

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Vietnam War helo pilot to receive Medal of Honor

BY TRAVIS J. TRITTEN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A Huey helicopter pilot from the Vietnam War will become the latest recipient of the Medal of Honor on Monday.

Retired Lt. Col. Charles Kettles, 86, of Michigan is scheduled to receive the medal from President Barack Obama during a ceremony at the White House, according to a recent presidential announcement.

The nation's highest military medal is an upgrade of the Distinguished Service Cross that Kettles received for a harrowing 1967 rescue of more than 40 soldiers with 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division who were ambushed in Vietnam.

"I didn't do it by myself. There were some 74 pilots and crewmembers in this whole mission that day," Kettles said in a video interview published by the Army. "So it's not just me; I'm just leading the pack."

A Vietnam veteran last received the medal in September 2014, when it was awarded to Army Sgt. 1st Class Bennie Adkins and posthumously to Specialist Donald Sloat, an Army rifleman.

Kettles was a flight commander assigned to the 176th Aviation Company, 14th Combat Aviation Battalion dur-

ing the war and was called up to lead a UH-1D helicopter platoon to ferry the ambushed soldiers to safety.

The helicopters loaded up what was thought to be the last remaining soldiers. But while en route back to the base, Kettles discovered eight men had been left behind on the battlefield.

Kettles turned back to rescue the men, though the United States had pulled back its artillery and air cover, and he remained uncertain whether his Huey would lift off with the additional troops aboard, potentially leaving them grounded amid enemy fire.

During the pick-up, bullets raked the helicopter and shrapnel blew out a section of its windshield, but the men got aboard.

The aircraft's tail rotor was damaged and it began fishtailing, causing a soldier to fall out its door, where he hung precariously from a skid before being pulled back into the helicopter.

Kettles told Stars and Stripes that the added weight and damage forced him to make a running takeoff over a long, open space amid the small arms and mortar fire.

"We got the 44 out. None of those names appear on the wall in Washington. There's nothing more important than that," Kettles said in the Army interview.

## Ex-admiral: US should protect disputed reef

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The United States should be willing to use military force to oppose Chinese aggression at a disputed reef off the coast of the Philippines, a former commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific told a congressional hearing Wednesday.

Dennis Blair made the recommendation to a Senate panel a day after an international tribunal invalidated Beijing's expansive claims in the South China Sea.

The objective was not to pick a fight with China at the disputed Scarborough Shoal, but to set a limit on its military coercion, Blair said.

"I think we need to have some specific lines and then encourage China to compromise on some of its objectives," he told the hearing.

The Philippines is a U.S. ally, but their treaty is ambiguous about whether the U.S. would come to its defense in disputed territory.

A 2012 standoff at Scarborough Shoal between Chinese and Philippine vessels prompted Manila to launch the arbitration case.

China has rejected the tribunal's ruling, and on Wednesday warned other countries against threatening its security in the South China Sea. Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said Beijing could declare an air defense identification zone over the waters if it felt threatened. China, however, also extended an olive branch to the new Philippine government, saying the Southeast Asian nation would benefit from cooperating with China.

Blair, also a former director of national intelligence, said China has alienated its neighbors through its aggressive actions in the South China Sea, including its reclamation of land and construction of airstrips and ports in the Spratly Islands.

He advised a careful U.S. approach following the tribunal ruling to give Beijing opportunity to change course.

Kurt Campbell, former top U.S. diplomat for East Asia and now an adviser on Asia policy for the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton, said, "I think over time, China will start to adjust its position because they will realize it's not in their best strategic interests."

New Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte wants to revive relations with China that soured after his predecessor launched the arbitration case in 2013. But he also wants to be seen at home as defending the legal victory.

## Militant news agency confirms death of senior commander

*Associated Press*

IRBIL, Iraq — A news agency affiliated with the Islamic State group has confirmed the death of the militant group's most senior commander — four months after U.S. officials reported his death and four days after the U.S.-led coalition conducted a strike on a leadership meeting where he was believed to be present.

