that found the com-

mand climate and culture problems at the base were a result of poor leadership. At the time, only action taken against leaders in positions at the brigade level and above were identified, in accordance with Army personnel privacy policy.

Leaders responsible for Guillen in her squad, platoon, company and battalion were also fired, Grinston said Thursday.

Maj. Gen. Jeff Broadwater and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Kenny of the 1st Cavalry Division, which was not part of Guillen's chain of command, were suspended following the report's release, pending the results of a new investigation into the unit's command climate and implementation of a sexual assault prevention program.

Guillen, who served as a small arms repairer in the regiment's engineer squadron, went missing from the base in April. During the more than two-month search for her, questions arose about the efforts to find her, the conditions at the base, and its sexual assault and harassment program. Investigators found her body June 30 and determined a fellow soldier, Spc. Aaron Robinson, killed Guillen with a hammer in an arms room, then buried her body about 20 miles from the base.

Fort Hood's commander, Lt. Gen. Pat White, returned from a yearlong deployment in September and initiated a "people first" training program to improve trust between soldiers

and leaders. The program included a weeklong break from field training to allow leaders to sit down with soldiers and get to know them on a personal level, talk with their families and visit their living quarters.

Grinston visited Fort Hood on Thursday to hear from soldiers about these efforts. Stars and Stripes was permitted to listen to a discussion with junior enlisted soldiers, with the agreement the participants would not be named.

It was during these discussions that Grinston explained last month's firings at Fort Hood. He said leaders can't take action on problems that they don't know about and he encouraged soldiers to report misconduct in the ranks.

Judge blocks Trump's broad asylum rules

Associated Press

PHOENIX — A U.S. judge on Friday blocked the Trump administration's most sweeping set of asylum restrictions less than two weeks before President-elect Joe Biden takes office.

The rules had been set to take effect Monday. The court order has limited immediate impact because the government has largely suspended asylum at the

U.S.-Mexico border during the coronavirus pandemic, citing public health concerns.

Still, letting the rules take effect would have been felt by some who can still claim asylum and make it significantly more difficult for all asylum-seekers once pandemic-related measures are lifted.

President Donald Trump's administration argued that the measures were an appropriate

response to a system rife with abuse and overwhelmed with unworthy claims.

They sought to redefine how people qualify for asylum and similar forms of humanitarian protection if they face persecution at home. The restrictions would have broadened the grounds for a judge to deem asylum applications "frivolous" and prohibit applicants from ever winning protections in the U.S.

U.S. District Judge James Donato in San Francisco sided with advocacy groups who sued, saying acting Homeland Security secretary Chad Wolf lacked authority to impose the sweeping rules.

Donato wrote that Wolf's appointment violated an established order of succession. He said it was the fifth time a court has ruled against Homeland Security on the same grounds.

US hit with record \$1B disasters in last year

Bloomberg News

California fires, Atlantic hurricanes and a Midwest windstorm were among a record number of \$1 billion disasters that hit the U.S. last year, highlighting the intensifying threat of climate change, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The agency tracked 22 billion-dollar calamities in 2020, surpassing the old record of 16 set in 2017 and 2011. Losses reached \$95 billion, making last year the fourth costliest since 1980, NOAA said in a report Fri-

day.

"Climate change, of course, is an increasing driver of some of these extremes that lead to billion-dollar disasters," said Adam Smith, a climate scientist with the U.S. National Centers for Environmental Information in Asheville, N.C..

The U.S. suffered a seemingly endless string of extreme weather in 2020. An unprecedented 30 hurricanes and tropical storms formed across the Atlantic and an all-time high of 12 hit the U.S. Hurricane Laura, which struck Louisiana in August,

topped the list of costliest events, causing \$19 billion in damages, the agency said.

In the West, wildfires spurred on by warm temperatures and dry winds burned record acreage, costing \$16.5 billion while, in the Midwest, a derecho tore a path of destruction that caused \$11 billion in losses. Other disasters included hail storms in the Midwest and Texas in April and May, tornadoes in the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys in the spring and drought and heatwaves in the western U.S. through the summer and fall.

Nun deaths show virus' toll in convents

Associated Press

LATHAM, N.Y. — Through the month of December, mixed in with joyful Christmas messages, death announcements filled the Facebook page of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet as a coronavirus outbreak took its toll in a residence for retired and infirm nuns.

