

## Trump impeachment heading to Senate

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — As the House prepares to bring the impeachment charge against Donald Trump to the Senate for trial, a growing number of Republican senators say they are opposed to the proceeding, dimming the chances that former president will be convicted on the charge that he incited a siege of the U.S. Capitol.

House Democrats planned to carry the sole impeachment charge of “incitement of insurrection” across the Capitol late Monday evening, a rare and ceremonial walk to the Senate by the prosecutors who will argue their case. They are hoping that strong Republican denunciations of Trump after the Jan. 6 riot will translate into a conviction and a separate vote to bar Trump from holding office again.

But instead, GOP passions appear to have cooled since the insurrection. Now that Trump’s presidency is over, Republican senators who will serve as jurors in the trial are rallying to his legal defense, as they did during his first impeachment trial last year.

“I think the trial is stupid, I think it’s counterproductive,” said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla. He said that “the first chance I get to vote to end this trial, I’ll do it” because he believes it would be bad for the country and further inflame partisan divisions.

Trump is the first former president to face impeachment trial, and it will test his grip on the Republican Party and the legacy of his tenure, which came to a close as a mob of supporters heeded his rally cry by storming the Capitol and trying to overturn Joe Biden’s election. The proceedings will also force Democrats, who have a full sweep of party control of the White House and Congress, to balance their promise to hold the former president accountable while also rushing to deliver on Biden’s priorities.

Arguments in the Senate trial will begin the week of Feb. 8. Leaders in both parties agreed to the short delay to give Trump’s team and House prosecutors time to prepare and the Senate the chance to confirm some of Biden’s Cabinet nominees. Democrats say the extra days will allow for more

evidence to come out about the rioting by Trump supporters, while Republicans hope to craft a unified defense for Trump.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said in an interview with The Associated Press on Sunday that he hopes that evolving clarity on the details of what happened Jan. 6 “will make it clearer to my colleagues and the American people that we need some accountability.”

Coons questioned how his colleagues who were in the Capitol that day could see the insurrection as anything other than a “stunning violation” of tradition of peaceful transfers of power.

“It is a critical moment in American history, and we have to look at it and look at it hard,” Coons said.

An early vote to dismiss the trial probably would not succeed, given that Democrats now control the Senate. Still, the mounting Republican opposition indicates that many GOP senators would eventually vote to acquit Trump. Democrats would need the support of 17 Republicans — a high bar — to convict him.

## Lawmakers receive threats ahead of impeachment trial

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Federal law enforcement officials are examining a number of threats aimed at members of Congress as the impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump nears, including ominous chatter about killing legislators or attacking them outside of the U.S. Capitol, a U.S. official told The Associated Press.

The threats, and concerns that armed protesters could return to sack the Capitol anew, have prompted the U.S. Capitol Police and other federal law enforcement to insist thousands of National Guard troops remain in Washington as the Senate moves forward with plans for Trump’s trial, the official said Sunday.

The shocking insurrection at the Capitol by a pro-Trump mob prompted federal officials to rethink security in and around its landmarks, resulting in an unprecedented lockdown for Joe Biden’s inauguration. Though the event went off without any problems and

armed protests around the country did not end up materializing, the threats to lawmakers ahead of Trump’s trial exemplified the continued potential for danger.

Similar to those that were intercepted by investigators ahead of Biden’s inauguration, the threats that law enforcement agents are tracking vary in specificity and credibility, said the official, who had been briefed on the matter. Mainly posted online and in chat groups, the messages have included plots to attack members of Congress during travel to and from the Capitol complex during the trial, according to the official.

The official was not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Thousands of Trump’s supporters descended on the Capitol on Jan. 6 as Congress met to certify Biden as the winner of the 2020 presidential race. More than 800 are believed to have made their way into the Capitol during the violent siege, pushing past overwhelmed

police officers. The Capitol Police said that they planned for a free speech protest, not a riot, and were caught off guard despite intelligence suggesting the rally would descend into a riot. Five people died in the melee, including a Capitol police officer who was struck in the head with a fire extinguisher.

Though much of the security apparatus around Washington set up after the riot and ahead of Biden’s inauguration — it included scores of military checkpoints and hundreds of additional law enforcement personnel — is no longer in place, approximately 7,000 members of the National Guard will remain to assist federal law enforcement, officials said.

The Guard Bureau said that the number of Guard members in D.C. is less than 20,000 as of Sunday. All but about 7,000 of those will go home in the coming days. The Guard Bureau said that the number of troops in D.C. would then continue to decline in the coming weeks to about 5,000. They are expected to stay in D.C. until mid-March.

# Biden ends ban on transgender troops

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
AND CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Monday ended the Pentagon's ban on most transgender men and women joining the military, fulfilling a campaign promise to undo one of President Donald Trump's signature Pentagon policies.

Biden issued an executive order Monday that allows all qualified Americans to serve in the military, regardless of their gender identity.

"President Biden believes that all gender identity should not be a bar to military service, and that America's strength is found in its diversity," according to a White House statement. "Allowing all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform is better for the military and better for the country because an inclusive force is a more effective force. Simply put, it's the right thing to do and is in our national interest."

