

## Study finds high food insecurity in military

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

More than 25% of active-duty service members lack consistent access to enough food for their households, and Army personnel or on-base residents are especially at risk for food insecurity, according to a new report.

The findings in the Rand Corp. study are at odds with the conventional wisdom that those most prone to food insecurity in the ranks are junior enlisted members with large families.

Instead, the majority of those affected, 67%, were early- to mid-career enlisted personnel between the pay grades of E-4 and E-6, Rand said.

“Food insecure members were more likely than food secure members to report being single with children or married without children,” the report said. “They also were more likely to be a racial or ethnic minority and were disproportionately in the Army, to a lesser extent in the Navy, and rarely in the Air Force.”

But the study, published Tuesday, also in-

dicated uncertainty about the root causes of the problem. One question that vexed researchers: Why do enlisted personnel who earn more than their civilian counterparts report much higher levels of food insecurity?

Only 9% of civilians with similar characteristics struggle to put food on the table, a difference of 16 percentage points, according to the study.

“The higher rate of food insecurity among military personnel is surprising and needs to be better understood,” the report said.

Study participants were asked a series of questions on food security such as how often they could not afford sufficient groceries and whether they skipped meals because of a lack of money.

The study, which Congress directed the Pentagon to sponsor as part of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, found that 15.4% of troops would be classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as having low food security in 2018.

A further 10.4% could be classified as hav-

ing very low food security. The USDA defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”

Among the key findings: 14% reported using government food assistance programs in the past year, while others were concerned that seeking help could negatively affect their career or security clearance. Food-insecure members also were more likely to report having a second job or a spouse with a part-time job.

Still, the findings suggest that at least some military members are opting to keep money in reserve rather than spend it on immediate food needs.

For example, 69% of food-insecure service members reported having money in savings for emergency expenses.

And 29% reported being “very comfortable and secure” or “able to make ends meet without much difficulty” despite qualifying as food-insecure. Of the remaining 71%, nearly two-thirds reported that their difficulties were “occasional” versus “tough” or “in over your head,” Rand said.

## Report: DOD must better manage fleet of fighter jets

By DOUG G. WARE  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon needs to do a better job managing the risks of replacing aging fighter jets and should share information with Congress so it can make better spending decisions and avoid gaps in air superiority, a top federal watchdog concluded in a recent report.

Federal and independent analysts have determined some fixed-wing tactical attack aircraft are outliving their life spans and, in some cases, there aren't planes to replace them yet, according to a study by the Government Accountability Office.

“Most of [the military's] existing tactical aircraft first entered service in the 1970s and 1980s and have exceeded their original service lives,” the 49-page report states, noting the GAO did the study after Congress asked for a review of capability gaps and shortfalls with military attack planes.

“Tactical aircraft — fixed-wing fighter

and attack planes — provide air-to-air, air-to-ground, and electronic warfare capabilities that are vital to combat operations and homeland defense,” according to the report. “Recent studies conducted by the Department of Defense's Joint Staff and the military services have found that [the Pentagon] needs to modernize its tactical aircraft fleet.”

The watchdog warned, however, the Pentagon risks spending valuable funds on duplicate or redundant efforts and leaving critical goals unmet, which could create a gap in tactical aerial capabilities.

The GAO analyzed several different military studies in two years, as well as budget and investment records for aircraft used by the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. It also studied the Pentagon's decision-making process in funding newer aircraft.

“Seven of eight studies found that existing aircraft did not have the capabilities needed to compete in future combat scena-

rios,” the report said. “And some noted the need to invest in advanced technologies to address future needs. Three of the studies ... identified shortfalls in the Navy's capacity, or inventory of tactical aircraft.”

The report shows many of the military's fixed-wing tactical aircraft are decades old. The GAO said the Air Force's fleet of A-10 Thunderbolts, for example, have an average age of 40.4 years. The A-10's replacement is the relatively new F-35A. Similarly, F/A-18s flown by the Navy and Marine Corps have an average age of 28 years, and they will be replaced ultimately by the F-35's B and C variants. Only a limited number of F-35s have been delivered so far. According to the GAO, the Air Force has fewer than 300 F-35As and several dozen B and C variants have been delivered to the Navy and Marine Corps. The Pentagon also has yet to designate replacements for the Air Force's F-16 Fighting Falcon and the Navy's EA-18G Growler.

# General cleared in online spat with Fox host

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

ATLANTA — Maj. Gen. Patrick Donahoe, the former commander of Fort Benning, Ga., retired from the Army on Sunday after he was cleared of wrongdoing in an investigation into his use of social media during a clash with a Fox News broadcaster.

“Elvis has left the building,” Donahoe tweeted from his Twitter account Sunday, announcing his retirement, which had been held up for months by an Army probe into his past use of that social media account.

Donahoe said Tuesday that he was cleared to retire without any negative administrative ac-

tion following the investigation. He officially retired from the Army as a two-star general, according to a service document.

