

## Trump: Dems causing ‘tremendous anger’

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — With the House set to impeach, President Donald Trump is blaming Democratic congressional foes for “tremendous anger” in the country and last week’s deadly attack on the Capitol by his supporters after he urged them on their way.

The embattled president, in his first remarks to reporters since last week’s attack, took no responsibility Tuesday for the deadly mob invasion of the building, but also said he wanted “no violence.”

Trump defended his fiery rally remarks to a protest crowd last week as “totally appropriate,” and he showed no remorse for the following attack, the most serious and deadly domestic incursion at the Capitol in the nation’s history.

On impeachment, Trump said it’s “a really terrible thing that they’re doing.”

“To continue on this path, I think it’s causing tremendous danger to our country, and it’s causing tremendous anger,” he said. “I want no violence.”

The president spoke as he left for Texas to survey the border wall with Mexico. He took no questions.

Impeachment ahead, the House on Tuesday first planned to try to convince the vice

president and Cabinet to act even more quickly to remove Trump from office, warning that he is a threat to democracy in the remaining days of his presidency.

House lawmakers are reconvening at the Capitol for the first time since the deadly pro-Trump riot to approve a resolution calling on Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment to declare the president unable to serve. Pence is not expected to take any such action. The House would next move swiftly to impeach Trump.

Trump faces a single charge — “incitement of insurrection” — in the impeachment resolution that the House will begin debating Wednesday, a week before Democrat Joe Biden is set to be inaugurated, Jan. 20.

The unprecedented events, only the first U.S. president to be twice impeached, are unfolding in a nation bracing for more unrest. The FBI has warned ominously of potential armed protests in Washington and many states by Trump loyalists ahead of Biden’s inauguration. In a dark foreshadowing, the Washington Monument was closed to the public and the inauguration ceremony on the west steps of the Capitol will be off limits to the public.

It all added up to stunning final moments for Trump’s presidency, as Democrats and

a growing number of Republicans declare he is unfit for office and could do more damage after inciting a mob that violently ransacked the U.S. Capitol last Wednesday.

A Capitol police officer died from injuries suffered in the riot, and police shot a woman during the violence. Three others died in what authorities said were medical emergencies.

“We have to be very tough and very strong right now in defending the Constitution and democracy,” said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., an author of both pieces of legislation, in an interview.

Democrats aren’t the only ones who say Trump needs to go.

Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., encouraged House GOP colleagues late Monday to “vote your conscience,” according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private call. She has spoken critically of Trump’s actions but has not said publicly how she will vote.

Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania joined GOP Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska over the weekend in calling for Trump to “go away as soon as possible.”

Pence and Trump met late Monday for the first time since the Capitol attack, and had a “good conversation.”

## Afghanistan troop drawdown goes on despite NDAA

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon still expects to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan to 2,500 by Friday despite the new defense law that prohibits funding that would allow personnel levels in the country to dip below 4,000, according to a defense statement Monday.

The fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act passed Jan. 1 states that no Defense Department funds from fiscal years 2020 or 2021 can be used to drawdown U.S. troops in Afghanistan below 4,000 or 2,000 until the defense secretary submits a report to Congress that assesses what effect the reduction in forces would have on areas, including risk to U.S. personnel and the on-

going counterterrorism mission.

On Nov. 17, acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller announced plans to reduce U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq by Jan. 15, five days before President-elect Joe Biden is sworn into office. The new administration would have 2,500 troops in Afghanistan and 2,500 in Iraq, while the situation in both countries remains precarious.

Pentagon officials said they are evaluating the new law’s impact on the ongoing drawdown in Afghanistan, and the Defense Department will “fulfill regulatory provisions set forth in Section 1215” of the 2021 NDAA.

“Currently, no new orders have been issued which impact the progression of the conditions-based drawdown expected to re-

ach 2,500 by Jan. 15, 2021,” Army Maj. Rob Lodewick, a Pentagon spokesman, said Monday in a statement.

The NDAA also states that the president can waive the funding limitation on troop reduction totals if he submits to Congress a “written determination that the waiver is important to the national security interests of the United States, and a detailed explanation of how the waiver furthers those interests.”

Pentagon officials did not say whether President Donald Trump was seeking such a waiver this week.

There are about 3,000 service members in Afghanistan now, according to a defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the drawdown.

# FBI warns of nationwide armed protests

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The FBI is warning of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington, D.C., in the days leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, stoking fears of more bloodshed after last week's deadly siege at the U.S. Capitol.

An internal FBI bulletin warned, as of Sunday, that the nationwide protests may start later this week and extend through Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration, according to two law enforcement officials who read details of the memo to The Associated Press. Investigators believe some of the people are members of extremist groups, the officials said. The bulletin was first reported by ABC.