"The information available to us at the time of our last strike against (Omar al-)Shishani indicated that he had been killed," a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition targeting the Islamic State group said in an email. "However, we were also careful at that time

to point out we were still assessing the results of the strike. When the Coalition later learned Shishani was still alive, we targeted him again and conducted the strike on July 10."

Al-Shishani, an ethnic Chechen and the Islamic State group's most senior commander, was believed to be among 17 Islamic State operatives at a gathering targeted by coalition forces near the Iraqi city of Shirqat on Sunday, the coalition said.

The Amaq news agency, which is linked to the Islamic State group, said Wednesday the ethnic Chechen, famous for his long, red beard, had died in combat south of Mosul.

## Republicans announce lineup for convention

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — A war hero, a casino mogul and an openly gay high-tech investor are among the scheduled speakers at next week's Republican National Convention, although Donald Trump is relying heavily on the party's establishment to fill out the list.

The presumptive presidential nominee has approved a convention program that features at least 20 current or former elected officials, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Speaker Paul Ryan and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a primary rival.

Absent from a list obtained Thursday by The Associated Press are Trump friends from professional sports, such as New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady or the celebrities the New York billionaire's team suggested would help make this convention unlike any other.

Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal, may be the first openly gay speaker featured at a national Republican convention. His appearance comes as party leaders refuse to soften the GOP's formal opposition to gay marriage.

Other speakers will include four of Trump's children, Las Vegas casino owner Phil Ruffin, and actor and former underwear model Antonio Sabato Jr. Football star Tim Tebow will appear on stage, the campaign confirmed.

Mark Geist and John Tiegen, survivors of the 2012 attack on the American diplomatic consulate in Benghazi, Libya, will speak.

Some of the GOP's biggest names are declining to participate in the four-day convention, which begins Monday.

Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, and the party's two most recent presidential nominees, John McCain and Mitt Romney, plan to skip the event, as does Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

Trump's team suggested the convention lineup would highlight Trump's outsider appeal.

The candidate acknowledged in recent days that he'd stick a little closer to tradition.

"Look, I have great respect for the institution of the conventions. I mean to me, it's very important. So we're not going to change the wheel," Trump said on Fox.

## 'Game of Thrones' rules Emmy nominations with 23

Associated Press

Power-and-blood fantasy saga "Game of Thrones" ruled the Emmy Award nominations Thursday with a leading 23 bids, including best drama, while a real-life epic of murder and celebrity, "The People v. O.J. Simpson," was close behind with 22 nods.

"Game of Thrones" gets the chance to win its second top Emmy, while "Veep," last year's top comedy winner, also will get another shot at holding office and with 17 nominations was the comedy leader.

Breakthrough nominations include a best comedy series nod for sophomore "black-ish," which brought the African-American family sitcom back to network TV, with bids as well for its stars, Anthony Anderson and Tracee Ellis Ross.

They were among a number of black actors recognized by TV academy voters, who have started to keep pace with TV's growing diversity — in sharp contrast to moviedom's Academy Awards, which were slammed as "Oscars So White" this year.

## US offers Russia pact over Syria operations

Associated Press

PARIS — The United States is offering Russia a new military pact against the Islamic State and al-Qaida in Syria, according to a leaked U.S. proposal that, if finalized, could dramatically alter America's role in the Arab country's five-year civil war.

The document, published by The Washington Post, calls for joint bombing operations, a command-and-control headquarters and other synchronized efforts. U.S. and Russian officials with expertise in intelligence, targeting and air operations will "work together to defeat" the extremist groups, the eight-page paper states.

Secretary of State John Kerry, who was to discuss the proposal in Moscow on Thursday, declined to comment.

"I'm going to Moscow, meeting with President (Vladimir) Putin tonight," Kerry told reporters. "We'll have plenty of time to talk about it and I'll give you all a sense of where we are."