Army spokespeople did not immediately provide comment Tuesday about Donahoe’s retirement.

Service officials acknowledged in September that Donahoe’s retirement, initially expected in the fall, had been delayed as the Army completed reviews of his online behavior, sparked in part by his March 2021 Twitter clash with Fox News broadcaster Tucker Carlson.

Donahoe commanded Fort Benning and its Maneuver Center of Excellence from July

2020 through July 2022. He tweeted regularly during his tenure, amassing more than 25,000 followers. He often interacted with other service members about topics that impact the military and troops’ lives.

In March 2021, Donahoe called out Carlson on Twitter after the television host aired a segment criticizing Pentagon leaders for taking new steps aimed at recruiting and retaining more female troops, which the television host blasted as softening and “making a mockery of the U.S. military.” At the same time, Carlson claimed China’s military was becoming “more masculine.”

Donahoe responded by tweet-

ing a video of himself reenlisting a female staff sergeant at Fort Benning. He wrote it was “just a reminder that @TuckerCarlson couldn’t be more wrong.”

The Army investigation found “national media coverage” that followed Donahoe’s tweets “brought a measurable amount of negative publicity to the Army.” Investigators also criticized some of Donahoe’s other actions on Twitter, including his strong stance in supporting a Pentagon coronavirus vaccine mandate.

Meanwhile, other service members took to Twitter to blast the investigation’s findings and defend Donahoe.

## South Korea considers suspending ‘confidence building’ pact with North

By DAVID CHOI  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Korea’s president suggested he would suspend a nearly 5-year-old agreement designed to lower military tensions with the North, a spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol directed the National Security Office to consider suspending the agreement signed by then-South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo and his North Korean counterpart, No Kwang-chol, on Sept. 19, 2018, senior press secretary Kim Eun Hye said at a news briefing in Seoul.

The agreement, which immediately followed a summit in Pyongyang between then-South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, directs both Koreas “to completely cease all hostile

acts against each other in every domain, including land, air and sea that are the source of military tension and conflict.”

The “confidence building” measures in the agreement established no-fly zones for aircraft and unarmed aerial vehicles and barred Seoul and Pyongyang from conducting artillery drills near the border.

Yoon during a meeting with senior officials Wednesday also directed the military to continue developing an “overwhelming response capability beyond a proportional level to North Korean provocations,” Kim said.

Yoon’s shift away from the agreement comes days after North Korean drones were detected in the South’s airspace for the first time in five years.

Five drones were discovered Dec. 26 over northern Seoul and on the western coast. They flew for roughly five hours and were

visible from the ground, according to South Korea’s military. Despite a military helicopter firing about 100 rounds at the drones, none were downed.

The incident prompted the Ministry of National Defense to apologize for failing to take out a drone.

South Korea’s military responded to the incursion on the same day by sending three surveillance drones north of the border, according to the ministry.

The U.N. Command, which is tasked with enforcing the armistice agreement between North and South Korea, said it was investigating the incident.

Yoon, a member of the conservative People Power Party, also ordered the military to mass-produce small drones within the year, and develop an indigenous “drone-killer system,” Kim said during Wednesday’s news briefing.

## Japan’s PM sets US visit

By JOSEPH DITZLER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan will meet with President Joe Biden at the White House on Jan. 13, the White House said Wednesday.

Biden looks forward to Kishida’s visit “to further deepen ties between our governments, economies, and our people,” according to a statement from White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

They will have much to talk about, including Japan’s plans to bolster its armaments with purchases of Tomahawk missiles from the United States, part of Japan’s record-breaking \$51 billion military spending plan approved in December by the Cabinet; and the persistent presence by the navies of China and Russia in the seas around Japan, including the southward-stretching Nansei Island chain that includes Okinawa.

# McCarthy vows to press on as GOP in disarray

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Republican leader Kevin McCarthy failed anew to win the House speakership Wednesday in a dramatic fourth round of voting as the chamber plunged into Day Two of the new Congress with no end in sight for the political chaos that GOP conservatives have created.

McCarthy fared no better than he did on opening day ballots as 20 conservative holdouts rejected him with their votes. No minds appeared to have changed, and he fell far short of the 218 votes typically needed to win the gavel.

The California Republican vowed to keep fighting despite losing in multiple rounds of voting that threw the new majority into tumult a day earlier.

The House gaveled in at noon, and a McCarthy ally quickly re-nominated him for the job with a rousing speech designed to peel off detractors.

“Sure, it looks messy,” said Rep. Mike Gallagher, R-Wis. But democracy is messy, he said. “The American people are in charge.”

McCarthy himself entered the chamber saying, “We’ll have another vote.”

But the dynamic proved no different from

Day One, as Democrats re-upped their leader, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, for speaker, and a right-flank leader from the Freedom Caucus offered a challenge to McCarthy — nominating Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla., in another history making moment. Both Jeffries and Donalds are Black.