"Armed protests are being planned at all 50 state capitals

from 16 January through at least 20 January, and at the U.S. Capitol from 17 January through 20 January," the bulletin said, according to one official. The officials were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The FBI issued at least one other bulletin — they go out to law enforcement nationwide on the topic — before the riots last week. On Dec. 29, it warned of the potential for armed demonstrators targeting legislatures, the second official said.

"While our standard practice is to not comment on specific intelligence products, the FBI is supporting our state, local, and federal law enforcement partners with maintaining public safety in the communities we serve," the bureau said in a statement. "Our efforts are fo-

cused on identifying, investigating, and disrupting individuals that are inciting violence and engaging in criminal activity."

The FBI said it wasn't focused on peaceful protests but "on those threatening their safety and the safety of other citizens with violence and destruction of property."

Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, told reporters Monday that the Guard is also looking at any issues across the country,

"We're keeping a look across the entire country to make sure that we're monitoring, and that our Guards in every state are in close coordination with their local law enforcement agencies to provide any support requested," he said.

The riots followed weeks of online calls for violence in the

nation's capital in the waning days of Donald Trump's presidency. There have been several arrests, and at least two Capitol police officers, one who took a selfie with rioters, and another who put on a Make America Great Again hat, were suspended. At least a dozen more are under investigation, according to lawmakers.

A tweet in which Trump promised that last Wednesday's event in Washington, D.C., "will be wild" fueled a "month-long frenzy of incitements, strategizing, and embrace of violence against lawmakers," according to a research group that tracks online extremism activity. In a report issued Saturday, the SITE Intelligence Group also warned that the Capitol attack has emboldened Trump-supporting extremists.

## 'QAnon Shaman,' arrested after riot, served in Navy

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

The man described as the "QAnon Shaman," who became the face last week of the Capitol riots in Washington after being photographed shirtless, sporting a horned headdress and painted face, is a Navy veteran who worked as a supply clerk, according to reports.

Jacob Anthony Chansley, 33, also known as Jake Angeli, of Arizona, was arrested Saturday by federal authorities on charges of illegally entering a restricted building and violent entry and disorderly conduct on the Capitol grounds, according to the U.S. Justice Department.

Chansley and thousands of other supporters of President Donald Trump shocked the nation last Wednesday when they marched from a Trump rally to

the Capitol, battled police and forced their way inside as Congress met to certify Joe Biden's election as president.

Two people died during the takeover. Three other people died afterward due to "medical emergencies," according to The Washington Post on Monday.

Chansley served in the Navy as a supply clerk from September 2005 to October 2007, leaving the service as a seaman apprentice, Military.com reported Monday, citing a copy of his personnel record.

Chansley defended his actions Thursday in an interview with Arizona's ABC15 reporting partner Newsy.

"I'm not really all that worried about it because, in all honesty ... I didn't break any laws. I walked through open doors," Chansley said. "I obey the orders of the president of the United States."

## Up to 15K guardsmen could be activated for inauguration

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Some 15,000 National Guard troops could be deployed to bolster law enforcement efforts during President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration, amid concerns of violence after a mob stormed the U.S. Capitol last week, the National Guard chief said Monday.

The National Guard deployment in Washington this week will increase from roughly 6,200 troops from D.C. and six states to about 10,000 troops by the weekend, said Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, the chief of the National Guard Bureau. The Pentagon has authorized that deployment to grow up to 15,000 troops, depending on the requests of federal law enforcement, including the Secret Service, the Capitol Police and the U.S. Park Police,

Hokanson told reporters Monday.

Those troops are expected to "support security, logistics, liaison and communications missions," the general said. No decisions have been made about whether some or all troops will be allowed to carry firearms or nonlethal weapons.

As the deadly siege of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump unfolded Wednesday, the Pentagon authorized the deployment of the entire 1,100-troop D.C. National Guard. About 5,100 additional troops from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and New York have since arrived in Washington to help bolster security, among other tasks, Hokanson said. He did not disclose from which states additional troops would deploy.

# Trump Homeland Security chief abruptly resigns

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's acting head of the Department of Homeland Security abruptly resigned Monday, leaving the post ahead of schedule as the nation faces a heightened terrorism threat from extremists seeking to reverse the election.

The announcement by acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf was perplexing. It came less than a week after he pledged to remain in office and just 10 days before the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. Wolf cited a legal challenge to his leadership as a reason for his resignation, but that had surfaced months ago.

"For months we have known Chad Wolf has been serving illegally in his position, so the timing of his resignation from the Department today is questionable," said Rep. Bennie Thompson, the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee. "He has chosen to resign during a time of national crisis and when domestic terrorists may be planning additional attacks on our government."

Wolf, who had been serving in an acting capacity since November 2019 and was never confirmed by the Senate, said he was compelled to leave by "recent events," in-

cluding court rulings that found he could not legally hold the position. He did not specify the other events or cite other factors.