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said only that joint U.S.-Russian efforts were key to fighting terrorism in the region.

Such a partnership would undercut months of U.S. criticism of Russia's military intervention in Syria. And it would put the U.S. alongside Syrian President Bashar Assad's chief international backer, despite years of American demands for Assad to leave power.

Russia would be getting what it wanted since it first intervened in Syria on Assad's behalf last September — to be a leader in an international alliance.

Washington has rebuffed Moscow's requests for military cooperation, accusing the Russians of using anti-terrorism objectives as a pretext for protecting Assad's position, of repeatedly violating truces and attacking moderate rebel groups backed by the U.S. or its allies as well as civilian targets.

Much of Washington is wary about working too closely with Russia. A dissent cable signed by 51 State Department officials last month showed a sizable part of America's diplomatic establishment believing a U.S. military response against Assad's forces was necessary, given Moscow's increased leverage as a result of its intervention.

### Navy: Selection to widen at Sigonella commissary

The Navy is working to expand the selection of items for sale at the Sigonella commissary on Sicily while a legal dispute that prohibits the sale of other items presses forward between U.S. and Italian authorities.

A small shipment arrived on Monday and a "broader selection of items will be available for purchase, as additional shipments arrive," the Navy said in a Facebook posting.

For now, commissary customers are authorized to pur-

chase only a small selection of goods — staples such as fruits, vegetables and meat — because of an Italian court's decision to award everything else in the store to an Italian man who said he was unfairly fired from Naval Air Station Sigonella.

Italian courts awarded Carmelo Cocuzza, a former Navy Exchange employee, restitution for lost wages and retirement in connection with a ruling that he was wrongly fired. Cocuzza recently got a court order to "foreclose" on the debt and seize commissary assets, Italian media reported.

From staff reports

# Twins search for answers to woes

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — During the previous decade, as Minnesota piled up division titles as a spunky overachiever, the organization's ability to produce fundamentally solid players and competitive teams without expensive power hitters or starting pitchers became known around baseball as the "Twins Way."

They've become the wayward Twins these days. They're on pace at the All-Star break to pass the club record of 102 losses.

"Like a lot of people, I don't look at the record too much anymore. It's kind of counterproductive for me," manager Paul Molitor said after a historic, horrific first half of the schedule during which the Twins went 27-54.

"I try not to go down that road. Obviously I hope we have a better half," said Molitor, who in his first year running the team oversaw an 83-79 record that had the Twins in postseason contention until the second-to-last day on the 2015 slate.

Having averaged 96 losses over the four years prior to Molitor's debut, the 0-9 start this season that didn't get much better throughout April and May looked more like

the trend. The optimism-fueling 2015 finish looked more like the outlier.

"Not where we want to be," said first baseman Joe Mauer, in his usual understated manner.

What can't be overstated is the organization's persistent problem procuring and maintaining adequate starting pitching. Twins starters are 19-38 with a 5.26 ERA this season, ahead of only Cincinnati.

The backbone of the "Twins Way" was durable starting pitchers who didn't walk many batters, trusting stout defense behind them to minimize potential damage from pitches to contact. The philosophy was formed around the time manager Tom Kelly took over in 1987, leading the Twins to their first of two World Series titles. There were lean years in the 1990s, but the club was in contention in Kelly's last season, 2001, and kept it up under his replacement, Ron Gardenhire. The Twins won the American League Central six times from 2002 through 2010.

Since then, quality starters have simply stopped coming through the farm system.

Kyle Gibson, the team's first-round draft pick in 2009, has settled in as a capable middle-of-the-rotation right-hander. Tyler

Duffey has shown potential in 24 major league starts. Jose Berrios is waiting in Triple-A. But the dearth of starting pitching has prompted general manager Terry Ryan to dole out close to \$200 million in free agent contracts since he returned to his post nearly five years ago.

Ervin Santana has been the best of a mediocre-at-best bunch, a group of five veterans who've combined for 78 victories over the last 4½ seasons.