It was the first time in 100 years that a nominee for House speaker could not take the gavel on the first vote, but McCarthy appeared undeterred. Instead, he vowed to fight to the finish, encouraged, he said, by former President Donald Trump to end the disarray and pull the party together.

Early Wednesday, Trump publicly urged Republicans to vote for McCarthy: “CLOSE THE DEAL, TAKE THE VICTORY,” he wrote on his social media site. He added: “REPUBLICANS, DO NOT TURN A GREAT TRIUMPH INTO A GIANT & EMBARRASSING DEFEAT.”

As the spectacle of voting dragged on, McCarthy’s backers implored the holdouts to fall in line for the California Republican.

“We all came here to get things done,” the second-ranking Republican, Rep. Steve Scalise, said in a speech nominating McCarthy for the vote and urging his colleagues to drop their protest.

# FDA finalizes expansion of abortion pills

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday finalized a rule change that broadens availability of abortion pills to many more pharmacies, including large chains and mail-order companies.

The Biden administration partially implemented the change last year, announcing it would no longer enforce a long-standing requirement that women pick up the medicine in person. Tuesday’s action formally updates the drug’s labeling to allow many more retail pharmacies to dispense the pills, so long as they complete a certification process.

The change could expand access at both brick-and-mortar stores and online pharmacies. Women can get a prescription via telehealth consultation with a health professional, and then receive the pills through the mail, where permitted by law.

Still, the rule change’s impact has been blunted by numerous state laws limiting abortion broadly and the pills specifically. Legal experts foresee years of court battles over access to the pills, as abortion-rights proponents bring test cases to challenge state restrictions.

For more than 20 years, the FDA labeling had limited dispensing to a subset of specialty offices and clinics, due to safety concerns. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDA temporarily suspended the in-person requirement.

The agency later said a new scientific review by agency staff supported easing access, concurring with numerous medical societies that had long said the restriction wasn’t necessary.

Two drugmakers that make brand-name and generic versions of abortion pills requested the latest FDA label update. Agency rules require a company to file an application before modifying dispensing restrictions on drugs.

Danco Laboratories, which sells branded Mifeprex, said in a statement the change “is critically important to expanding access to medication abortion services and will provide health care providers” with another option for prescribing the drug.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists called the update an “important step” forward.

# Man suspected of driving car off cliff in California intentionally

*Associated Press*

MONTARA, Calif. — The driver of a car that plunged off a cliff in Northern California, seriously wounding two children and a second adult after the 250-foot drop, was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and child abuse, the California Highway Patrol said Tuesday.

Dharmesh A. Patel of Pasadena will be booked into San Mateo County Jail after he’s released from a hospital, the highway patrol said in a statement.

“CHP investigators worked throughout the night interviewing witnesses and gathering evidence from the scene,” the highway patrol statement said. “Based on the evidence collected, investigators developed probable cause to believe this incident was an intentional act.”

Patel, 42, was in the car with a 41-year-old woman, a 7-year-old girl, and a 4-year-old boy, according to court documents cited by CBS News. It was not immediately clear if they were all members of the same family.

However, Patel is a doctor in radiology at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in the Mission Hills area of Los Angeles, and a statement released by the hospital on Tuesday indicated that members of his family were in the car.

“Providence Holy Cross Medical Center is deeply saddened to learn of a traffic incident involving one of our physicians and his family,” said the statement, which was reported by KABC-TV. “We are extremely grateful there were no serious injuries. We will not respond further, as this incident is under investigation.”



# Russia: Troops' phone use led to attack

Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Unauthorized use of cellphones by Russian soldiers led to a deadly Ukrainian rocket attack on the facility where they were stationed, according to the Russian military, as it raised the death toll from the weekend attack to 89.

Gen. Lt. Sergei Sevryukov said in a statement late Tuesday that phone signals allowed Kyiv's forces to "determine the coordinates of the location of military personnel" and launch a strike.

The Russian military is taking unspecified measures to "prevent similar tragic incidents in the future," Sevryukov said, and promised to punish officials responsible for the blunder.

The attack, one of the deadliest on the Kremlin's forces

since the start of the war over 10 months ago, occurred one minute into the new year, according to Sevryukov.

It was the latest blow to the Kremlin's military prestige as it struggles to progress with its invasion of its neighbor, and stirred renewed criticism inside Russia of the way the war is being conducted amid a successful Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Ukrainian forces fired six rockets from a U.S.-provided HIMARS multiple launch system at a building where the soldiers were stationed. Two rockets were downed but four hit the building and detonated, prompting the collapse of the structure.

Details of the strike have trickled out in recent days.

U.K. intelligence officials said Wednesday that Moscow's

"unprofessional" military practices were likely partly to blame for the high casualty rate on the troops.

"Given the extent of the damage, there is a realistic possibility that ammunition was being stored near to troop accommodation, which detonated during the strike, creating secondary explosions," the U.K. Defense Ministry said in a Twitter post.

