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US, Taliban scramble to rewrite draft

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Taliban and U.S. negotiators are scrambling to rewrite a draft agreement that will outline the withdrawal of American and NATO troops from Afghanistan and a verifiable Taliban guarantee to fight terrorism ahead of an all-Afghan peace conference Sunday.

Officials familiar with the talks, but not authorized to speak about them, say negotiations went late into the night on Wednesday and were to resume again on Thursday — the sixth day of direct talks between the insurgents and U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad.

Suhail Shaheen, spokesman for the Taliban's political office in Qatar, told The Associated Press on Thursday that "the talks are continuing and they will continue tomorrow as well. We have made some progress."

Previously he said that a draft agreement was being rewritten to include agreed-upon clauses. On Thursday he said the two sides had broadened their discussion, without elaborating.

Until now the two sides had been divided on the withdrawal timetable, with the U.S. seeking more time.

Taliban officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, earlier said the U.S. was

seeking up to 18 months to complete a troop withdrawal even as President Donald Trump told Fox News earlier this week that a withdrawal had already quietly begun and that troop strength had been cut to 9,000. The president's statement has since been contradicted by a senior U.S. official, who said the force strength is unchanged at about 14,000.

Still, Trump's statements reinforced the president's often-stated desire to leave Afghanistan and end America's 18-year war — the longest in his country's history.

His eagerness to pull out has strengthened the position of the

Taliban, who effectively control half the country and won a key concession in the planning of the upcoming peace gathering, which will include no official delegation from the Afghan government.

Germany and Qatar, who are co-sponsoring the dialogue and issuing the invitations, said participants will attend "only in their personal capacity," a condition President Ashraf Ghani has strenuously opposed.

The Taliban have steadfastly refused to talk to Ghani's government, calling it a U.S. puppet, but have said government officials can attend the conference as private citizens.

White House lays out grounds for an attack on Iran

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — As it has contemplated military action against Iran, the Trump administration has opened the door to virtually every legal authority it might use to justify an attack, from tying Iran to al-Qaida, to President Donald Trump's assertion that it would not involve American ground troops and "wouldn't last very long."

Democrats, and some Republicans, have tried repeatedly to pin the administration down, including last week's unsuccessful attempt to muster 60 Senate votes for an amendment requiring Trump to ask Congress before launching any military engagement.

When asked directly about legal justification, senior administration officials have offered undetailed assurances that any action would be "consistent with our Constitution," as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said last month, or they deferred to lawyers.

Concern about the possibility of U.S. military action against Iran has grown since the administration cited new intelligence that Iran or its proxies were planning to attack U.S. troops or American interests in

the Middle East.

Although Trump canceled a U.S. strike against Iran following the drone shoot-down, the administration has continued to lay the legal groundwork for a strike.

Pompeo, in both public and classified testimony, according to lawmakers, has said there are ties between Iran and al-Qaida. Such a relationship would seem to provide the foundation for military action against Iran under the 2001 congressional Authorization for Use of Military Force against the perpetrators of the al-Qaida attacks that year.

Such a determination has doubters even within the administration. Defense officials have taken unusual steps in recent weeks to distance themselves from Pompeo's assertion amid fears that the administration may be driving toward a conflict that most Pentagon officials expect would be long, costly and detrimental to American interests in the region.

In a statement, Cmdr. Rebecca Rebarich, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said the department "does not believe 2001 AUMF can be used against Iran." That position has been affirmed by the Pentagon's top lawyer, Paul Ney Jr., according to officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to

address internal deliberations.

The other legal authority available to the president, short of Congress' approval under its constitutional authority to declare war, is the president's own constitutional power as commander in chief of the armed forces, in charge of keeping the nation secure. Here, previous presidents and the current Justice Department have laid a broad foundation for action that Congress has done little to constrain.

Citing previous definitions of the "national interest," the Trump OLC opinion cited protection of U.S. persons and property, assistance to allies, and the promotion of regional stability — all of which have been mentioned by the administration as U.S. goals regarding Iran.

In an interview last week with Fox Business host Maria Bartiromo, Trump said that "If something should happen, we're in a very strong position. It wouldn't last very long, I can tell you that. It would not last very long."

"And I'm not talking about boots on the ground, I'm not talking we're going to send a million soldiers. I'm just saying if something would happen, it wouldn't last very long."

Navy SEAL walks free in war crimes trial

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — One of the U.S. military's most significant war crimes cases ended with a decorated Navy SEAL walking out of court a free man after acknowledging moral and ethical mistakes, including posing in photographs with the body of an Islamic State captive he was cleared of killing.

Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher will spend no time in jail for the only charge he was convicted of — pos-

ing with a human casualty — despite being given the maximum sentence of four months' confinement for the offense Wednesday by a military jury. That's because it is less than the time he was held in custody before the trial.

The jury also called for his rank to be reduced, hurting his pension and benefits just as the 19-year-veteran prepares to retire.