"We have lost nine beloved sisters — wonderful, dedicated members of our religious community," said Sister Joan Mary Hartigan, director of St. Joseph's Provincial House in the Albany suburb of Latham.

The women were 84 to 98 years old when they died at the private residence for Roman Catholic nuns in the order of St. Joseph of Carondelet, which traces its roots to 1650 in Le Puy, France.

The county health department didn't learn the extent of the deadly toll of the outbreak at Provincial House until a story came out in the Times Union, County Executive Dan McCoy said. That's because unlike regulated nursing homes, retirement homes aren't required to notify state or county officials of deaths.

At the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary convent in Livonia, Mich., 13 Felician sisters ages 69 to 99 died of COVID-19 between April and June.

Seven died at a center for Maryknoll sisters in Ossining, N.Y.

In Wisconsin, eight nuns who lived at the Notre Dame of Elm Grove convent died in one week in December.

Washington

SEATTLE — The Washington State Department of Health announced on Friday that all eight regions in the state's new COVID-19 recovery plan will remain in the first phase until at least Jan. 18.

Gov. Jay Inslee announced the state's regional economic reopening plan on Tuesday, which focuses efforts on reopening regions rather than indi-

vidual counties.

"We know that all people in Washington want to move forward as quickly as possible with respect to COVID-19. However, these metrics show that we are just not ready to do so now," Dr. Umair A. Shah, Washington's Secretary of Health, said in a news release.

The new guidelines require regions meet four metrics in order to move to the next phase, at which point restaurants and fitness centers can open indoors at 25% capacity, sports competitions can resume with limited spectators, and wedding and funeral ceremonies can increase their number of guests.

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas coronavirus hospitalizations continued to edge closer to the 14,000 level Friday as the string of record hospitalizations continued, state health officials said.

COVID-19 patients in Texas hospitals numbered 13,921 Friday, marking the state's 12th consecutive daily record, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The 372 new fatalities brought the Texas COVID-19 death toll to 29,310, and 22,946 new confirmed and probable cases brought the total for the outbreak to more than 1.9 million, almost 334,711 of those now active.

Delaware

DOVER — Public health officials on Friday reported the first COVID-19-related death of a child in Delaware.

Officials said the death involved a child under the age of 5 from New Castle County who had a significant number of underlying health problems.

Also Friday, Democratic Gov. John Carney signed a revised emergency order lifting a 10 p.m. curfew on restaurants and bars starting Friday night. Those establishments must still require patrons to wear masks

and post signs on each table stating that only people from the same household can share a table.

The revised order also allows all sports contests and competitions to resume, with a maximum occupancy of 30%. That includes athletes, coaches, and other employees or staff. Each athlete may be accompanied by one person, who would not be included in the 30% capacity limit, but additional spectators are not permitted.

Illinois

CHICAGO — Some in-person instruction at Chicago public schools will resume Monday for the first time in months, the city's mayor and school chief reaffirmed Friday, warning teachers that their absence will have consequences.

The district is giving families the option for students in pre-kindergarten and some special education programs. K-8 students could return on Feb. 1. No date has been set for high school students.

About 6,500 students are expected Monday, the district said, still a fraction of the nation's third-largest district.

The Chicago Teachers Union, however, said many schools still carry risks for the coronavirus. Attendance by teachers this week has been uneven.

Washington

SEATTLE — Alaska Airlines said Friday that at least 14 people could be banned from the company's flights after the passengers were rowdy, argumentative and refused to wear masks on a flight from Dulles International Airport to Seattle.

The Seattle Times reported airline spokesperson Ray Lane said those passengers were on Flight 1085 from the D.C.-area airport to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on Thursday night.

"Last night, a number of passengers onboard Alaska Air-

lines Flight 1085 from Washington Dulles to Seattle were non-mask compliant, rowdy, argumentative and harassed our crew members," Lane wrote in an email Friday to the newspaper. "Their behavior was unacceptable. We apologize to our other guests who were made uncomfortable on the flight."

California

GLENDALE — A man who allegedly spat on people while jogging in a Los Angeles suburb because they weren't wearing masks has been arrested, police announced Friday.