"These events and concerns increasingly serve to divert attention and resources away from the important work of the Department in this critical time of a transition of power," he said in a written message to DHS employees.

Wolf's departure followed the abrupt resignation of other Cabinet officials angered by Trump's role in encouraging the mob to storm the Capitol on Jan. 6 over his false claims of election fraud.

Wolf condemned the violent attack on the Capitol by Trump supporters, calling it "tragic and sickening." He also said then that he would stay on at DHS until the end of the administration to ensure a smooth transition and to help the department stay focused on the threats facing the nation.

It was unclear what prompted him to change course with the nation braced for the potential for more violence ahead of the Jan. 20 inauguration. The FBI has warned of plans for armed protests at all 50 state capitals and in Washington, D.C.

The White House had no immediate comment.

# UN: COVID-19 herd immunity unlikely in 2021

Associated Press

GENEVA — The World Health Organization's chief scientist warned that even as numerous countries start rolling out vaccination programs to stop COVID-19, herd immunity is highly unlikely this year.

At a media briefing on Monday, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan said it was critical countries and their populations maintain strict social distancing and other outbreak control measures for the foreseeable future.

In recent weeks, Britain, the U.S., France, Canada, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands and others have begun vaccinating millions of their citizens against the coronavirus.

"Even as vaccines start protecting the most vulnerable, we're not going to achieve any levels of population immunity or herd immunity in 2021," Swaminathan said. "Even if it happens in a couple of pockets, in a few countries, it's not going to protect people across the world."

Scientists typically estimate that a vaccination rate of about 70% is needed for herd immunity, where entire populations are protected against a disease.

But some fear that the extremely infectious nature of COVID-19 could require a significantly higher threshold.

Dr. Bruce Aylward, an adviser to WHO's director-general, said the U.N. health agency was hoping coronavirus vaccinations might begin later this month or in February in some of the world's poorer countries, calling on the global community to do more to ensure access to all countries.

"We cannot do that on our own," Aylward said, saying WHO needed the cooperation of vaccine manufacturers in particular to start immunizing vulnerable populations.

Still, the majority of the world's COVID-19 vaccine supply has already been bought by rich countries.

The U.N.-backed initiative known as COVAX, which is aiming to deliver shots to developing countries is short of vaccines, money and logistical help as donor countries scramble to protect their own citizens, particularly in the wake of newly detected COVID-19 variants in Britain and South Africa, which many officials are blaming for increased spread.

WHO, however, said that most of the recent spikes in transmission were due to "the increased mixing of people" rather than the new variants.

# Army moves to oust 2nd lieutenant over anti-Semitic post on TikTok

By COREY DICKSTEIN

Stars and Stripes

The Army plans to remove a second lieutenant at Fort Stewart, Ga., from the service over his anti-Semitic social media post last year that went viral and resulted in his suspension from leadership roles, a service spokesman said Monday.

Army Lt. Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla, the commander of the XVII Airborne Corps, recommended 2nd Lt. Nathan Freihofer for separation after an investigation into his TikTok post on Aug. 28 about Jewish people killed in the Holocaust, said Col. Joe Buccino, a spokesman for the XVII Airborne Corps. In Freihofer's post to some 3 million followers, he said those who were offended by the comment should "get the f— out, because it's a

joke."

The Army launched a probe into the post, which was removed from TikTok, and stripped Freihofer of leadership roles within the 3rd Infantry Division, where he is a field artillery officer.

Kurilla found "Freihofer's anti-Semitic statement on TikTok inconsistent with the values of Army service and inappropriate for anyone in a position of leadership over American soldiers," Buccino said in a statement issued Monday. "As a result, last month, the Corps commander initiated the process of removing Freihofer from the Army."

Freihofer has two weeks to present Kurilla with a final argument defending himself before he can be removed from uniform, Buccino said.



# Surging virus deaths in Calif. now top 30K

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The coronavirus death toll in California reached 30,000 on Monday, another staggering milestone as the nation's most populous state endures the worst surge of the nearly yearlong pandemic.

Newly confirmed infections are rising at a dizzying rate of more than a quarter-million a week, and a record 1,163 deaths were reported during the weekend. Los Angeles County is one of the epicenters, and health officials there are telling residents to wear a mask even when at home if they go outside regularly and live with someone elderly or otherwise at high risk.

It took California six months to record its first 10,000 deaths. But in barely a month, the total rose from 20,000 to 30,000, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University. California ranks third nationally, behind Texas and New York, which is No. 1 with nearly 40,000 deaths.

California has deployed 88 refrigerated trailers to use as makeshift morgues mostly in hard-hit Southern California, where traditional storage space is dwindling.

Hospitalizations also have exploded in California, and many hospitals are stretched to the limit. Still, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and the state's top health officer said there is a sliver of hope, with hospitalizations leveling off in the last week and vaccinations about to shift into a higher gear.