The order directs the defense secretary and the Homeland Security secretary to implement it and make certain all regulations and policies follow the new executive order.

It also immediately stops involuntary separations, discharges, and denials of reenlistment or continuation of service due to gender identity, according to the statement. The order also starts a process to find and examine records of personnel who were kicked out based on their gender identity and correct their military records.

An initial report is to be submitted to Biden within 60 days on the progress for implementing the new directives and policy, according to the statement.

The policy change was expected to essentially revert the Pentagon back to its 2016 policy, which opened the military to most transgender men and women near the end of former President Barack Obama's administration. Biden, who backed that policy at that time, had pledged last year as a presidential candidate to quickly kill the policy, labeling it discriminatory.

The order comes as new Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, a retired four-star Army general, took the Pentagon's reins on Friday. The Pentagon will take immediate action to make certain the policy allows people who identify as transgender are eligible to serve in the military, Austin said in a statement issued Monday following the ban reversal.

It was not immediately clear Monday how long the Pentagon would need before it would start accepting new transgender service members. Experts said last summer that the Pentagon could reverse the policy in just 30 days.

The policy reversal did not please everyone. Retired Army Lt. Gen. Tom Spoeher, who directs the conservative Heritage Foundation's National Defense Center, said Monday that ending the Trump-era policy would harm the military's combat readiness.

Spoeher said Biden's decision was based on "political correctness."

## US moves to stop German taxation of troops' income

BY JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — The U.S. government has intervened to try to stop German finance offices from imposing income taxes on American forces in the country, a practice the military says violates a long-standing international treaty.

The Pentagon, along with State and Treasury departments, have put the U.S. Embassy in Berlin in charge of leading efforts to resolve the issue, which has caused financial devastation for some military families who have been hit with six-figure bills by local tax authorities.

"The German ministry of foreign affairs agreed to take the issue to the federal ministry of finance. We're now waiting to hear back from them," said Col. Joe Scrocca, U.S. Army Europe and Africa spokesman.

The problem came to light last year when Stars and Stripes investigated aggressive tactics used to force troops and military civilians to pay German income tax, despite a clause in the Status of Forces Agreement stating that they are exempt.

In November, the State Department sent a cable to the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, directing it to engage with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the matter.

In a meeting the following month between American and German officials, the foreign ministry agreed to involve the federal finance office, Scrocca said.

## Navy SEAL sentenced to 10 years in hazing death

*The Virginian-Pilot*

NORFOLK, Va. — A Navy SEAL convicted of involuntary manslaughter in the hazing death of an Army Green Beret in 2017 was sentenced this weekend to 10 years in prison.

SEAL Team 6 member Tony E. DeDolph was also demoted from chief petty officer to seaman and will be dishonorably discharged. He must forfeit pay.

DeDolph pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter earlier this month after admitting that he applied the chokehold that killed Army Staff Sgt. Logan Melgar while trying to haze him in 2017 in Mali, West Africa.

Two others previously convicted in the case, former Navy Chief Special Operator Adam Matthews and former Marine Staff Sgt. Kevin Maxwell Jr., were

sentenced to one year and four years confinement, respectively. Both are also receiving bad conduct discharges.

Marine Gunnery Sgt. Mario Madera-Rodriguez has also been charged in Melgar's death. A trial is set for later this year.

DeDolph intends to appeal the sentence, according to his attorney, Philip Stackhouse.

# Fight over rules brings Senate to halt

*The Washington Post*

WASHINGTON — When President Joe Biden took office last week, he promised sweeping, bipartisan legislation to solve the coronavirus pandemic, fix the economy and overhaul immigration.

Just days later, the Senate ground to a halt, with Democrats and Republicans unable to agree on even basic rules for how the evenly divided body should operate.

Meanwhile, key Republicans have quickly signaled discomfort with — or outright dismissal of — the cornerstone of Biden's early legislative agenda, a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief plan that includes measures including \$1,400 stimulus checks, vaccine distribution funding and a \$15 minimum wage.

On top of that, senators are preparing for a wrenching second im-

peachment trial for former President Donald Trump, set to begin Feb. 9, which could mire all other Senate business and further obliterate any hopes of cross-party cooperation.

Taken together, this gridlock could imperil Biden's entire early presidency, making it impossible for him to deliver on key promises as he contends with dueling crises.

This reality could force Democrats to choose within a matter of weeks whether they will continue to pursue the sort of bipartisan cooperation that Biden — and many senators of both parties — have preached, or whether to pursue procedural shortcuts or rule changes that would sideline the GOP but are also likely to divide their caucus.

"Things move faster and faster nowadays," said Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., commenting on the

rising tensions Friday. "It doesn't seem like there's a honeymoon period."

Much of the current conflict over the Senate rules comes courtesy of veteran Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell, of Kentucky, who transitioned to minority leader Wednesday after six years as majority leader.

Just hours after Biden's inauguration, moments after a smiling Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., was first recognized as majority leader, McConnell pointedly noted on the Senate floor that the country elected a smaller House Democratic majority, an evenly split Senate and a "president who promised unity."

"The people intentionally entrusted both political sides with significant power to shape our nation's direction," he said. "May we work together to honor that trust."