James Howard, 38, of Glendale, was arrested on Dec. 30 and booked for investigation of battery, elder abuse and committing a hate crime, police said.

"Howard admitted to committing the series of reported assaults along with other assaults that had not been reported," the police statement said.

Florida

MIAMI — A South Florida nurse fraudulently obtained about \$420,000 in coronavirus relief funds, federal prosecutors said.

Giraldo Caraballo, 55, of Miami, made his initial appearance Friday in Miami federal court. He's charged with engaging in transactions in unlawful proceeds and making false statements to a financial institution.

Caraballo applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program loan on behalf of his company, Professional Skills Inc., according to a criminal complaint. He claimed the company had 28 employees and an average monthly payroll of \$168,000, which investigators said was untrue. The complaint also alleges that Caraballo applied for and received approximately \$55,000 in Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Instead of using the money for payroll, prosecutors said Caraballo used it for personal expenses.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Llama found wandering in field near highway

MA NEWBURYPORT — A passerby spotted a wandering llama in a field off an interstate in Massachusetts and with the help of an animal control officer, brought it to a farm for safekeeping.

Kayla Provencher, the animal control officer for Newburyport and West Newbury, does not have any leads on the wandering llama's owner.

For now, the llama is being housed just across the state line in New Hampshire with farm owner Carly LeSage.

University releases annual list of little-used words

MI DETROIT — A team at Wayne State University in Detroit released an annual list of little-used words it deems worthy of resurrection.

Anagapesis (loss of feelings for someone who was formerly loved), blatteroon (a senseless babbler or boaster), snollygoster (a shrewd, unprincipled person, especially a politician) and footle (to engage in fruitless activity; to mess about) are among the 10 words selected by Wayne State University's Word Warriors.

Unlike overused words or phrases that counterparts at Lake Superior State University list each year for banishment, the Word Warriors want to dust off those that have fallen into disuse.

Rare coins from beaches to be shown in museum

NC HATTERAS VILLAGE— A museum in North Carolina plans to exhibit a collection of coins that were found on the Outer Banks. The coins date as far back as 221 BC and originated in places as far away as Spain and Egypt.

The Virginian-Pilot reported that the 55 coins are currently kept in a back room of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum.

The late William Sell and his wife, Catherine, of Pennsylvania collected the coins over decades. They walked the Hatteras Is-

land beaches while vacationing there from 1939 to 2001.

Suspect escapes after COVID cleaners leave

OR PORTLAND — A man suspected of attempted murder who escaped a secure room in a Portland police precinct may have gotten out after a COVID-19 cleaning crew opened the door, police said.

Police arrested David Dahlen on suspicion of ramming a stolen pickup into an officer Dec. 24. The Portland Police Bureau said that while Dahlen was in a holding cell in the detectives division, a crew doing COVID-19 disinfection opened the door and then closed it when they saw him.

Preliminary investigation shows the door didn't fully latch and investigators believe Dahlen pushed it open and exited the building through a stairwell, police said.

Man pleads guilty to owning Molotov cocktails

WA SEATTLE — An Edmonds man pleaded guilty to possessing Molotov cocktail devices that he used to set fire to Seattle police vehicles during a protest following the May 25 death of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer that turned violent.

Kelly Thomas Jackson, 20, manufactured the destructive devices after researching how on the internet, according to his plea agreement.

He faces up to 10 years in prison on each of the two felony counts of possession of a destructive device.

Man arrested for making threats with machete

SD SIOUX FALLS — A Sioux Falls man was arrested for threatening people with a machete, according to police.

The man, 31, was arrested after officers were called to a gas station for a weapons violation.

The man was talking with two people at the gas station and became upset, walked to his car and came back and threatened the two men with a machete, according to police spokesman Sam Clemens.

Clemens said the man tried to block the men from leaving, but they eventually drove away, the Argus Leader reported.

Feds investigate shooting of euthanized bald eagle

AK JUNEAU— The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is investigating the shooting of a bald eagle near Alaska's capital city, which led to the protected bird being euthanized.

The injured eagle was rescued in Juneau, but it was not clear the bird had been shot until the Alaska Raptor Center in Sitka did an X-ray, The Juneau Empire reported.