## New Mexico

SANTA FE — A wastewater monitoring program launched last month has helped to prevent a COVID-19 outbreak at a juvenile justice facility in southern New Mexico, according to state officials.

The New Mexico Environment Department said the virus was detected in wastewater samples taken from the state-run facility in Las Cruces in late December.

After testing more than 100 people, they were able to determine that an asymptomatic positive individual was working in the facility. That person was instructed to isolate, and subsequent wastewater samples did not detect the virus, indicating that an outbreak was prevented among the young people and staff at the facility.

## Maine

AUGUSTA — The Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles has reinstated regular deadlines that were extended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Gov. Janet Mills, a Democrat, has rescinded a March executive order that eased requirements for renewals. The reinstated deadlines and requirements apply to driver's licenses, driver permits, state identification cards, commercial driver licenses and numerous other credentials that have expired since Mills first declared a state of civil emergency.

Driver's license vision screenings that were waived last year are also back in effect. The Maine Department of the Secretary of State said in a statement that the "original executive order was implemented due to the pandemic-related closure of Bureau of Motor Vehicles offices in March, and is no longer necessary, as all BMV branches have now reopened to the public for walk-in transactions."

## Kentucky

FRANKFORT — Graffiti proclaiming COVID-19 as a fraud was spray-painted on the home mailbox of Kentucky's top public health official in an action that Gov. Andy Beshear denounced Monday as an attempt to "create fear."

The weekend vandalism occurred at the home of Dr. Steven Stack, the state's public health commissioner. Stack frequently speaks at the governor's press conferences in taking a high-profile role in Beshear's efforts to combat the coronavirus.

"Because of his work, thousands of people are alive today that wouldn't be," Beshear said at a press conference. "And whether you agree or disagree with the steps that ultimately I made the calls on, trying to create fear in his family is the lowest form of low."

The words "COVID is PCR fraud" were spray-painted on Stack's mailbox, Beshear said. PCR is a standard test for COVID-19.

## North Dakota

BISMARCK — North Dakota's COVID-19 update released Monday showed no deaths for a third straight day, a mark that hasn't been seen in nearly six months although health officials noted that virus reports are typically sporadic over the weekend.

The two previous days of no fatalities did not change the state's death toll ranking of sixth-highest per capita in the country at about about 178 deaths per 100,000 people, according to The COVID Tracking Project. A total of 1,352 people have died from complications due to the coronavirus.

Health officials have confirmed 16 deaths

this month, after 272 on December and 494 in November.

## Massachusetts

BOSTON — Boston schoolchildren will return to the classroom starting next month using a four-phase hybrid model announced Monday, under a tentative agreement reached by school officials and the city's teachers union.

"The best learning environment for our students is in their classrooms, with their peers, under the care of our educators and staff. This agreement charts the course for the rest of the school year and establishes a safe return to in-person learning for additional students and staff," said Superintendent Brenda Cassellius in a statement.

The plan starts with high-priority students — including those with disabilities — returning on Feb. 1, and concludes with high school students resuming in-person classes the week of March 29.

## West Virginia

CHARLESTON — West Virginia reported a new peak in confirmed coronavirus cases and a record 206 deaths last week. Health workers also administered nearly 40,000 vaccine shots, doubling the pace of vaccinations.

As the pandemic hits new deadly peaks, the state is now up to 92,070 vaccine doses administered.

It closed the week leading the nation on number of doses per 100,000 residents. It next plans a big push to vaccinate teachers ahead of Gov. Jim Justice's goal to restart in-person education at as many schools as possible on Jan. 19.

A record 7,888 positive cases were reported last week, up 4% from the previous week. West Virginia has set weekly virus records in eight of the past 11 weeks.

## Nebraska

LINCOLN — Nebraska appears to have avoided a post-Christmas spike in coronavirus cases that many had feared, although it's not entirely clear why, Gov. Pete Ricketts said Monday.

It may be because people followed virus safety guidelines warning against attending holiday gatherings, Ricketts said during a news conference.

The Republican governor said the decision not to impose a statewide lockdown may have also played a role because it helped avoid pandemic fatigue that leads some to break the recommendations.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**18-year-old plans to run for mayor of his home town**

**MS** OXFORD — An 18-year-old Mississippi man from Oxford said he plans to run for mayor in his home city.

Brandon Pettis told the Oxford Eagle his mayoral campaign's platform focuses on the economy. Pettis told the newspaper he's focused on the "business aspect of life" and has been paying close attention to the city's budget over the last several years.

The main initiative Pettis said he plans to roll out is "Oxford First," which would look to secure funds to continue infrastructure projects that current Mayor Robyn Tannehill has been working on, the newspaper reported. The initiative also aims to contribute to local businesses and bring other franchise businesses to Oxford.

**No injuries after helicopter drops air conditioner onto street**

**CA** OAKLAND — A huge industrial air conditioning unit crashed onto a downtown Oakland street seconds after it was lifted by a helicopter.