Two days earlier, he had notified his Republican colleagues in the Senate that he would deliver Schumer a sharp ultimatum: agree to preserve the legislative filibuster, the centerpiece of minority power in the Senate, or forget about any semblance of cooperation — starting with an agreement on the chamber's operating rules.

Schumer told McConnell on Friday that he considered any guarantee surrounding the filibuster to be an "extraneous demand" departing from the arrangement that the two parties worked out the last time there was a 50-50 Senate, in 2001.

"What's fair is fair," Schumer said, noting that McConnell changed Senate rules twice as majority leader. "Leader McConnell's proposal is unacceptable, and it won't be accepted."

## Taliban prisoners released in peace deal get arrested

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Hundreds of Taliban prisoners released under last year's U.S.-Taliban peace deal have been arrested after returning to the battlefield, a top Afghan security official said.

The Afghan military expects the insurgents to intensify attacks as the year progresses, national security adviser Hamdullah Mohib also told reporters Sunday.

"We have recaptured 600 of the freed individuals because they were fighting alongside the Taliban even though they promised they would not fight again," Mohib said.

Other released prisoners were involved in making car bombs and planning attacks on security forces, Mohib said, citing intelligence reports.

Over 5,000 Taliban prisoners were released last year in exchange for 1,000 Afghan security force personnel captured by the guerrillas. The prisoner ex-

change, which was a part of the U.S.-Taliban deal struck last February, was a precursor for the ongoing peace talks between the insurgents and the Afghan government.

The Kabul government — which did not participate in talks leading up to the agreement — was initially hesitant to free the prisoners, but eventually bowed to pressure from Washington.

Mohib, who attended a security meeting, did not specify how many former prisoners besides those rearrested are believed to have rejoined the insurgency. All of the released prisoners signed a pledge that they would no longer fight.

Taliban officials insist none of the former detainees have returned to combat and rejected the claim that 600 had been recaptured. Only about 40 of the men are back in government custody and most of those were seized during raids on their homes and are innocent, spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told Stars and Stripes on Monday.

## Chinese fighters, bombers test Taiwan's air defense

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

Chinese warplanes flew into Taiwan's air defense identification zone two days in a row over the weekend, stepping up its show of force a day after President Joe Biden's administration signaled support for the self-governing island.

Fifteen Chinese aircraft, including 12 fighters, two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft and a technical reconnaissance plane, entered Taiwan's southwest air defense identification zone Sunday, the island's Military News Agency reported that day. They passed between Taiwan's southern shores and the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands in the South China Sea, according to the report. The incident came one day after China flew eight H-6K nuclear-capable bombers, a Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft and four fighters through the same area, the news agency said.

In both instances, Taiwan dispatched airborne alert aircraft, issued radio warnings and deployed air defense missile systems for

tracking and surveillance, according to the Taiwan Ministry of National Defense.

China carries out near daily flights into Taiwan's air defense identification zone, but not usually of the size and scope seen over the weekend, the English-language news website Taiwan News reported Sunday.

China considers Taiwan, which is less than 100 miles off its eastern coast, to be a part of its territory.

On Saturday, the Biden administration weighed in with a statement from the U.S. State Department.

"Our commitment to Taiwan is rock-solid and contributes to the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and within the region," State Department spokesman Ned Price wrote on the department's website. "We urge Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic and economic pressure against Taiwan, and instead engage in meaningful dialogue with Taiwan's democratically elected representatives."



# Calif. lifts curfew, stay-at-home orders

*Associated Press*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California lifted regional stay-at-home orders across the state Monday in response to improving coronavirus conditions, returning the state to a system of county-by-county restrictions, state health officials announced.

The order had been in place in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California, covering the majority of the state's counties. The change will allow businesses such as restaurants to resume outdoor operations in many areas, though local officials could choose to continue stricter rules. The state is also lifting a 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew.

"Together, we changed our activities knowing our short-term sacrifices would lead to longer-term gains. COVID-19 is still here and still deadly, so our work is not over, but it's important to recognize our collective actions saved lives and we are turning a critical corner," Dr. Tomas Aragon, the state's public health director, said in a statement.

The decision comes with improving trends in the rate of infections, hospitalizations and intensive care unit capacity as well as vaccinations.

During the weekend, San Francisco Bay Area ICU capacity surged to 23% while the San Joaquin Valley increased to 1.3%, its first time above zero. The huge Southern California region, the most populous, remains at zero ICU capacity.

As of the weekend, California has had more than 3.1 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and 36,790 deaths, according to the state's public health website.

## Arizona

WINDOW ROCK — Navajo Nation health officials are reporting 133 new COVID-19 cases and seven more deaths as a revised public health order is set to take effect.

The latest figures released Sunday bring the total reported coronavirus cases on the reservation to 27,484 with 973 known deaths.

Beginning Monday, the tribe extended its stay-at-home order with a revised nightly curfew to limit the spread of COVID-19. The Navajo Nation is also lifting weekend lockdowns to allow more vaccination events.