The bird's pelvis was shattered and there was mounting lead poisoning from a type of shotgun ammunition that is illegal in Alaska, and it had to be euthanized, Juneau Raptor Center Manager Kathy Benner said.

Killing bald eagles carries penalties of up to a \$250,000 fine and a five-year prison sentence, the Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Officials: Juveniles stole vehicle, rammed police car

NC WINSTON-SALEM — A group of juveniles in an allegedly stolen vehicle rammed a North Carolina police car before leading authorities on a chase that ended when the suspect vehicle's tires blew out, according to police.

Winston-Salem police officers were trying to block in a vehicle that was reported stolen when the occupants of the car accelerated and rammed the squad car, The Winston-Salem Journal reported.

Officers chased the car across the city, police said. The pursuit ended when the stolen vehicle hit a curb and blew out its tires, according to investigators.

Four juvenile suspects jumped out and were captured after a short foot chase, the agency said.

— From The Associated Press



STARS AND STRIPES

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit www.stripes.com.

**Reporting
World, National
and Military News**

Brees doesn't want Saints' spotlight

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Drew Brees doesn't want the Saints to make their upcoming playoff run about him, even if the record-setting quarterback's career could end on any given weekend.

Brees, who turns 42 on Jan. 15 and is the NFL's all-time leading passer, hasn't committed to playing another season.

His extraordinary 20 seasons as an NFL player could end with either the next Saints loss, or perhaps, a Super Bowl victory. But Brees bristles at the notion that speculation about the end of his playing days should overshadow the story of the Saints' 2020 season or the club's preparation for the single-elimination NFL postseason.

"All I know is this, I did not come back to play this season for myself," said Brees. "I came back for my team. I came back for the city. I came back for the organization. That's why I am here."

It sounds like coach Sean Payton and Brees' teammates are in lockstep on that front as they prepare for their playoff opener Sunday against the Chicago Bears in the Superdome.

Payton went so far as to assert that a potentially imminent end to Brees' career is, "The last thing on anyone's mind."

"Right now, it's all the things necessary to beat Chicago," Payton continued. "Shoot, there will be a number of players, coaches, personnel — there will be changes every year."

But Brees has been a constant in New Orleans since 2006, a time when lingering devastation from Hurricane Katrina, which had struck less than a year earlier, re-

mained commonplace across the cityscape.

The Saints had gone 3-13 the season during their displacement by the storm in 2005. But Brees quickly led a storybook turnaround in the team's first season back in New Orleans and the Superdome. The Saints made the playoffs and advanced to the NFC title game at the end of the 2006 season. That captivating run ended against the Bears in Chicago.

What followed during the next decade included the city's lone major pro sports championship and more than a few historically significant moments in the Superdome.

Brees was the Super Bowl MVP when the Saints capped their 2009 season with a championship. Brees later obliterated franchise passing records and began eclipsing the most significant passing marks in NFL history.

He has passed for 80,358 yards in the regular season (postseason statistics do not count toward NFL career totals or records), making Brees the first NFL QB to pass for 80,000 yards. His 571 touchdowns rank second behind only Tom Brady's 581.

All the while, Brees dedicated himself to supporting New Orleans with millions of dollars in charitable endeavors, opened businesses in the area, took part in national campaigns to promote the city's tourism industry and even started a network of flag football leagues, including one in which he coaches his sons in New Orleans.

"No one knows Drew's future and what that holds," said left tackle Terron Armstead, who has been Brees' teammate since 2013. "So, we're just going to take this thing

one game at a time, try to execute our game plan to the best of our ability and be victorious week after week."

If Brees were looking for reasons to retire, he could start with recent injuries. He missed five games with a thumb injury in 2019. He missed four games with rib and lung injuries this season.

He also has a handsomely paid job as an analyst on NBC football broadcasts awaiting him, and it would be hard to blame a father for wanting to be more involved in the lives of his children, although they seem to enjoy their father's football career.

Brees has spoken this season of being on "borrowed time." And Payton suggested in a radio interview last spring, before ultimately backtracking, that Brees would retire after this season.

Brees doesn't pass for as many yards as he used to. He eclipsed the 5,000-yard mark in four seasons, but this season had 2,942, his second straight season with fewer than 3,000.

Still, his efficiency has remained high.