"Hopefully we've drafted and are starting to develop some people who are going to emerge in the near future and give us an opportunity to start building a staff where you'd say, 'All right, they're going to be around here for a while,'" Ryan said.

This is the sixth straight year that Twins starters have ranked in the bottom five in the majors in strikeouts. The overall struggles have triggered a shift toward development, Ryan said, from innings limits to drafting harder throwers.

Less-than-desirable defense hasn't helped the starting pitchers, either, but sometimes they've been at fault, too. Molitor ordered an early round of pitchers' fielding practice before a recent game, the type of fundamental drills rarely seen dur-

ing a season after spring training.

"There's a lot of our game, our Twins baseball, this year that needs cleaning up," Molitor said that night. "You can talk about base running and our defense at times. But the plays that are on the mound, our guys make good pitches and we get balls hit in the infield and we're having mental lapses about covering bases or where to go backing up bases. It was just kind of my desire to get these guys focusing a little bit more and realize that they have more responsibility than just throwing a pitch. You let your guard down, and it's easy to come back and bite you."

The Twins have gone 7-3 in July while outscoring opponents a whopping 78-37, including seven games against league-leading Texas. They're likely to make some trades this month and next, clearly out of contention for 2016, but Molitor has expressed at least a mild satisfaction in recent progress shown by some of the young players who struggled so badly at the beginning of the season.

"It's a great opportunity to teach," Molitor said.

## What 2nd half of MLB season might produce

Associated Press

David Ortiz is set to get booed at Yankee Stadium, Chris Sale is ready to resume striking out Kris Bryant and the Kansas City Royals are facing a rugged road back to the playoffs.

Now that the All-Star fun is finished, a look at what's on deck as Major League Baseball makes the turn and heads home toward October:

**Pennant push:** All eyes will be on Joe Maddon and his Cubs as they chase their first World Series crown since 1908. They're in prime position so far — Jake Arrieta, Bryant and Co. hold the biggest lead at the break, up seven games over St. Louis in the NL Central.

The Cubs have never won a title while at Wrigley Field. All those past failures? "That's something we don't really discuss very often," Arrieta said.

Only one division race closer than five games: The AL East, with Baltimore up two on Boston and Toronto. Ortiz got a lot of love this week, but what Big Papi really wants is one more swing in the postseason.

Quite a scramble is shaping up for wild-card spots — 18 teams are within five games of the slots.

**Deal or no deal:** Will Aroldis Chapman soon be closing somewhere else? Can Jonathan Lucroy catch on with a contender? How about Carlos Gonzalez? Could Drew Pomeranz or Jake Odorizzi be starting a new chapter?

Plenty to track before the Aug. 1 deadline to make trades without waivers. Last year, a lot of big names moved in the final week — Yoenis Cespedes, Johnny Cueto

and Troy Tulowitzki, among them.

This year, several elite teams need bullpen help. The Yankees have two of the top targets in Chapman and Andrew Miller. A few more wins might quiet all the trade noise, Miller said.

"We can shut down those rumors, and I think that's the goal. That's what we need to do. That's what we should do," he said.

**Heal or no heal:** Clayton Kershaw, Zack Greinke and Craig Kimbrel come out of the break on the disabled list, as do Felix Hernandez, Michael Brantley and several Texas pitchers.

How fast the likes of Jordan Zimmermann, Wade Davis, Matt Carpenter and others can effectively come back might determine how far their teams go.

The defending NL champion Mets had already lost captain David Wright and former ace Matt Harvey for the season and power-hitting Lucas Duda for a long time when slugger Yoenis Cespedes and hard-throwing Noah Syndergaard recently got hurt in the same game.

"I don't want it to sound like woe is me," Mets manager Terry Collins said, "but woe is us."

**Step it up!** Andrew McCutchen, Prince Fielder and Giancarlo Stanton are among several stars who slumped through the first half. Jose Bautista, Jason Heyward and Dallas Keuchel also have been shaky. All over the majors, All-Stars who haven't performed that way get 2½ months to return to form.