In the same post, the ministry said that the building struck by Ukrainian missiles was little more than 7.5 miles from the front line, within "one of the most contested areas of the conflict," in the partially Russian-occupied Donetsk region.

"The Russian military has a record of unsafe ammunition storage from well before the current war, but this incident highlights how unprofessional practices contribute to Russia's

high casualty rate," the update added.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin-appointed leader of the Donetsk region, one of four that Moscow illegally annexed in September, on Wednesday praised the "courage and true heroism" of the dead Russian soldiers.

Denis Pushilin said in a Telegram post that some of those killed tried to pull their comrades from the burning building.

In Samara, in southwestern Russia, locals on Tuesday gathered for an Orthodox service in memory of the dead. The service was followed by a minute's silence, and flowers were laid at a Soviet-era war memorial, the state RIA Novosti agency reported. Unconfirmed reports in Russian-language media said the victims were mobilized reservists from the region.

## Pope Francis hails 'gentle' Benedict ahead of funeral

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis praised Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's "acute and gentle thought" as he presided over a packed Wednesday general audience in the Vatican, while thousands of people paid tribute to the former pope on the final day of public viewing in St. Peter's Basilica.

Francis was greeted by an enthusiastic crowd in the Paul VI auditorium and shouts of "Viva il papa!" or "Long live the pope" as he arrived for his weekly catechism appointment.

This week's audience was conducted as tens of thousands of people continued to flock to St. Peter's Basilica to pay their respects before Benedict's body, lying in state. The first two days of viewing drew a total of 135,000 people. Wednesday's viewing began before dawn and was set to end in early evening.

Francis is due to preside over the late German pope's funeral on Thursday, an event that is drawing heads of state and royalty despite Benedict's requests for simplicity and Vatican efforts to keep the first Vatican funeral for an emeritus pope in modern times low-key.

Francis drew applause when he opened his remarks by noting all those who were outside paying tribute to Benedict, whom he called a "great master of catechesis."

"His acute and gentle thought was not self-referential, but ecclesial, because he always wanted to accompany us in the encounter with Jesus," Francis said.

Later Wednesday, Vatican officials were to place Benedict's body in a cypress coffin along with a brief, written summary of his historic papacy, the coins minted during his pontificate and his pallium stoles.

## US reopening visa and consular services in Cuba

Associated Press

HAVANA — The United States Embassy in Cuba is reopening visa and consular services Wednesday, the first time it has done so since a spate of unexplained health incidents among diplomatic staff in 2017 slashed the American presence in Havana.

The Embassy confirmed this week it will begin processing immigrant visas, with a priority placed on permits to reunite Cubans with family in the U.S., and others like the diversity visa lottery.

The resumption comes amid the greatest migratory flight from Cuba in decades, which has placed pressure on the Biden administration to open more legal pathways to Cubans and start a dialogue with the Cuban government, despite a historically tense relationship.

They are anticipated to give

out at least 20,000 visas a year, though it's just a drop in the bucket of the migratory tide, which is fueled by intensifying economic and political crises on the island.

In late December, U.S. authorities reported stopping Cubans 34,675 times along the Mexico border in November, up 21% from 28,848 times in October. Month-to-month, that number has gradually risen. Cubans are now the second-largest nationality after Mexicans appearing on the border, U.S. Customs and Border Protection data shows.

The growing migration is due to a complex array of factors, including economic, energy and political crises, as well deep discontent among Cubans.

The exodus from Cuba is also compounded by rising migration to the U.S. from other countries like Haiti and Venezuela.

**AMERICAN ROUNDUP**

**Universities increase pool offered in-state tuition**

**SD** SIOUX FALLS — South Dakota’s six public universities plan to offer in-state tuition rates to students from Wisconsin and Illinois by next fall.

The South Dakota Advantage plan has until now offered in-state tuition to undergraduates and graduate students from Colorado, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming residents, the Argus Leader reported Thursday. The Board of Regents voted to add Wisconsin and Illinois to the list earlier this month.

Officials at South Dakota’s universities say the move should boost enrollment and lead to more graduates remaining in South Dakota. The regents said in a Dec. 9 news release that about 30% of nonresident students remain in-state following graduation.

In-state students and students from states in the South Dakota Advantage plan will pay about \$253.85 per credit hour at Black Hills State University, Dakota State University and Northern State University.

They will pay \$259.10 per credit hour in undergraduate studies at the University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University and \$260.55 per credit hour in undergraduate studies at South Dakota Mines.

**Lawyer: Facial recognition led to mistaken arrest**

**LA** NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana authorities’ use of facial recognition technology led to the mistaken-identity arrest of a Georgia man on a

fugitive warrant, an attorney said in a case that renews attention to racial disparities in the use of the digital tool.

Randall Reid, 28, was jailed in late November in DeKalb County, Ga., The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate reported.

His attorney, Tommy Calogero, said authorities erroneously linked Reid to purse thefts in Jefferson Parish and Baton Rouge. Reid, arrested on Nov. 25, was released Dec. 1.