This season, Brees completed 70.5% of his passes, which compares favorably to most QBs except himself. He finished the 2018 season with a record 74.4% completion rate, which last season dropped only slightly to 74.3%.

Technically, Brees is under contract through next season after signing a two-year, \$50 million deal last offseason. But he doesn't have to play it out.

"You know what? Honestly, I've played the last four seasons in a row as if it was my last," Brees said. "So, as I sit here, right now, my approach is very much the same."

Browns get three players off COVID list to face Steelers

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The Browns finally caught a break when safety Ronnie Harrison, tight end Harrison Bryant and linebacker Malcolm Smith were activated from the COVID-19 list and can play in Sunday night's wild-card game at Pittsburgh.

The hard-hitting Harrison's return helps a Cleveland secondary missing cornerbacks Denzel Ward and Kevin Johnson, who remain on the COVID-19 list.

Ward is the Browns' best defensive back and his absence hurts as he would have been assigned to cover Juju Smith-Schuster

or Chase Claypool, Pittsburgh's top deep threats.

Cornerback Terrance Mitchell's status is also unclear. He's been out — an issue not tied to an injury — and is listed as questionable. If he can't play, Tavierre Thomas would likely take on a larger role.

The sixth-seeded Browns (11-5) will make their first playoff appearance since the 2002 season short-handed.

First-year coach Kevin Stefanski and Pro Bowl left guard Joel Bitonio both tested positive this week and cannot take part in the game because league rules require anyone

testing positive to isolate for 10 days.

Harrison was just placed on the COVID list Thursday. However, it turns out his test was a false positive and he was cleared to play after subsequent negative tests.

Also, the NFL determined safety Jovante Moffatt was not a close contact and he remains on the active roster.

Cleveland will also be missing wide receiver and special teams dynamo KhaDarel Hodge and several assistant coaches because of COVID-19 protocols for its third matchup against the Steelers this season. The teams split the first two games.

Harbaugh, Michigan agree on a new 5-year contract

Associated Press

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — Michigan has decided to stick with coach Jim Harbaugh, finalizing a new, five-year deal that cuts his guaranteed compensation but gives him an opportunity to make up for the financial loss if he can start winning championships.

The school will pay him \$4 million in 2021 with a chance to make nearly \$8 million in the fifth year of his contract, according to the memorandum of understanding signed by Harbaugh and athletic director Warde Manuel on Friday.

Harbaugh can make \$1 million for winning the Big Ten title and another \$1 million for winning the national championship along with other bonuses he will earn if he can improve the team's success on the field.

"My thanks to athletic director Warde Manuel for the trust that he has shown in allowing me to continue to coach the University of Michigan football team, and to President Mark Schlissel and the Board of Regents for their ongoing support," Harbaugh said.

The deal ends months of speculation about Harbaugh's future. He could have potentially returned to the NFL or the school could have cut loose a coach with one year left on the seven-year contract paying him about \$7 million per season that he signed after leaving the NFL.

"I continue to believe that Jim is the right man to lead our program in pursuit of Big Ten and CFP championships," Manuel said. "Our program didn't achieve at a level that anyone expected this year but I know those setbacks will drive the coaches, players and staff moving forward. Jim is a tireless worker and competitor. Following the completion of the season we talked for many hours on what it will take for Jim to lead and get us back on the right trajectory."

Harbaugh is now under contract at Michigan through the 2025 season with his new deal, which includes relatively affordable buyouts for both sides if they decide to part ways.

Michigan can buy out Harbaugh's contract for \$4 million if it decides to fire him without cause after the 2021 season and the amount is reduced by \$1 million in each of the following three years. Harbaugh, meanwhile, would owe the university \$2 million if

he leaves after the 2021 season, a figure that is reduced by \$500,000 in each of the following three years.

Harbaugh has won nearly 70% of his games, but is winless against archrival Ohio State and as an underdog against any opponent. Michigan has not won the Big Ten since 2004, seven seasons after its last national championship.

The Wolverines were 2-4 in Harbaugh's sixth season, which ended with three straight games being canceled due to a COVID-19 outbreak within the program. They were 0-3 at the Big House, too, including listless losses to rebuilding rival Michigan State and previously winless Penn State.