A big second half by Justin Upton could propel Detroit in the playoff chase, same for Yordano Ventura in KC and Adam Wainwright in St. Louis.

## Multiple WCAP Army athletes head to Rio

The Gazette

U.S. Army Sgt. Nathan Schrimsher knows he has a high standard to attempt to meet.

The Fort Carson, Colo.-based modern pentathlete placed third at the Pan American Games in July 2015 to become the first American to qualify for the Rio Olympics next month.

Now, almost a year later, the realization that he may soon compete in the event that then-Lt. George Patton excelled in has the Roswell, N.M., native excited.

"Those are very big shoes to fill," said Schrimsher, 24. "I just want to do the best I can and represent the U.S. Army and my country to the best of my abilities."

Patton, who went on to fame in World War II as the "Old Blood and Guts" four-star general, placed fifth in the 1912 Olympics when the event — based on the skills needed to succeed in 19th century warfare — made its debut. It remains the Americans' top Olympic finish.

Schrimsher credits his military training for his success, especially the physical fitness and mental training, along with the help of former competitor, two-time Olympian and new coach Staff Sgt. Dennis Bowsher.

They were two of 15 World Class Athlete Program Olympians, Paralympians and coaches introduced at a press conference Tuesday at Fort Carson. The WCAP allows Olympic-caliber athletes to remain on active duty in the U.S. Army and earn a paycheck while focusing on their training during the season and buildup to Rio.

That's critical in the less-lucrative or less-sponsored sports like modern pentathlon, which requires an athlete to compete in fencing, horse riding, pistol shooting, running and swimming all in one day with placings awarded points to determine an overall winner.

"There aren't a lot of sponsors in (Paralympic) archery and I see how the civilians competing really struggle," said Staff Sgt. Michael Lukow, an Alamosa native training in Salt Lake City. "It allows me to have a steady paycheck and support my family."

Schrimsher used the past 12 months to get ready for Rio, competing as often as his body allowed to improve when the event starts Aug. 20, two weeks after the opening ceremonies. He climbed steadily up the world rankings, going from 123rd in 2011 to 40th entering the Games.

But then the first-time Olympian, who grew up on a ranch outside Roswell, is used to waiting. He will attend the opening ceremonies and then leave Brazil for a training camp to remain focused on the competition.

"He has a long history in the sport starting as a youth, junior and now Olympics," Bowsher said. "He's been working hard and steadily improving."

He will be there for the closing ceremonies when he can relax and soak in the experience.

"I cannot wait to be among all these Olympic athletes and be part of such a huge international event," he said.



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# Supreme Court next for Brady, Pats?

Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Tom Brady is down to his last chance, and it's not a very good one.

If the New England Patriots quarterback is to avoid a four-game suspension in the scandal known as "Deflategate," he will have to convince the U.S. Supreme Court to take his case. Only about 1 percent of the appeals submitted to the nation's highest court are accepted, and they tend to be about grand constitutional issues.

Not deflated footballs.

Brady's latest appeal was rejected on Wednesday by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which turned away his request with a one-paragraph ruling. The NFL Players Association said it was disappointed but declined to say whether it planned to appeal.

Here are some things to look for as "Deflategate" mercifully, winds down:

## Appeal

Should Brady choose to appeal, he would ask the 2nd Circuit for a stay of the ruling and, if unsuccessful there, make the same request of the Supreme Court. (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg is in charge of such requests from the 2nd Circuit.) A stay would allow him to play this season while the high court decides whether to take the appeal and, if so, hears the case.

The Supreme Court accepts around 80 cases from about 7,000 requests each year.

## No contact

The Patriots report for training camp in two weeks, and a suspended player is allowed to practice with the team during camp and participate in preseason games. Brady's suspension would not take effect until 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept.

3, the time rosters are trimmed to 53 players.