Witnesses told the Mercury News that nobody was hurt when the cables snapped and the unit about the size of a truck fell onto the pavement and sent construction workers running for cover.

The unit plummeted about 40 feet.

**Volunteers try to decipher whaler's journal from 1844**

**NY** NEW LONDON — At least 35 volunteers are helping to decipher a 19th-century whaler's journal that New London's Custom House Maritime Museum acquired last year, The Day of New London reported.

The New London Maritime Society sent an email seeking help transcribing the 155-page journal by the anonymous crewman or crewmen who chronicled voyages of the Merrimac, which sailed from New London on July 17, 1844.

Nearly a third of the journal's 155 pages have been assigned. Some of the respon-

dents already have signed up for second and third pages.

Laurie Deredita, the society's librarian, is building an online display of the journal, posting pages as they become available.

**Teen killed by grenade that was likely sold at an antique mall**

**NC** SHALLOTTE — Authorities said a hand grenade that killed a Virginia teenager may be one of the many explosives that were unknowingly sold at a North Carolina antique mall.

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives did not release the identity of the teen, but they said in a statement the grenade that killed the victim may have been purchased at Fancy Flea Antique Mall in Shallotte.

"At the time of sale, neither the vendor nor buyer(s) believed the grenades to be functioning or hazardous," the agency said. They described the explosives as "'inert' MK2 grenades" that have "a style used during World War II."

**Reward offered for information after 4 wild horses fatally shot**

**AZ** SPRINGERVILLE — A \$5,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest of whoever is responsible for fatal shootings of four wild horses in northern Arizona.

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest officials said officers responded to reports of dead horses on the Black Mesa Ranger District outside of the Heber Wild Horse Territory.

Authorities said necropsies showed all four horses were shot to death.

**Man arrested after shots fired into apartments, guns found**

**OR** PORTLAND — Portland police responding to reports of shots fired from an apartment discovered multiple firearms, including a rifle with a magazine loaded with more than 50 rounds of ammunition, officials said. A man was taken in to custody without incident.

David Yaron, 31, of Portland was booked

into the Multnomah County Detention Center for investigation of 14 counts of reckless endangering and 15 counts of discharge of a firearm in the city, the Portland Police Bureau said in a statement.

Officers arriving at the Buckman Neighborhood building heard gunfire and a fire alarm from the second floor, police said. Using a loudspeaker, they convinced the man to leave the building unarmed. Officers then discovered the rifle and magazine, other firearms and body armor, and they found that shots had been fired into neighboring units. No one was hurt.

**Officers arrest man that they say stole and crashed a police SUV**

**CA** RIVERSIDE — A man suspected of stealing an unmarked police vehicle following a crash on a Southern California freeway was arrested after he ran into an apartment complex, authorities said.

Gunfire was exchanged after the suspect gained control of the Corona police SUV following the crash, the Riverside Press-Enterprise reported. Nobody was hurt in the shootout.

The suspect was involved in the earlier collision and left his crumpled car behind as he drove away in the SUV, said Riverside Police Officer Ryan Railsback.

Police tracked the man to an apartment complex, where he barricaded himself inside before being arrested, the newspaper reported.

**Police warn residents against killing deer in neighborhood**

**NC** SOUTHERN SHORES — Police in a town in North Carolina's Outer Banks are investigating after someone shot and killed a deer with an arrow inside the town's limits.

The Town of Southern Shores police department said in a statement that the deer was found dead. Police said the town code prohibits the shooting or discharging of arrows within the town's corporate limits.

— From wire reports

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and Military News

# Alabama rolls to national championship

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The celebration was at once familiar and unique. The confetti cannons sent a crimson and white shower into the air and Alabama players ran to the sideline to grab their championship hats and T-shirts.

It's a rite of passage if you have played for the Crimson Tide under coach Nick Saban.

This time, though, the band playing the fight song was a piped-in recording, and when "Sweet Home Alabama" blared, only a few thousand Tide fans were still in the stadium to sing along.

The final game of a college football season in a pandemic, a season that was uncertain to be played in the summer and filled with disruptions in the fall, ended in the most predictable fashion: Alabama as national champion for the sixth time in the last 12 years under Saban.

DeVonta Smith was uncover-

able, Najee Harris unstoppable and Mac Jones impeccable as the top-ranked Tide won the College Football Playoff national championship game 52-24 against No. 3 Ohio State on Monday night. They finished the year 13-0 — a full season when many wondered if it would be possible to play any.

"I think we're the best team to ever play," Jones said.

For Saban, it was career title No. 7 overall, breaking a tie with Alabama great Paul "Bear" Bryant for the most by a major college coach.

"To me this is the ultimate team," Saban said. "There is more togetherness on this team than on almost any team we've ever had. They've had to overcome and to persevere so much through this season, and they have done it magnificently."