Reid is Black, and his arrest brings new attention to the use of a technology critics say results in a higher rate of misidentification of people of color than of white people.

“They told me I had a warrant out of Jefferson Parish. I said, ‘What is Jefferson Parish?’” Reid said. “I have never been to Louisiana a day in my life. Then they told me it was for theft. So not only have I not been to Louisiana, I also don’t steal.”

**Senator cited for intoxication while in car**

**SC** LEXINGTON — A South Carolina state senator said he was cited for public intoxication early New Year’s Day while sitting in his parked car after realizing he drank too much and shouldn’t be driving.

Republican Sen. Tom Davis said he had been sitting in his parked car for over an hour Sunday when a Lexington Police officer approached him and eventually issued a ticket for public intoxication.

“Moments after leaving a social gathering where alcohol was consumed, Senator Davis recognized he should not be driving. In an effort to be safe

and responsible, he pulled his vehicle into a nearby parking lot, disengaged it and sat in it,” the law firm retained by Davis said in a statement.

Lexington Police didn’t respond to an email Monday seeking a copy of the public intoxication ticket or other information. Town offices, including municipal court, were closed Monday for the New Year’s holiday.

**Suspected gas blast levels 2 homes, hurts 5**

**PA** PHILADELPHIA — A suspected gas explosion a few hours into the new year demolished two Philadelphia row homes and damaged others, sending several people to the hospital, authorities said.

Fire department officials said the blast occurred shortly before 3 a.m. Sunday in the Port Richmond neighborhood of northeast Philadelphia.

Two buildings were reduced to rubble while others had windows blown out, while several cars were pushed from the street and debris was scattered everywhere.

Assistant Fire Chief Charles Walker said two people managed to free themselves but one person had to be dug out of the rubble. A 65-year-old man was critically injured and a 60-year-old woman had critical burns, WTXF-TV reported. Police reported three other victims, at least two of them in stable condition.

**One dead, three injured in plane crash at airport**

**UT** PROVO — A small plane with four passengers crashed at a Utah airport on Monday, killing one and

injuring the other three, according to city officials in Provo.

The plane crashed immediately after takeoff and one of the three survivors was transported to the hospital in critical condition. The other two sustained “minor bumps and bruises,” officials said.

The National Transportation Safety Board tweeted that it was investigating the crash of the aircraft, which it identified as an Embraer 505, a light business jet.

Brian Torgersen, the airport manager, told FOX13 that the scene of the crash was “devastating” and was surprised that two of those on board made it out with relatively minor injuries.

**Man sentenced in theft case involving resort**

**WV** CHARLESTON — A Maryland man who admitted stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from a southern West Virginia resort where he was the maintenance director has been sentenced to two years and three months in federal prison.

Dhanraj Singh, 62, of Bowie, Md., also paid back more than \$382,000 that he admitted to embezzling from the resort, U.S. Attorney Will Thompson said in a news release. The statement did not name the resort.

From 2017 until July 2020, Singh submitted fake invoices that either requested reimbursement for maintenance work that never occurred or inflated the cost of work performed, according to court records.

— From wire reports



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**Reporting World, National and Military News**

# Hamlin's recovery moving in positive direction

*Associated Press*

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Damar Hamlin's recovery is moving in "a positive direction" two days after the Buffalo Bills safety collapsed and went into cardiac arrest during a game against Cincinnati, the player's marketing representative said Wednesday.

"We all remain optimistic," Jordan Rooney, a family spokesman who described himself as a good friend of the player, told The Associated Press by phone. He said he was unable to go into further detail on Hamlin's status at the request of his family not to provide specifics.

On Tuesday, the Bills said Hamlin was listed in critical condition.

Rooney said Hamlin's family was staying positive and buoyed by the outpouring of worldwide support the Bills player has received since his heart stopped and he was resuscitated on the field before being loaded into an ambulance and transported to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center.

"They are elated right now,"

Rooney said. "Damar is still their first concern. But for them, they always look at how they can turn a somewhat troubling situation into a good one. The bounce back from this, for him and his family is going to be incredible."

Rooney's update comes after Hamlin's uncle, Dorrian Glenn, told numerous media outlets Tuesday night there were some encouraging signs in his nephew's progress, such as doctors lowering the level of oxygen Hamlin needs from 100% to 50%.

"He's still sedated right now," Glenn told CNN. "They just want him to have a better chance of recovering better. So they feel that if he's sedated, his body can heal a lot faster than if he was woke and possibly cause other complications."

Rooney did want to clarify one thing Glenn said by saying there was a misunderstanding when the uncle said Hamlin had to be resuscitated twice. Rooney said that "isn't exactly true," without going into further detail.

The chilling scene of Ham-

lin's collapse, which played out in front of a North American television audience on ESPN's "Monday Night Football," has put the NFL on hold, with the pivotal game suspended indefinitely. The Kansas Chiefs (13-3) are battling with the Bills (12-3) and Bengals (11-4) for the No. 1 seed in the AFC.