Brady would not be allowed to have any contact with the team during the suspension. He would return to the active roster on Monday, Oct. 3, a day after Game 4 against the Buffalo Bills.

## Substitutes

Without Brady, the Patriots are expected to start Jimmy Garoppolo for the first four games. Even in their unwavering support of Brady, many Patriots fans consider this to be a benefit for the team.

Brady is going to turn 39 next month, and could use the rest. Also, New England hasn't been seriously challenged in the AFC East since 2010, so an extra loss or two could be inconsequential to the team's playoff chances.

Garoppolo has been Brady's backup since he was picked in the second round of the 2014 draft, and the Patriots certain-

ly want to see what he can do.

This would give them a chance.

## The next conflict

While several judges have doubted the quality of the evidence against Brady and the Patriots, the 2nd Circuit panel that upheld the suspension ruled that the league's collective bargaining agreement gave Commissioner Roger Goodell wide latitude in player discipline.

So if the NFLPA wants to protect players from a process it has called "biased," "agenda-driven" and "capricious," it will have to bring it up in labor negotiations. The current CBA is due to expire in 2021.

"The track record of this league office when it comes to matters of player discipline is bad for our business and bad for our game," the NFLPA said in a statement on Wednesday. "We have a broken system that must be fixed."

## MSU CB: Green punched my jaw

Associated Press

DETROIT — Golden State Warriors star Draymond Green struck a Michigan State football player in the jaw during a weekend confrontation near campus, tried to apologize and then had to sit in jail for a while until he could sober up, according to a police report released Wednesday.

Senior cornerback Jermaine Edmondson — who the school announced Wednesday night has received his release to transfer — claimed he was punched by Green early Sunday outside a restaurant in East Lansing, though officers patrolling the area said they saw or heard a loud, open-handed "slap."

Edmondson said it was his second confrontation with Green, a former Michigan State player, in two nights. He told police that he and his girlfriend were choked Friday night by men who were with Green at Rick's, a bar near campus.

He said he spotted Green the next night and tried to talk to him, according to the police report released to The Associated Press.

"I walk over and I tell Draymond that last night wasn't cool," Edmondson, who is from Canton, Ohio, said in an email to police. "As he responded to me he began to poke me on my shoulder and I tell him that he doesn't need to put his hands on me, we can just talk. As I started to talk again, boom, I'm punched in my jaw."

He said he had a headache and pain in his neck and jaw.

Green was arrested and taken to the East Lansing jail where he had a blood-alcohol level of 0.10, police said. He was released when sober.

Green said "he was sorry for slapping the subject and wanted to speak with him to make things right," Officer Jeff Horn wrote.

On Wednesday night, Michigan State said in a release that Edmondson was given his release and has decided to play his final college season elsewhere. There was no indication from the school whether the alleged altercation with Green played a role in Edmondson's departure.

"In discussions with Jermaine Edmondson following spring practice and in the weeks thereafter, it became clear that Jermaine wanted to play a larger role on the team," coach Mark Dantonio said in a statement. "After consulting with him in the summer, he felt it was in his best interest to finish his playing career elsewhere."

Edmondson had 24 tackles last season. He was listed as a third stringer on Michigan State's spring depth chart. If convicted of misdemeanor assault and battery, Green could face 93 days in jail, a \$500 fine or both.

"My legal team is handling it. It will be resolved really quickly," Green said Tuesday in Aspen, Colo. "As a public figure, I just can't put myself in certain situations. It's something that I'll learn from and move on."

## Froome retains yellow jersey after bizarre crash at Tour de France

Associated Press

MONT VENTOUX, France — Chris Froome was allowed to keep the yellow jersey after the Tour de France race jury ruled he crashed and lost his bike in unfair circumstances during a wacky conclusion to the 12th stage on Thursday.

"Ventoux is full of surprises. ... I'm very happy with the jury's decision," Froome said.