Ohio State (7-1) just couldn't keep up. Justin Fields, playing what might be his last game before heading to the NFL,

passed for 194 yards and a touchdown. Whether Fields was 100% after taking a brutal hit to the side during his brilliant semifinal performance against Clemson was hard to know for sure.

"I was able to be out there," was all the junior quarterback would say.

On the Buckeyes' first drive, they lost star running back Trey Sermon to an injury, and in a game they needed to be running at top speed, facing one of the great offenses in recent history, they sputtered too much. Ohio State has never allowed more points in a bowl game.

"I think there's a feeling of, if you don't score you're going to get behind and then the pressure mounts," Buckeyes coach Ryan Day said of facing the Tide's prolific offense.

Fans can debate which team in the Saban dynasty is best, but none will be more memora-

ble than this group.

"Everybody is so together," Smith said. "People last year said the dynasty was over. We don't stop. We just keep reloading."

After going a whole two seasons without winning a national title, the Tide finished perfect during a season that could not have been further from it.

COVID-19 forced teams into quarantines and endless testing and uncertainty every single week with games played in mostly empty stadiums.

"To me this team accomplished more than almost any team," Saban said. "No disrespect to other teams we had but this team won 11 SEC games. No other team has done that. They won the SEC and went undefeated in the SEC and then they beat two great teams in the playoffs with no break. I think there's going to be quite a bit to write about the legacy of this team."

## Analysis: In just a half, 'Bama's Smith wasn't half bad

Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — DeVonta Smith did not catch a single pass after halftime. He didn't have to, either.

He'd done plenty.

The Heisman Trophy-winning receiver from Alabama put his stamp all over the College Football Playoff championship game in the first two quarters, and the Crimson Tide are national champions once again. Smith had 12 catches for 215 yards and three touchdowns — all those scores coming in the second quarter — to lead the Tide past Ohio State 52-24 on Monday night.

He won everything there was to win this season: the national title, the Heisman, and became the first FBS player since Michael Crabtree in 2007 to lead the nation in receptions, receiving yards and receiving touch-

downs.

And after winning offensive player-of-the-game honors Monday, next stop, the NFL.

"Unbelievable," Smith said in the on-field interview, as crimson confetti littered the field. "We just finished writing our story. That was the whole thing of us coming back, just finishing the story that we wanted to write. And we did that."

Smith left in the third quarter, a towel draped over his right hand, covering what was later revealed to be a dislocated finger. Smith stopped on his way into the Alabama locker room to gaze at a television mounted high over the left side of the entrance, checking out one of the countless Crimson Tide highlights of the evening.

He was responsible for plenty of them.

"Smitty, obviously, had a great

half," Alabama coach Nick Saban said.

Smith had five catches that went for more than 15 yards, including a 42-yard touchdown that pushed Alabama's lead to 35-17 just before halftime. He doesn't so much run as glides; consider, on one of his touchdowns Monday night, he evaded a defender, the end zone pylon, three photographers and a crane holding a camera — all on the same play, and made it all look easy, just like the Tide did pretty much all night.

After getting hurt, Smith returned to the sideline with his hand heavily bandaged, wearing sweats and a mask with the Heisman logo. His high school and college career were over, even though he tried to talk his way back onto the field. But he wasn't going to miss the celebration, and knew his teammates would finish the

job.

"I just believed in them from the jump," Smith said. "That's what we do. That's why you come to 'Bama."

Alabama fans who were at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the Miami Dolphins, ooh-ed and aah-ed every time he touched the ball, just as they did two years ago when he came to that same stadium and put on a show in the Orange Bowl to help the Tide past Oklahoma and into the CFP title game that season. They lost that matchup to Clemson, denying the Tide back-to-back national titles.

Smith has that second ring now, to go with the one he helped secure as a freshman when he caught the game- and title-winning pass from Tua Tagovailoa in overtime as Alabama topped Georgia for the 2017 season's national championship.



# Eagles fire Pederson after 5 seasons

*Associated Press*

PHILADELPHIA — Doug Pederson lost his job less than three years after he led the Philadelphia Eagles to the franchise's only Super Bowl title.

Pederson was 42-37-1 in five seasons. He guided the Eagles to two division championships and three playoff appearances before going 4-11-1 in 2020.

Owner Jeffrey Lurie made the decision after meeting with Pederson last week and again Monday.

"Very few people probably after success deserve to lose their job," Lurie said. "This is much more about the evaluation of whether the Eagles moving forward, our best option is to have a new coach and that's really what it's about. ... He did not deserve to be let go."

Pederson had two years remaining on his contract. Lurie said he wouldn't be surprised if another team hired Pederson before the end of the week.

"Although I am disappointed that this chapter of my career

has come to an end, I am extremely proud of what we accomplished together," Pederson said in a statement.