The Bengals led 7-3 in the first quarter when the game was stopped. The NFL is scheduled to begin playoffs on Jan. 14. The No. 1 seed in each conference gets a first-round bye and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs.

It's uncertain how the league will handle seedings if the Bills-Bengals game isn't concluded. The NFL could push the start of the playoffs back one week and eliminate the extra week in between the conference championship games and Super Bowl. The Pro Bowl Games are scheduled for Feb. 5.

The Bills, who returned to Buffalo early Tuesday, are scheduled to hold team meetings and a walkthrough practice on Wednesday. They are expected to resume practicing

on Thursday in advance of their home game against the New England Patriots on Sunday.

Players and fans from across the NFL rallied to Hamlin's support, with vigils held in Cincinnati and outside the Bills' home stadium. The shock of what happened also reverberated in Pittsburgh, where the 24-year-old Hamlin grew up and was determined to give back to those in need.

Hamlin was hurt in the first quarter when he was struck squarely in the chest while making what appeared to be routine tackle of Bengals receiver Tee Higgins. Hamlin briefly got up and adjusted his facemask before collapsing backward.

Hamlin is from McKees Rocks, a hardscrabble exurb of Pittsburgh, and was selected by Buffalo in the sixth round of the 2021 draft out of the University of Pittsburgh. He spent his rookie season limited to special teams roles, and took over the starting job in Week 3 in place of veteran Micah Hyde, who remains sidelined by a neck injury.

# Panthers, Harbaugh discuss head coaching job

*Associated Press*

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Carolina Panthers owner David Tepper has talked to University of Michigan head football coach Jim Harbaugh about the team's head coaching position, according to a person familiar with the situation.

The person characterized the meeting as a conversation, not an interview. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity on Tuesday because the team does not typically release details of its coaching search.

Charlotte Sports Live was first to report the conversation.

The Panthers' head coaching search is expected to begin in earnest in the coming weeks.

Carolina (6-10) was eliminated from playoff contention on Sunday following a 30-24 loss to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Steve Wilks has been serving as interim head coach after Matt Rhule was fired in the middle of his third season as head coach. The Panthers are 5-6 under Wilks.

Carolina is required to interview at least two minority candidates in person, and those can't come until after the wildcard weekend if those coaches are employed by another NFL team.

Harbaugh has had success coaching at the NFL and college levels.

He coached the San Francisco 49ers from 2011-2014, winning two NFC West titles and reaching the NFC championship game three times in four seasons. He was 44-19-1 during that span and helped the 49ers get to Super Bowl 47, where they lost 34-31 to the Baltimore Ravens.

He left the 49ers after going 8-8 in 2014 — the only season the 49ers didn't make

the postseason under his direction — to take the job at Michigan.

The 59-year-old Harbaugh has spent the past eight seasons coaching the Wolverines, compiling a 74-25 record. Michigan was 13-0 this season before getting upset this past weekend by TCU in the College Football Playoffs.

Harbaugh also spent four seasons as head coach of Stanford and three more at San Diego.

He was the AP NFL Coach of the Year in 2011 and AP College Coach of the Year in 2021.

He spent 15 seasons as an NFL quarterback, wrapping up his career with a short stint with the Panthers in 2001, although he didn't play.

The Panthers, who have failed to reach the playoffs the past five seasons, wrap up the season Sunday at New Orleans.



# Nowell, Kansas State top No. 6 Texas

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Markquis Nowell had 36 points and nine assists as Kansas State beat No. 6 Texas 116-103 on Tuesday night, setting a school scoring record with a stunning offensive outburst that gave first-year Wildcats coach Jerome Tang his biggest victory.

The Wildcats poured in 58 points in the first half behind 64% shooting and eight three-pointers. Kansas State then held off a Texas rally as the Longhorns made 11 consecutive shots in the second half and shaved a 20-point deficit under 10 with just under five minutes left.

“We wanted to be aggressive the first five minutes,” said Nowell, who was one assist shy of being the first Kansas State player with at least 30 points and 10 assists. “We’re a really dangerous team when we get it going downhill.”

And they never let up, especially in the second half as the teams traded basket after basket.

Keyontae Johnson added 28 points and nine rebounds for the Wildcats (13-1, 2-0 Big 12), whose free-flowing offense with Nowell leading the way found just about any open shot the team wanted. Nowell came into the game No. 2 nationally in assists, and his shifty drives and nifty passing had Texas defenders looking for the ball all game.

Tyrese Hunter scored 29 points and Marcus Carr had 27 for the Longhorns, handed their first loss in their new arena, the Moody Center.

Kansas State also sent the Longhorns (12-2, 1-1) to their first loss since head coach Chris Beard was suspended indefinitely without pay following his Dec. 12 arrest on a felony family violence charge. Assistant coach Rodney Terry has been acting head coach since then and had led Texas to five straight wins, including a victory at Oklahoma in the Big 12 opener.