The actions in the latest public health emergency order will run through at least Feb. 15. The curfew will run daily from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

## Alaska

JUNEAU — Alaska held the enviable position of having the highest rate of coronavirus vaccinations per capita in the nation as of last week, the state's top health official said.

Alaska Chief Medical Officer Anne Zink said Thursday that the progress was the result of community efforts to quickly distribute vacci-

nations and additional allotments for federal agencies within the state, KTOO-FM reported.

Zink told the Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce that Alaska receives more doses of vaccine because of allowances above the state's share for the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Indian Health Service.

"We have the highest veterans per capita population. We have a large military presence. And we have a large Indigenous population with over 229 sovereign tribes," Zink said. "And so, because of those reasons, we did get some additional vaccine in the state via those federal partnerships."

## Connecticut

HARTFORD — Local health officials ordered a Connecticut home for retired nuns closed to visitors and the public because of a coronavirus outbreak that has infected nearly half of the more than 70 residents there as vaccinations were underway.

The restrictions on the School Sisters of Notre Dame home in Wilton were ordered by town Director of Health Barrington Bogle, and state health officials were expected to visit the property Monday to help with the outbreak, First Selectwoman Lynne Vanderslice said in a statement.

Vanderslice said 30 residents recently tested positive for COVID-19, as did a number of staff members. Health officials are doing contact tracing in Wilton as well as in the communities where staff members live.

Fifteen retired nuns recently received COVID-19 vaccinations under state guidelines, which allow vaccinations for people 75 years and older. The remaining residents and staff were scheduled to be vaccinated Monday, after town officials obtained permission to administer the vaccine to non-eligible residents and staff, Vanderslice said.

## Hawaii

HONOLULU — About half of Hawaii's supply of 186,000 doses of the coronavirus vaccine had been distributed through last week, officials said.

The state has more than 40 distribution sites for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, KITV-TV reported.

Democratic Lt. Gov. Josh Green said state leaders have pressed the federal government to continue supplying the state with doses.

"We now have another 50 or 60,000 scheduled appointments for people getting their either first shot or second shot," Green said. "We didn't want to leave people in the lurch."

## Massachusetts

BOSTON — Massachusetts relaxed some coronavirus restrictions Monday as several key metrics used to measure the spread of the pan-

demic trend in the right direction.

Restaurants, movie theaters and many other businesses will now be allowed to remain open past 9:30 p.m. Also, a rule that required people to stay at home from 10 p.m. until 5 p.m. except for work or other essential travel has been lifted.

The restrictions were adopted in November as new cases surged.

The latest seven-day average positivity rate in Massachusetts has dropped to 4.83% as of Sunday, down from 7.2% on Jan. 10.

The seven-day rolling average of daily new cases in Massachusetts is also on the decline, at more than 4,200 on Sunday, down from at least 6,400 on Jan. 10, according to The COVID Tracking Project.

Hospitalizations are also falling.

## South Dakota

RAPID CITY — Organizers of South Dakota's annual point-in-time count for the state's unsheltered homeless population have canceled the effort this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Sara Hornick, Rapid City-area coordinator of homeless services for Volunteers of America, said the count was called off mainly because of a shortage of volunteers, lack of personal protective equipment and concerns about the spread of COVID-19. She said the vulnerable homeless population is quite large, but the Department of Housing and Urban Development decided against the count, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Hornick said she's not sure how the cancellation will affect federal funding because of all the allowances in place this year because of the virus.

## West Virginia

CHARLESTON — West Virginia is debuting an online portal for residents to register for coronavirus vaccine appointments.

Gov. Jim Justice said the new system that will help streamline vaccination efforts statewide launched Monday at [www.vaccinate.wv.gov](http://www.vaccinate.wv.gov). The new website comes after complaints of long wait times to book a shot.

According to the Department of Health and Human Resources, West Virginia is the first state to deploy the new system through Everbridge, a company that helps states notify residents in emergencies such as a hurricane, flood or fire.

Residents who don't want to or can't go online to set up appointments can still call a vaccination information line.

Currently, all residents 65 and older and some essential workers, such as health care personnel and teachers, are eligible for shots, although the state currently does not have enough vaccine doses for all senior citizens.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Hiker rescued several days after falling down 50-foot cliff**

**OR** CASCADE LOCKS — A hiker was rescued in Oregon, apparently three days after he fell down a 50-foot cliff in the Columbia River Gorge.

The Coast Guard and the Hood River County Sheriff's Office said they got the 43-year-old to safety after he was discovered by two other hikers at the base of the cliff, about a mile from the start of the Gorton Creek Trail.

He was conscious but injured, disoriented and possibly hypothermic, and authorities said he likely would not have survived the night.

The first responders who arrived were unable to transport the man to safety due to the difficult terrain, but a Coast Guard helicopter crew extracted him and brought him to a Portland hospital in stable condition.

**Auto shop pays \$2,033 for students' school lunch debts**

**MI** SUTTONS BAY — An auto repair shop tuned up the lunch accounts at a northern Michigan school district.

To celebrate five years in business, the owners of Mr. Hoxie's Garage wrote a check for \$2,033.99 to cover unpaid student lunch debts in Suttons Bay, near Traverse City, the Record-Eagle reported.