"Through all the ups and downs, one thing remained constant about our team—an unwavering commitment to battle through adversity and to achieve our goals not as individuals, but as a collective unit. There is no better example of that than when we celebrated the first Super Bowl championship in Eagles history together with our city. That is a memory we will all cherish forever."

Pederson's loyalty to his coaching staff and frustration with the front office's interference became a major issue, according to a person familiar with the decision who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the conversations. The person also said Pederson and general manager Howie Roseman weren't on the same page regarding many personnel moves, including draft picks and

use of veteran players.

The team's draft failures in recent years from taking wide receiver J.J. Arcega-Whiteside over DK Metcalf in 2019 to selecting wideout Jalen Reagor one pick before Justin Jefferson in 2020 contributed to the offense's struggles along with numerous injuries and quarterback Carson Wentz's poor performance.

Ultimately, Lurie chose Roseman over Pederson.

"I have real confidence that our football operations, led by Howie, can not only repeat the performance of 2016 until now, and once again, create a dominant football team that can really maximize every aspect of its potential," Lurie said.

Lurie indicated Pederson wasn't on board with rebuilding.

"It's a transition point and we've got to get younger and we have to have a lot more volume of draft picks and we have to accumulate as much talent as we possibly can that is going to work in the long run with a focus on the midterm and the long term

and not on how to maximize 2021," Lurie said. "And it's almost not fair to Doug, because his vision has to be: what can I do to fix this right away and what coaches can I have that can help me get to a smoother 2021?"

Pederson benched Wentz for the final four games after the quarterback had the worst season of his five-year career and started rookie Jalen Hurts. Pederson had said repeatedly he was confident he could fix Wentz and get him back on track.

He won't get that chance now.

Wentz's \$128 million, four-year contract kicks in this year and he knows the Eagles control whether to keep him or trade him. Wentz has been taking time away to reflect on his situation before meeting with the team to discuss his future, a person close to the situation told the AP last week. Wentz was frustrated with his season and unhappy that he got benched, but he had no input into Pederson's firing, two people said.

## Belichick won't take Presidential Medal of Freedom

*Associated Press*

New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick announced Monday night that he will not accept the Presidential Medal of Freedom, saying "remaining true to the people, team and country I love outweigh the benefits of any individual award."

In a delicately worded, one-paragraph statement, the six-time Super Bowl-winning coach did not say explicitly that he had turned down the offer from President Donald Trump, whom he has called a friend. Instead, Belichick explained, "the decision has been made not to move forward with the award" in the wake of last week's deadly siege on the U.S. Capitol.

A White House official said on Sunday, four days after the

riots, that Trump would be awarding Belichick the nation's highest civilian honor — part of a late flurry of presentations that also included golfers Annika Sorenstam, Gary Player and the late Babe Zaharias.

Sorenstam and Player accepted their awards in a private ceremony the day after Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Five people died in the mayhem, including U.S. Capitol Police officer Brian Sicknick. Belichick was to be honored on Thursday.

"I was flattered ... out of respect for what the honor represents and admiration for prior recipients," the coach said in a statement.

"Subsequently, the tragic

events of last week occurred and the decision has been made not to move forward with the award. Above all, I am an American citizen with great reverence for our nation's values, freedom and democracy. I know I also represent my family and the New England Patriots team."

Although he describes himself as apolitical, Belichick has waded into politics on occasion.

The architect of the Patriots dynasty wrote Trump a letter of support that the candidate read aloud the night before the 2016 election.

Although Trump said the letter offered "best wishes for great results" on Election Day and "the opportunity to make America great again," Belich-

ick said it was it was merely to support a friend.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's death this summer, Patriots players praised Belichick for providing an open forum for them to express their feelings on race and social injustice in America. In his statement on Monday, Belichick called that "one of the most rewarding things in my professional career."

"Through the great leadership within our team, conversations about social justice, equality and human rights moved to the forefront and became actions," he said. "Continuing those efforts while remaining true to the people, team and country I love outweigh the benefits of any individual award."

# NHL will have familiar faces in new places

Associated Press

Jeff Skinner was enjoying an afternoon in his parents' backyard, when suddenly the Buffalo Sabres forward thought his father was pulling an April Fool's joke on him in mid-September.

"My dad came out and told me that Eric Staal is on our team," Skinner said upon learning Buffalo had acquired his former Carolina Hurricanes teammate in a trade with Minnesota. "I thought he was joking with me at first."

He wasn't.

The Sabres' addition of Staal was completed before the Stanley Cup was even awarded, and wasn't the most high-profile move made over the past four months.

But it was among the first of many trades and free-agent signings involving some of the league's more notable players changing teams during a most unique of offseasons. The draft was held in October, training camps opened in late December and the league is preparing to embark on a 56-game shortened season with four realigned divisions — all a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Don't adjust your TV sets, which is where most fans will have to watch the action with most arenas closed to the public. It may take

a few weeks to get accustomed to some of the NHL's more familiar faces playing in different places with the regular season opening Wednesday.