The 116 points were the most

Texas has permitted in a Big 12 game.

“We’ll work hard to get a lot better defensively,” Terry said. “(Nowell) put his will on the game.”

**No. 3 Kansas 75, Texas Tech 72:** KJ Adams scored the last of his 16 points on a breakaway dunk with seven seconds remaining, and the Jayhawks ended Texas Tech’s home winning streak at 29 games.

Dajuan Harris scored 18 points for Kansas (13-1, 2-0 Big 12), who led by a dozen points early in the second half but allowed the Red Raiders to make it close at the finish. Jalen Wilson had 14 points and Gradey Dick scored 11.

**No. 7 Alabama 84, Mississippi 62:** Brandon Miller scored 17 points, Marc Sears had 18 and host Alabama beat Mississippi.

The Crimson Tide (12-2, 2-0 Southeastern Conference) raced to a 21-point halftime lead, shot 9-for-20 on three-pointers and placed five scorers in double figures. The Rebels (8-5, 0-2)

finished just 2-for-24 on threes (8.3%) in their third straight loss.

**No. 8 Tennessee 87, Mississippi State 53:** Santiago Vescovi scored 14 points, Zakai Zeigler had 11 points and 10 assists, and host Tennessee beat Mississippi State.

The Volunteers (12-2, 2-0 Southeastern Conference) scored the first 16 points of the game and won for the 24th consecutive time at home, dating to the last game of the 2020-21 season.

**Pittsburgh 68, No. 11 Virginia 65:** Blake Hinson scored 16 points, Jamarius Burton added 15 and host Pittsburgh rallied past Virginia.

**No. 14 Wisconsin 63, Minnesota 60:** Steven Crowl scored 17 points, Chucky Hepburn had 16 and host Wisconsin held off Minnesota for its sixth straight win.

**Fresno State 71, No. 21 New Mexico 67:** Isaih Moore scored 16 points and host Fresno State upended New Mexico, the last unbeaten team in the nation.

## NCAA recommendations call for bigger championship events

Associated Press

Bigger brackets. Less bureaucracy. More benefits for athletes.

The NCAA Division I transformation committee wrapped up months of work with a 22-page report released Tuesday that recommends a variety of changes at the top level of college sports, but only one likely to catch the attention of the average fan.

The committee is recommending allowing 25% of teams in sports sponsored by at least 200 schools to compete in annual championship events. That opens the door to possible expansion of the popular March Madness basketball tournaments from 68 to as many as 90 teams each.

Expanding the tournaments is not imminent and might not even be likely in the near future even if the recommendation is adopted.

“Each sport will have the opportunity to take a look, comprehensively, at what the impact of expanded brackets might be and whether or not it’s something they should pur-

sue for their particular championship,” said Ohio University athletic director Julie Cromer, who is the co-chairperson of the committee.

The final report will be presented to the Division I Board of Directors for consideration ahead of next week’s NCAA convention in San Antonio.

Led by Cromer and Southeastern Conference Commissioner Greg Sankey, the 21-member committee comprised mostly of college sports administrators and university presidents held weekly meetings for most of the last year. Sankey, Cromer and others have been discussing some of the details publicly for weeks.

The goal was to reform the highest and most lucrative level of college athletics, which includes more than 350 schools. The result will be changes that could largely go unnoticed outside college sports and could take years to play out.

No schools will be getting booted from Division I and the committee recommended giv-

ing schools approximately two years to meet enhanced membership expectations. The committee also said NCAA revenue could be used to subsidize schools in need of help meeting those new expectations.

“I don’t think what we’ve done today makes it cost prohibitive to be a Division I member,” Cromer said.

Among the notable recommendations:

■ Require schools to create a “direct pathway for full-time clinical services of a licensed mental health professional exclusively dedicated to serving student-athletes.”

■ Schools and conferences should create Student-Athlete Advisory Committees, similar to those used by the NCAA to allow athletes to be more involved in decisions.

■ Require more accountability, training and certification for coaches.

The committee also recommended expanding permissible benefits to athletes to include more pay for travel, elite training away from the school, educational incidentals and more money toward housing and meals.

# Sabres honor Bills' Hamlin in OT win

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Damar Hamlin was forefront in the minds of the Buffalo Sabres from the time they woke up on a game day through the end of their 5-4 overtime victory at the Washington Capitals on Tuesday night.

It was evident from the "LOVE FOR 3" shirts players wore into the arena to Hamlin's jersey number in Bills colors on the lapel of general manager Kevyn Adams, who did not even want to talk about Tage Thompson's hat trick and his team's seventh victory in eight games. He and the Sabres were entirely focused on Hamlin, the Bills safety who remained hospitalized in critical condition in Cincinnati after collapsing and going into cardiac arrest during Buffalo's NFL game Monday night against the Bengals.

"What happened last night is something that makes the game itself and any sport secondary, so it was a tough day for all of us," Adams said in speaking for the organization. "There's an emotional connection to the city from our team. It was tough, to be honest, this morning, the conversations. But (players) also, I think, know how much our team means to this city and just

wanted to be able to go out and do what we could today to put our best foot forward."