Kris Hoxie said she and her husband, Grant, usually support school arts and sports, but COVID-19 disrupted those programs. She said she has talked to other business owners in the Leelanau County community about making a five-year pledge to the school lunch program.

**Teen charged with gun possession for 2nd time**

**MA** SPRINGFIELD — A 15-year-old Massachusetts boy already wearing a court-ordered monitoring device on his ankle after a previous arrest was arrested again for allegedly being in possession of a gun, police said.

The Springfield youth was taken into cus-

tody after police obtained a search warrant for his home, Springfield police spokesman Ryan Walsh told Masslive.com.

Detectives had developed information that the suspect had an illegal firearm. Upon arrival at the home, police knocked and announced themselves but saw someone inside running "frantically" around the house apparently trying to hide evidence, police said.

After several minutes, the suspect tried to flee out a side door but officers were waiting. During the subsequent search, officers found a loaded handgun, Walsh said.

**Woman sentenced to 18 months for fraud in medical hoax case**

**IL** EAST ST. LOUIS — A 36-year-old southern Illinois woman was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison in a medical hoax that tricked people who gave her money and other benefits.

Sarah Delashmit, of Highland, pleaded guilty in October to multiple fraud charges after authorities claimed she defrauded nonprofit organizations by pretending to have muscular dystrophy and breast cancer. She must pay a \$1,250 fine, forfeit items she received and pay about \$7,600 in restitution. After her release, she must serve three years of court supervision.

Authorities said the offenses took place between 2015 and 2019, but evidence at the hearing showed she'd participated in similar hoaxes back to 2006.

**Massive fire at potato plant forces employee evacuations**

**WA** WARDEN — A massive fire at a potato plant in Warden brought fears of an exploding ammonia tank, forcing the evacuation of nearly a third of the town for several hours.

The fire broke out at the Washington Potato Plant in eastern Washington in one of the dehydrators, according to Kyle Foreman with the Grant County Sheriff's Office, KOMO-TV reported. Employees in the building made it out safely as the flames spread, eventually engulfing much of the plant.

Among the items in the burning building was a large ammonia tank that firefighters worried could explode and send a toxic cloud over the region, and officials issued an urgent immediate evacuation notice for the surrounding area.

The fears of explosion subsided the next morning and residents were allowed back into their homes, Foreman said.

**Man wins lifetime license for hunting and fishing in lottery**

**VT** MONTPELIER — A Massachusetts man won a lottery to hunt and fish in Vermont for free for the rest of his life.

Robert Hubbard, 57, of Warwick, Mass., was drawn as the winner from more than 19,400 tickets bought in 2020, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department said.

Sales of the \$2 tickets brought net sales of almost \$39,000 to the department, which can be leveraged with federal funds to produce more than \$155,000 to support fish and wildlife conservation in Vermont, officials said. The lottery was open to residents and out-of-staters.

"These funds help us to manage the state's sportfish and game animals, protect threatened and endangered species and conserve important habitat for wildlife," Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Louis Porter said.

**4 people stole unmarked police car and stripped it for parts**

**NY** NEW YORK — Police are seeking four people who stole an unmarked police car in the Bronx, drove it to a nearby parking lot and stripped it for parts, authorities said.

It's not clear how the bandits stole the parked police car, police said.

The thieves drove the car to a parking lot near Crotona Park, where they stripped it down.

Surveillance images show three of the four people who are being sought in the heist. One, a woman, is carrying a bag and a drill.

— From wire reports

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# Brady, Buccaneers win at Green Bay

*Associated Press*

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Tom Brady has a new team, in a new town. The destination is the same: another Super Bowl.

At home, too.

The man with six NFL titles will become the first quarterback to play a Super Bowl on his team's home field. He owes the Tampa Bay defense that sacked Aaron Rodgers five times, and a curious late call on fourth-and-goal by the Packers as Brady and the Bucs beat top-seeded Green Bay 31-26 for the NFC title Sunday.

"It's great to get another road win and now we got a home game, and who would have ever thought a home Super Bowl for us," Brady said. "But we did it. I thought the defense was spectacular. They've done that all year."

The Bucs (14-5) will face the Kansas City Chiefs (16-2) at Tampa's Raymond James Stadium on Feb. 7. No, a host team in the Super Bowl has never happened in 54 previous games.

"We're coming home," said Bucs coach Bruce Arians, whose first NFL coaching job

was as an assistant in 1989 with Kansas City, and won two league Coach of the Year awards, with Indianapolis in 2012, Arizona in 2014. He will make his first trip to the Super Bowl as a head coach. "We're coming home to win."

Brady is back in his first year at Tampa Bay after reaching this stage nine times with the New England Patriots. He went 20-for-36 for 286 yards and three touchdowns, but also threw three interceptions as Tampa Bay squandered most of an 18-point lead. Shaquil Barrett and Jason Pierre-Paul combined for five sacks to help the Bucs hang on for their franchise-record eighth consecutive road victory.

It's quite a step up for a team that had one winning record in the past nine seasons.