"There is work to be done and challenges to be addressed," Harbaugh said. "These challenges are being addressed as we continue to strive for excellence in the classroom and championships on the field, a message that I hope is noted in the language of our agreed-upon contract."

Harbaugh's hiring was hailed in late 2014 and some suggested the former Wolverines quarterback was going to be a savior for college football's winningest program.

It hasn't worked out that way so far.

Harbaugh does have a 49-22 record, but his 0-5 mark against the Buckeyes is glaring. And when Wisconsin beat the Wolverines 49-11 in 2020, Harbaugh fell to 0-11 in games his team was not favored to win.

Harbaugh seemed to be the perfect person to turn around Michigan's program, which had slumped after Lloyd Carr's retirement following the 2007 season, given his success with the San Francisco 49ers and as the coach at Stanford.

He didn't dampen enthusiasm with a pair of 10-win seasons, but he followed that up by averaging four losses the following three years. This all came alongside a salesmanship that stood out in the staid Big Ten: Harbaugh starred in a rap video, traveled the country for youth camps, took his team to Florida for spring break and overseas on trips, and even had a sleepover with a recruit.

There were questions about Harbaugh's future well before this pandemic-altered season kicked off. In July, Harbaugh said he had been closing in on a contract extension earlier in the year until the pandemic became the top priority.

Williams lifts Boilermakers past Spartans

Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Trevion Williams knew no one doubted he would get the ball when Purdue had a chance to score a go-ahead basket against No. 23 Michigan State.

The Spartans certainly thought the pivotal inbounds play would go to Williams. They just couldn't stop him from getting the ball — or the bucket.

Williams made a short jumper with 4.5 seconds left and scored 22 of his 26 points after halftime, rallying the Boilermakers over the Spartans 55-54 on Friday night after trailing by 17.

"Everybody knew the ball was going to me," the 6-foot-10, 265-pound power forward said. "I just wanted to take my time with it."

Aaron Henry, who scored 13 points, missed a runner from the left side of the lane just before the buzzer.

Boise State 80, Air Force 69: Abu Kigab had a season-high 25 points plus 11 rebounds as the host Broncos matched the program's longest win streak at 10 straight games.

Derrick Alston Jr. had 19 points for Boise State (10-1, 6-0 Mountain West Conference). Marcus Shaver Jr. added 14 points. Mladen Armus had eight rebounds.

The Falcons totaled 40 points in the first half, a season high for the team.

A.J. Walker had 23 points for Air Force (3-7, 1-5), which has lost four games in a row. Chris Joyce added 17 points. Glen McClintock had 14 points.

The Broncos improve to 2-0 against the Falcons for the season. Boise State defeated Air Force 78-59 on Wednesday.

Louisiana 66, Arkansas-Little Rock 64: Theo Akwuba scored 12 points with 13 rebounds and the host Ragin Cajuns survived a near blackout and a missed three-pointer at the horn to win.

Down by two with 5.2 seconds left and the Trojans preparing for a shot, the main lights in Louisiana's Cajundome went out to leave only dimmed red lights to illuminate the floor.

The reduced lighting; however, lasted just two seconds and the officials never stopped play. Full lighting returned, and Ruot Monyong launched a desperation three-pointer.

Curry rallies Warriors past Clippers

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Stephen Curry scored 38 points and the Golden State Warriors erased a big second-half deficit Friday night to beat the Los Angeles Clippers 115-105.

The Warriors trailed by 21 late in the third quarter but Curry scored 19 in that period and pulled the Warriors within six entering the fourth.

Golden State (5-4) then outscored Los Angeles 34-18 over the final 12 minutes and snapped a four-game losing streak against the Clippers, who beat them at the Chase Center two nights earlier.

Paul George had 25 points for Los Angeles (6-4) and Kawhi Leonard added 24, but the Warriors turned up the defense after the Clippers scored 65 in the first half.

Curry got payback after being held to just 13 points in Wednesday's loss. His nine three-pointers Friday were the most by a

Golden State player this season, and he added 11 assists.

"It's just who Steph is," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "He's been doing this for many, many years and it's one of the reasons he's a two-time MVP. Usually with Steph, when he has a tough game he bounces back with the next one."