In a complete embarrassment for race organizers on Bastille Day, Richie Porte crashed headfirst into a motorbike carrying a TV camera and Froome, who was right behind his former teammate, also hit the pavement in the final kilometer on the wind-shortened climb to Mont Ventoux.

The motorbike appeared to have stopped because fans blocked its path.

"We took an exceptional decision because of this exceptional situation, an incident that might have never happened before in 100 years," said Tour director Christian Prudhomme, explaining that the wind prevented organizers from erecting the usual barriers at the end of most stages.

Froome threw his mangled bike aside and began running up the road. He eventually was given a small yellow race assistance bike before his team car was finally able to provide him with a suitable substitute.

All of Froome's main rivals crossed ahead of him, and Froome shook his head in disbelief when he finally reached the finish.

As Froome ran through the crowds he attempted to communicate with his team via radio but the crowds prevented the Team Sky car from reaching him.

"It was a nightmare," Sky sports director Nicolas Portal said. "It took up to two minutes for him to get a spare bike but the pedals did not suit him. ... I can't understand how so many people were allowed there. It was mayhem."

Froome increased his overall lead to 47 seconds ahead of fellow British rider Adam Yates.

## Albany won't play Duke due to law

DURHAM, N.C. — Duke has an opening on its men's basketball schedule because of the state law that impacts LGBT people.

The Blue Devils were supposed to play Albany on Nov. 12 as part of the Hall of Fame Tipoff tournament but there's no opponent listed on that day in Duke's schedule that was released Wednesday.

Holly Liapis, spokeswoman for the State University of New York system that includes Albany, said that game won't be played because of New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's executive order banning publicly funded, non-essential travel to North Carolina.

## Spurs make it official, sign Gasol

SAN ANTONIO — The San Antonio Spurs have signed Pau Gasol, beefing up a front line that will be without Tim Duncan next season for the first time in 19 years.

The 7-foot Gasol has won two NBA titles and is a six-time All-Star. Gasol is one of six players in NBA history to reach 19,000 points, 10,000 rebounds, 3,000 assists and 1,500 blocks along with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Hakeem Olajuwon, Shaquille O'Neal, Kevin Garnett and Duncan, who retired earlier this week.

The 36-year-old Gasol has been one of the league's most talented and versatile big men for the last 15 years. He spent the last two seasons in Chicago and averaged 16.5 points, 11.0 rebounds and 4.1 assists this year. He should fit right in with Gregg Popovich's ball-moving system.

## NHL expansion team hires McPhee

George McPhee wants to build a team that will entertain fans in a unique market and bring hockey's hallowed trophy to the desert sooner rather than later.

McPhee was named general manager of the NHL's expansion Las Vegas franchise on Wednesday. Now it's up to him to build Las Vegas from scratch to begin play in 2017-18, a task he knows won't be easy.

"Our mission here is clear: We're going to build an organization and a team that people in Nevada and Las Vegas will be proud of, and we're going to do it quickly and we're aiming at the Stanley Cup," McPhee said. "It's that simple."

McPhee most recently served as special adviser to New York Islanders GM Garth Snow and before that spent 16 seasons as GM of the Washington Capitals. As the Capitals' GM, McPhee oversaw a complete rebuild around star winger Alex Ovechkin that led to six consecutive playoff appearances.

In other NHL news:

■ The New York Rangers agreed to terms Wednesday with restricted free agent forward J.T. Miller on a \$5.5 million, two-year deal.

Agent Scott Bartlett confirmed the terms of the deal, which carries a \$2.75 million cap hit. Miller will make a \$2.5 million in salary with a \$250,000 bonus next season and \$2.75 million in 2017-18.

## Portugal rises in FIFA rankings

ZURICH — European champion Portugal has risen two places to No. 6 in the FIFA rankings, and Copa America winner Chile stays at fifth.

Argentina is still No. 1.

Mexico leads CONCACAF nations at No. 14, and Copa America semifinalist United States has risen six to 25th.