"Tom is the GOAT (greatest of all time)," said Bucs receiver Scotty Miller, who caught a 39-yard touchdown pass with 1 second left until halftime. "Last year, we ended 7-9. This year, we're going to the Super Bowl. He's the biggest reason."

The Bucs snapped Green Bay's seven-game winning streak. They were aided by a

strange decision from Packers coach Matt LaFleur to kick a field goal with just over two minutes remaining while trailing 31-23.

Green Bay lost in the NFC championship game for the fourth time in the past seven seasons. The team hasn't reached the Super Bowl since its 2010 championship season.

Rodgers went 33-for-48 for 346 yards with three touchdowns and one interception, but fell to 1-4 in conference championship games as a starting quarterback. The Packers had the NFL's best red-zone offense this season, but they twice settled for field goals after having a first-and-goal Sunday.

"I'm just pretty gutted," Rodgers said. "It's a long season. You put so much into it to get to this point. We had our chances."

Twice in the fourth quarter, the Packers got the ball with a chance to take the lead after Jaire Alexander picked off Brady passes deep in Green Bay territory. Both times, the Packers went three-and-out.

"I felt like we had plenty of opportunities tonight to take advantage of and get the job done," LaFleur said.

## Chiefs get past Bills in AFC championship

*Associated Press*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — It took the Kansas City Chiefs five frustrating decades to make their third Super Bowl appearance.

Now, the defending champs are headed there for the second consecutive year.

Showing no lingering effects from his concussion, Patrick Mahomes sliced up Buffalo's secondary with ruthless efficiency Sunday night, helping the Chiefs roll to a 38-24 victory over Josh Allen and the Bills in the AFC championship game.

The reigning Super Bowl MVP finished with 325 yards passing and three touchdowns, most of it to favorite targets Travis Kelce and Tyreek Hill, who complemented their star quarterback with a record-setting night.

The Chiefs will face a familiar foe — Tom Brady — and the NFC champ Buccaneers in two weeks in Tampa, Fla.

"It was just trusting each other. The best thing about this team is we believe in each other," said Mahomes, who was also dealing with a toe injury. "But the job's not finished. We're going to Tampa; we're trying to run it back."

Kelce finished with 13 catches for 118 yards and two touchdowns, and Hill added

nine catches for 172 yards, becoming the first duo in NFL history with consecutive games of at least 100 yards receiving each in a single postseason.

Clyde Edwards-Helaire and Darrel Williams added short TD runs for the Chiefs, who will try to become the eighth franchise and first since the Brady-led New England Patriots in 2003 and '04 to defend the Lombardi Trophy.

"So glad to get to do it again," said Chiefs chairman Clark Hunt, whose father, Lamar, founded the franchise. "Thought a lot about my dad tonight, thought about my family and how excited my father would have been that we got to do it again in Arrowhead Stadium. That's what he would have liked the most about it."

Allen, who had his worst game of the season in a Week 6 loss to the Chiefs, again struggled against the blitzing Kansas City defense. He finished with 287 yards passing with two touchdowns and an interception, but a big chunk of his numbers came as the Bills tried to rally from a 38-15 deficit in the final minutes.

Their frustration boiled over with 3:19 to go, when Allen was getting sacked by Tanoh Kpassagnon. Alex Okafor finished off the

tackle, and Allen pitched the ball in his face in resentment. Offensive linemen Jon Feliciano and Dion Dawkins rushed in and leveled Okafor, resulting in a flood of offsetting personal foul penalties.

"Obviously a lot of emotion," Allen said. "Any time you don't finish the season with a win, that's the type of emotion you're going to have. The way it ended doesn't sit right with me with how chippy and ticky-tack it got. I'm disappointed in myself. I let my emotions get to me there. That's not how you're supposed to play football."

It capped a bitter night for the Bills, who had reached their first AFC title game since beating Kansas City at home on Jan. 1, 1994. They had won 11 of 12 since their loss to the Chiefs earlier this season and were riding a wave of confidence that this might finally be their championship year.

Instead, after finally conquering the Patriots in the AFC East, the Bills have a new roadblock to the Super Bowl.

"It stings to get this far," said Bills coach Sean McDermott, who once worked under Chiefs counterpart Andy Reid in Philadelphia. "Sometimes the further you go, the harder it is to lose. It's a learning experience for us as an organization."



# Rodgers laments his uncertain future

Associated Press

Aaron Rodgers was lamenting the sudden end of a remarkable season he'll treasure long after he's retired, running through a list of Green Bay Packers teammates he's grown the closest to.

"There's a lot of guys' futures that are uncertain, myself included," Rodgers said, managing a slight laugh as if to momentarily soften this harsh reality in the immediate aftermath of the loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the NFC championship game. "That's what sad about it most."

The 37-year-old produced by most measures in 2020 the finest performance of his brilliant career, making him a leading contender for a third NFL MVP award.

The Packers went 13-3 for the top seed in

the NFC, cruising past the Los Angeles Rams in the divisional round and finally giving Rodgers a home game to play for a spot in the Super Bowl. His other four shots at it as the starter, including the win at Chicago (2010 season) that preceded his only championship, were on the road. They lost in the semifinals at San Francisco (2019), Atlanta (2016) and Seattle (2014).