That added up to some incredible symmetry: Thompson scoring three goals, including the third exactly 3 minutes into 3-on-3 OT, on Jan. 3. One of the new faces of the Sabres franchise, Thompson now has 30 goals this season.

**Rangers 5, Hurricanes 3:** Artemi Panarin, K'Andre Miller and Filip Chytil scored third-period goals as host New York snapped Carolina's 11-game winning streak.

Jacob Trouba and Mika Zibanejad also scored for the Rangers, who are 10-2-1 in their last 13 games.

The Hurricanes had points in 17 straight (15-0-2) and hadn't lost in regulation since Nov. 23 to Arizona.

**Blues 6, Maple Leafs 5 (SO):** Brayden Schenn scored on the power play and again in the shootout to give visiting St. Louis a victory over Toronto.

Schenn put away the winner in the tiebreaker after Robert Thomas and Pavel Buchnevich scored on Maple Leafs goalie Ilya Samsonov.

Brandon Saad scored twice, including one short-handed. Jordan Kyrou and Josh Leivo

also scored, and Jordan Binnington made 20 saves.

**Kings 3, Stars 2:** Adrian Kempe broke a tie on a power play midway through the third period and host Los Angeles ended Dallas' four-game winning streak.

Pheonix Copley made 28 saves for his seventh straight victory.

**Predators 6, Canadiens 3:** Mattias Ekholm, Tommy Novak and Roman Josi each had a goal and an assist to lead host Nashville to a victory over Montreal.

Cole Caufield, Josh Anderson and Brendan Gallagher scored for the slumping Canadiens, who have lost six straight and nine of 10.

**Lightning 4, Blackhawks 1:** Alex Killorn snapped a tie in the third period and visiting Tampa Bay beat Chicago for its fourth straight victory.

Brandon Hagel added a goal and an assist as the Lightning won for the 11th time in 14 games.

Chicago dropped its fifth straight.

**Kraken 5, Oilers 2:** Jaden Schwartz had a goal and two assists and visiting Seattle scored four consecutive goals in the second period to beat Edmonton.

Matty Beniers, Yanni Gourde, Jared McCann and Alex Wennberg also scored for the surprising Kraken (20-12-4).

**Panthers 5, Coyotes 3:** Matthew Tkachuk scored his first hat trick for host Florida in a win over Arizona.

Tkachuk was acquired last summer in a trade with the Calgary Flames. Florida also got a pair of goals from Eric Staal and 33 saves from Spencer Knight to end a two-game skid.

**Islanders 6, Canucks 2:** Mathew Barzal had a goal and two assists as visiting New York beat struggling Vancouver.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored twice — once on a power play and then shorthanded late into an empty net. Aatu Raty, Anders Lee and Casey Cizikas also had goals for the Islanders.

**Senators 4, Blue Jackets 0:** Anton Forsberg made 22 saves for his second NHL shutout, Tim Stutzle had a goal and an assist and host Ottawa beat Columbus.

**Jets 3, Flames 2:** Sam Gagner tipped in Ville Heinola's point shot with 5:40 left to help host Winnipeg beat Calgary.

Brenden Dillon and Josh Morrissey also scored for the Jets.

# Antetokounmpo scores 55, lifting Bucks past Wizards

Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Giannis Antetokounmpo says he wants to produce with so much consistency that it causes boredom.

That's the only respect in which the two-time MVP has fallen short lately.

Antetokounmpo scored a career-high 55 points with a series of thrilling dunks and drives as the Milwaukee Bucks beat Washington 123-113 on Tuesday night, snapping the Wizards' five-game winning streak. The spectacular forward also had 10

rebounds and seven assists to continue arguably the best stretch of his career.

"I want to get in a position ... that my game is boring," Antetokounmpo said. "I just do what I do and people don't talk about it because it becomes boring — I do it every single night. That's what I want to do. I want other people to feel like my game is boring. But I don't get bored. The greats — the best players — never get bored. They go out there and they always give their best any given night."

Antetokounmpo has at least 40 points, 10 rebounds and five assists in each of the last three games he's played. He sat out a loss to the Wizards on Sunday because of a sore left knee.

"He's been kind of playing with this kind of determination, this kind of just willing us in games," coach Mike Budenholzer said. "Tonight we were able to win it. He's just been phenomenal."

**Thunder 150, Celtics 117:** Josh Giddey scored a season-high 25 points and short-handed

host Oklahoma City blew out NBA-leading Boston.

Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who averages 30.8 points per game, sat out with an illness.

**Kings 117, Jazz 115:** De'Aaron Fox made a driving layup in the final second and scored 22 of his 37 points in the fourth quarter to help visiting Sacramento beat Utah.

Utah's Lauri Markkanen made a three-pointer at the final buzzer that was initially ruled good, but reversed upon replay.