Andrew Wiggins scored 16 for Golden State but Curry was predominantly a one-man show through the first three quarters. He got help in the fourth as Eric Paschall, Brad Wanamaker and Kent Bazemore all hit big shots.

Los Angeles shot 58.7% from the floor in the first half and led 65-51. George had 17 points on 6-of-7 shooting, including 4-for-4 from beyond the arc.

"I think it's good something like this happened to us early in the season," George said. "We have to be a better closing-out team ... They got hot and they stayed hot the

last two quarters. The momentum swung and that team was playing with a lot of confidence."

But Curry rallied the Warriors with his big third quarter and when Paschall hit a three-pointer to put the team up 92-89 with 10:01 left, it gave Golden State its first lead since it was 3-2.

The Clippers got to the basket easily in the first two quarters, outscoring the Warriors 28-16 in the paint.

Tip-ins

Clippers: Serge Ibaka had 19 points on 9-for-12 shooting. ... Leonard's missed free throw in the second quarter ended a streak of 46 consecutive free throws made by Los Angeles at the Chase Center.

Warriors: Rookie center James Wiseman had nine points and six rebounds in just 15 minutes ... Kerr found success with a smaller three-guard lineup down the stretch.

NBA ROUNDUP

Grant propels Pistons over Suns in overtime

Associated Press

DETROIT — Jerami Grant had 31 points, 10 rebounds and a crucial assist near the end of regulation, and the Detroit Pistons beat the Phoenix Suns 110-105 in overtime after rallying from a 23-point deficit.

The Pistons scored the first nine points of the extra session after barely leading at all during regulation. Grant had only two assists on the night, but one of them was to Mason Plumlee for a dunk that tied it at 93 with 9.6 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter. Then Devin Booker missed a jumper that could have won it for the Suns.

Booker scored 23 points for Phoenix, including a three-pointer with 40.7 seconds left in overtime that brought the Suns within three. Grant answered with a three-pointer in front of the Detroit bench to double the lead.

Phoenix entered the game with the best record in the Western Conference. The Pistons came in with the worst mark in the NBA.

Lakers 117, Bulls 115: LeBron James had 28 points, seven rebounds and seven assists, and Los Angeles overcame the absence of two injured starters to beat visiting Chicago.

Zach LaVine scored 38 points, but the UCLA product missed a 17-foot jumper with 4.7 seconds left that would have put the Bulls ahead.

Jazz 131, Bucks 118: Donovan Mitchell scored 32 points and Utah made a franchise-record 25 three-pointers to hand Milwaukee its first home loss.

The Jazz shot 25-for-53 from three-point range to snap a two-game skid after double-digit losses at Brooklyn and New York.

Raptors 144, Kings 123: Pascal Siakam had 17 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds, Toronto made 20 three-pointers and set a franchise record for scoring while winning at Sacramento for its second win of the season.

Fred VanVleet scored 34 points to help the Raptors snap a three-game losing streak.

Hornets 118, Pelicans 110: Gordon Hayward scored 26 points and Charlotte methodically came back from an 18-point, second-quarter deficit to win at New Orleans.

Miles Bridges scored 20 points and Devonte Graham had 17 for the Hornets, who didn't take their first lead until the fourth quarter.

Grizzlies 115, Nets 110: Dillon Brooks scored 24 points and Memphis held on to

beat Brooklyn after Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas left midway through the game due to health and safety protocols.

Brandon Clarke added 21 for Memphis, which got its first home win of the season.

Celtics 116, Wizards 107: Jayson Tatum had 32 points, Jaylen Brown had 27 points and 13 rebounds, and host Boston held off Bradley Beal and Washington for its fourth straight win.

Beal had 41 points and eight rebounds a game after tying the franchise record with 60 points against the 76ers.

Thunder 101, Knicks 89: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 25 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, Hamidou Diallo scored a season-high 23 points, and Oklahoma City overcame an ugly start to win at New York.

Al Horford added 15 points and was practically the only offense early for the Thunder, which got better as the game went along and improved to 4-1 on the road.

Rockets 132, Magic 90: Christian Wood scored 22 points and tied a career high with 15 rebounds to lead host Houston past short-handed Orlando. The Rockets were up by 29 at halftime and had extended the lead to 81-43 after consecutive three-pointers by John Wall and P.J. Tucker with about five minutes left in the third.