Ten years and counting since the Packers won it all with Rodgers, this 31-26 loss to Brady and the Bucs will sting for awhile. Especially considering what happened last spring, when Green Bay drafted quarterback Jordan Love in the first round. Rodgers is signed through 2023, but that sure doesn't guarantee in this league that he'll stay that long — or that he'd want to.

"I'm going to have to take some time away

for sure and clear my head and just kind of see what's going on with everything, but it's pretty tough right now," Rodgers said. He later added: "It's a grind to get to this point, and that makes the finality of it all kind of hit you like a ton of bricks."

Rodgers went 33-for-48 for 346 yards and three touchdowns, but this wasn't exactly his best.

He had one interception that Tampa Bay used to set up a last-second touchdown before halftime and completed only two of nine attempts on goal-to-go situations. He also took five sacks.

Both of his goal-to-go completions went for scores, though, and coach Matt LaFleur twice took away a fourth-down chance to finish a drive in the end zone by settling for short field goals.

## Buffalo's Ullmark stops Caps in shootout victory

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Linus Ullmark stopped 28 shots in regulation and overtime and three more in the shootout to help the Buffalo Sabres beat the Washington Capitals 4-3 on Sunday for just their second victory in six games this season.

Ullmark picked up his first win of the season six days after learning of the death of his father at age 63. It was Ullmark's second consecutive start after taking some time away from playing hockey, and the Sabres needed him with goaltender Carter Hutton injured.

"It's been rough, definitely," Ullmark said. "There's a lot of emotions and thoughts that had to be processed. I'm trying to take it day by day. Try to be happy when I'm happy, try to be sad when I'm sad and right now I'm utterly grateful for getting a win."

Captain Jack Eichel scored in the shootout and Colin Miller, Victor Olofsson and Eric Staal each scored on the power play for Buffalo, which snapped a two-game skid. The Sabres outshot the Capitals 48-31 and beat them for the first time in four meetings.

Justin Schultz scored his first goal with Washington and mainstays T.J. Oshie and Nicklas Backstrom each had a power-play goal. The Capitals were playing without five prominent players: captain Alex Ovechkin, center Evgeny Kuznetsov, defenseman Dmitry Orlov and goalie Ilya Samsonov because of COVID-19 protocols and right winger Tom Wilson because of a lower-body in-

jury.

**Stars 3, Predators 2:** Joe Pavelski helped Dallas tie the NHL record for power-play goals in the first two games, scoring one of three with the man advantage in another victory over visiting Nashville.

Denis Gurianov and Roope Hintz also scored on the power play after the Stars went 5-for-8 with the man advantage in a 7-0 victory over the Predators in their delayed opener. Dallas was 3-for-4 on the power play this time.

The Stars tied the 1995-96 Pittsburgh Penguins and 1942-43 Detroit Red Wings with eight power-play goals in the first two games.

**Blackhawks 6, Red Wings 2:** Pius Suter scored his first three NHL goals, Kevin Lankinen made 25 saves and host Chicago swept its two-game set with Detroit after beginning the season with four straight losses in Florida.

**Penguins 3, Rangers 2:** Jake Guentzel scored the 100th goal of his NHL career with less than two minutes remaining, rallying host Pittsburgh over New York, extending the Penguins' win streak to four games after two opening losses. It was Pittsburgh's fourth straight comeback win, tying the longest such streak in franchise history.

**Sharks 5, Wild 3:** Brent Burns scored with 1:48 remaining to snap a tie and lead visiting San Jose over Minnesota.

Burns corralled a loose puck in the right circle, cut to the middle between three Wild

defenders, shifted from his forehand to backhand and beat Kaapo Kahkonen on the far side for the winner.

**Maple Leafs 3, Flames 2:** Morgan Reilly had three assists and Wayne Simmonds scored his first goal with visiting Toronto.

**Devils 2, Islanders 0:** Ty Smith set up two first-period goals to become the sixth NHL rookie defenseman to get points in his first five games for host New Jersey.

Scott Wedgewood, who spent last season in the AHL, made 28 saves for his first NHL shutout since blanking the Devils in December 2017 for Arizona. The win was his first in an NHL game since February 2018.

**Kings 6, Blues 3:** Anze Kopitar had a goal and two assists, Jonathan Quick made 28 saves and Los Angeles earned a split of its two-game set in St. Louis.

**Ducks 3, Avalanche 1:** Jakob Silfverberg and Rickard Rakell scored, and host Anaheim held on to beat Colorado. The Ducks had not scored more than two goals in their first five games.

**Oilers 4, Jets 3:** Leon Draisaitl scored with less than a second left to lift visiting Edmonton over Winnipeg.

**Golden Knights 1, Coyotes 0:** William Karlsson scored with 42 seconds left in regulation, Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 16 shots for his 62nd career shutout and visiting Vegas beat Arizona. Karlsson beat Darcy Kuemper with a one-timer on a feed from Jonathan Marchessault behind the goal.

# Leonard, Clippers win 7th straight game

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Kawhi Leonard scored 34 points and the Los Angeles Clippers beat Oklahoma City 108-101 on Sunday for their seventh consecutive victory and second straight over the Thunder.