Zdeno Chara is no longer in Boston after the Bruins captain signed with Washington. Capitals goalie Braden Holtby is now in Vancouver. Blues captain Alex Pietrangelo has left St. Louis — where he was replaced by veteran Bruins defenseman Torey Krug — to hit the jackpot in Vegas.

Eric Staal wasn't the only member of the family on the move, with younger brother Marc traded from the Rangers to Detroit. The Sabres made a bigger splash in free agency by landing 2018 NHL MVP Taylor Hall in October.

On the West Coast, Patrick Marleau is back in San Jose for a third stint in four years, while the Sharks' lineup will for the first time in 15 years be without Joe Thornton, who is now in Toronto.

"Just soak it all in," said the 41-year-old Thornton, who grew up a 90-minute drive from Toronto. "I feel like I'm young again."

Though NHL stars switch teams every offseason, the moves this year were, in part, precipitated by the affects of COVID-19, which has frozen the salary cap at \$81.5 million for at least this season and likely the next. That placed teams anticipating the

cap to increase in a bind.

The effects were evident before free agency opened with teams not retaining the rights to some of their restricted free agents in fear of what the players might be awarded in salary arbitration hearings. That was the case in Buffalo, where the Sabres cut loose Dominik Kahun after the forward showed promise in playing six games after being acquired in a trade with Pittsburgh.

And while several players earned lucrative paydays in free agency, such as Pietrangelo, who signed a seven-year, \$61.6 million contract, his deal proved to be an exception when it came to length.

Hall, for example, signed a one-year, \$8 million deal with Buffalo by realizing the free-agent market was going to be tight.

In Tampa Bay, the defending champion Lightning had to get creative with their roster.

They lost defensemen Kevin Shattenkirk and Zach Bogosian to free agency and traded center Cedric Paquette and defenseman Braydon Coburn to Ottawa. The team acquired right wing Marian Gaborik and goalie Anders Nilsson from the Senators, but both will be placed on long-term injury reserve.

## Bucks crush Magic in Antetokounmpo's return

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Giannis Antetokounmpo returned from a one-game absence because of a minor back injury and scored 22 points as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Orlando Magic 121-99 on Monday night.

Antetokounmpo, the reigning two-time NBA MVP, started slowly and battled through second-half foul trouble before coming alive in the fourth quarter. Milwaukee won a second straight and beat Orlando for a fifth consecutive time in the regular season.

Khris Middleton finished with 20 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, while reserve Bobby Portis played well for a second straight game, scoring 20 points.

**Hawks 112, 76ers 94:** Trae Young scored 26 points, including the first three baskets of Atlanta's dominant start to the second half in a win over visiting Philadelphia.

DeAndre Hunter and Brandon Goodwin had 15 points as the Hawks snapped a four-game losing streak. Clint Capela added 12 points and 10 rebounds as six Atlanta players

scored in double figures.

Young, who was held to a combined 22 points in his last two games, regained his scoring touch. He opened the second half with a jumper before adding back-to-back layups.

**Hornets 109, Knicks 88:** Gordon Hayward scored 34 points and host Charlotte beat New York for its fourth straight win.

Devonte Graham had 19 points and seven assists for the Hornets, and P.J. Washington had 13 points as they handed the Knicks their third straight defeat.

Kevin Knox had 19 points to lead New York, and Mitchell Robinson had 12 points and 11 rebounds.

**Wizards 128, Suns 107:** Bradley Beal scored 34 points and Washington snapped its three-game losing streak and won at home for the first time this season, beating Phoenix.

The Wizards (3-8), who had lost five straight at home, played without guard Russell Westbrook. He will miss at least a week with a left quadriceps injury.

Devin Booker led the Suns (7-4) with 33

points. Chris Paul had 14 points and 11 assists. Mikal Bridges also had 14.

**Grizzlies 101, Cavaliers 91:** Dillon Brooks scored 21 points and Memphis recovered after blowing a 16-point lead to win at Cleveland.

Brandon Clarke scored 15 points and Tyus Jones had 13 points, seven assists and three steals for the Grizzlies, who won their second straight and improved to 3-1 on the road.

**Trail Blazers 112, Raptors 111:** CJ McCollum scored 30 points, including the go-ahead jumper with 9.6 seconds left to lift host Portland over Toronto.

Damian Lillard added 23 points and Carmelo Anthony scored 20 off the bench for the Trail Blazers, who erased a 17-point deficit and overcame Pascal Siakam's first career triple-double of 22 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists.

**Kings 127, Pacers 122:** Buddy Hield made a big three-pointer for host Sacramento down the stretch, moments after Indiana's Domantas Sabonis had a basket taken away following a replay review.

Hield finished with 18 points on six threes.