Serge Ibaka added 17 points. At 13-4, the Clippers are tied with the Lakers for the best record in the NBA. Leonard also had nine rebounds and eight assists. He had 31 points in a 14-point victory over the Thunder on Friday night.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 23 points against his former team, and George Hill added 22 points. Oklahoma City has lost three in a row and five of six.

**Bucks 129, Hawks 115:** Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points and 14 rebounds and host Milwaukee beat Atlanta to snap a two-game losing streak.

Antetokounmpo had eight assists, finishing two shy of a triple-double. Bobby Portis added 21 points, and Khriston Middleton had 19 for the Bucks.

DeAndre Hunter led the Hawks with a career-high 33 points. John Collins had 30

points, but short-handed Atlanta saw its three-game winning streak end. It was without scoring leader Trae Young (back spasms) and center Clint Capela (sore right hand).

**Celtics 141, Cavaliers 103:** Jaylen Brown scored 20 of his 33 points in the third quarter and host Boston cruised past Cleveland to snap a three-game losing streak.

Kemba Walker added 21 points, Daniel Theis had 17, Carsen Edwards 15 and Marcus Smart 12 for the Celtics. Brown played just 19 minutes.

Collin Sexton led the Cavs with 13 points, far below his team-leading average of 26.8. The team had won three in a row.

**Raptors 107, Pacers 102:** OG Anunoby scored a season-high 30 points and made three free throws in the final minute to break a tie and help surging Toronto win at Indiana.

The Raptors have won two straight and five of their last six, including this one without injured All-Stars Kyle Lowry and Pascal Siakam.

Myles Turner had 25 points and six

blocks for Pacers, who have lost three of four.

**Hornets 107, Magic 104:** Gordon Hayward broke a tie with a layup with 0.7 seconds left and scored 39 points in Charlotte's comeback victory at Orlando.

Hayward beat Evan Fournier off the dribble and made the left-handed layup after the Magic's Terrence Ross tied it with a three-pointer with 8.7 seconds to play.

The teams were to meet again Monday night in Orlando.

Nikola Vucevic topped 10,000 career points and finished with 22 points and 13 rebounds for the Magic.

**Trail Blazers 116, Knicks 113:** Damian Lillard had 39 points, including six three-pointers, and rested Portland jumped out early in a win against visiting New York.

Anfernee Simons added 16 points off the bench for the Blazers, who led by as many as 25 points before seeing their advantage slip away in the final quarter.

Immanuel Quickley scored 31 points off the bench and Julius Randle added 25 for the Knicks.

## Wizards lose in return, Grizzlies postponed again

Associated Press

The Washington Wizards are finally back. The Memphis Grizzlies aren't ready yet.

Washington lost 121-101 at San Antonio on Sunday night, the Wizards' first game in 13 days after having six players test positive for COVID-19 and three others having to miss several days following contact tracing.

The Grizzlies won't play until at least Saturday, after the NBA called off yet another game — the 20th since Jan. 10 and the 21st postponement this season.

Memphis was scheduled to play Sunday and Monday at home against Sacramento. Those were called off late last week and now, the Grizzlies' home game against Chicago that was scheduled for Wednesday is off as well.

The NBA said the Wednesday game was called off "due to contact tracing within the Grizzlies and the length of time preceding the game during which Memphis will be unable to practice."

It was the sixth postponement for the Grizzlies, matching Washington for the most in the NBA.

"It's definitely a challenge," Washington coach Scott Brooks said Sunday night in San Antonio. "It's not where we want to be — but we get to play again and that's the bottom line. It's been a long time. We missed it. It's good to be back."

Patty Mills led San Antonio with 21 points. The Wizards still had six players ineligible, and Washington faded down the stretch as coach Scott Brooks primarily used an eight-man rotation. Bradley Beal scored 31 points to lead the Wizards.

The earliest Memphis will play again is Saturday, also in San Antonio. Having six games called off in the season's first half means, if the Grizzlies and Washington are to play the full 72-game schedule, they would have 41 games in a 67-day span in the second half.

"I just hope that we never have to deal with this again," Brooks said.

Later this week, the NBA and National Basketball Players Association are expected to consider whether the stiffer protocols that were put in place Jan. 12 can be loosened in some way. They were originally put in place in an effort to curb travel to anywhere except games, practices and work-

outs as the league's number of virus-related issues started climbing.

No fewer than 75 players — roughly 16% of the league — have already been on injury reports this season in accordance with the league's health and safety protocols. Reasons for missed games can include positive COVID-19 tests, inconclusive tests and contact tracing showing that a player may have been exposed to someone who had contracted the virus.

Some players have missed 10 games already, including Denver's Michael Porter Jr. and Chicago teammates Tomas Satoransky and Chandler Hutchison. Porter and Satoransky played Friday; Hutchison was eligible to play that night as well but did not get into the Bulls' game.

Other top players still out because of virus-related reasons include Boston's Jayson Tatum, Miami's Jimmy Butler and Minnesota's Karl-Anthony Towns — who revealed earlier this month that he tested positive, the latest blow to his family after seven of his relatives, including his mother, have died from COVID-19 since the pandemic began.