Gallagher turned to his wife, shook his head and pretended to unpin his "anchors" — the

insignia of a chief — and fling them across the courtroom. He then smiled and hugged her.

While the outcome was a major blow to the Navy's prosecution, it is expected to have lasting effects on the culture of special operations forces.

The fact that Gallagher escaped prison may discourage future reporting, while others see the case sending a different message.

"It will be a cautionary lesson for all special operations that they're not beyond the law

and that's a lesson that's valuable in and of itself," said former Marine Corps prosecutor Gary Solis, who teaches military law at Georgetown.

Naval Special Warfare Commander Rear Adm. Collin Green said the SEAL community "will learn from this experience through critical self-examination and be better for it."

A jury cleared Gallagher on Tuesday of all other charges, including premeditated murder.

Court upholds freeze on DOD funds for wall

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — An appeals court on Wednesday upheld a freeze on using Pentagon money to build a border wall with Mexico, casting doubt on President Donald Trump's ability to make good on a signature campaign promise before the 2020 election.

A divided three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco agreed with a lower court ruling that prevented the government from tapping Defense Department counterdrug money to build high-priority sections of wall in Arizona, California and New Mexico.

The decision is a setback for Trump's ambitious plans. He ended a 35-day government shutdown in February after Congress gave him far less than he wanted. He then declared a national emergency that the White House said would free billions of dollars from the Pentagon.

The case may still be considered, but the administration cannot build during the legal challenge.

"As for the public interest, we conclude that it is best served by respecting the Constitution's assignment of the power of the

purse to Congress, and by deferring to Congress's understanding of the public interest as reflected in its repeated denial of more funding for border barrier construction," wrote Judges Michelle Friedland, a Barack Obama appointee, and Richard Clifton, a George W. Bush appointee.

A freeze imposed by U.S. District Judge Haywood Gilliam Jr. of Oakland in May prevented work on two Pentagon-funded wall contracts — one spanning 46 miles in New Mexico and another covering 5 miles in Yuma, Ariz.

While the order applied only to those first-in-line projects, Gilliam made clear that he felt the American Civil Liberties Union was likely to prevail in their argument that Trump ignored Congress' wishes by diverting Defense Department money.

Gilliam went a step further June 28 by ruling definitively that the administration couldn't use Pentagon counterdrug money for the two projects covered in his May order or to replace 63 miles in the Border Patrol's Tucson, Ariz., sector and 15 miles in its El Centro, Calif., sector.

The administration immediately appealed.

US troops on Afghan base celebrate the 4th of July

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DAHLKE, Afghanistan — U.S. servicemembers deployed to this austere base in eastern Afghanistan had something extra to celebrate this Independence Day: the official opening of a USO center.

The facility's inauguration corresponded with a string of events to mark the holiday, including a 5-kilometer run, basketball and table tennis competitions and alcohol-free beer pong.

FOB Dahlke, which opened in recent years on the old grounds of Forward Operating Base Shank, has traditionally offered next to nothing for troops in terms of recreation.

Soldiers with Task Force Apocalypse, currently stationed at the base, have been working to change that.

"When we first came here we didn't have anywhere for the soldiers to do anything," said Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Pryor, an aviation operations specialist with the task force who was deployed earlier this year.

It was Pryor who recommended setting up a USO center and, after getting approval,

scoured the grounds for an empty building and even helped with construction work.

The facility, which took more than a month to construct, is equipped with a movie screening area, pool table, televisions, video games and free wi-fi.

"The only thing people used to say here was 'Dahlke doesn't have anything. This is going to be the worst deployment,'" Pryor said. "Anyone can sit and complain, but I thought: 'Yeah, it sucks, but guess what? I'm going to make a USO, and the soldiers are going to love it.'"

On Thursday, it appeared Pryor's goal was achieved, and just in time to mark the Fourth of July.

After he cut an opening ceremony ribbon, the facility and the grounds around it were teeming with troops celebrating. At noon, the USO provided a barbecue lunch in addition to the other activities.

"I think what they did today was great; it was a great morale boost," said Spc. Michael Millier, 33, an aviation specialist with Task Force Apocalypse. "It's a big holiday back home, and it stinks not being with your family. I've got a wife and three girls, but you got to do what you got to do for your country."

Trump: Still working to save census question

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said administration officials were working on Independence Day in hopes of finding a way to have the 2020 census include a citizenship question even though the government has begun the process of printing the questionnaire without it.

“So important for our Country that the very simple and basic ‘Are you a Citizen of the United States?’ question be allowed to be asked in the 2020 Census,” Trump said in his first tweet of the holiday.

Trump’s administration has faced numerous roadblocks to adding the question, including last week’s Supreme Court ruling that blocked its inclusion, at least temporarily. The Justice Department had insisted to the Supreme Court that it needed the matter resolved by the end of June because of a deadline to begin printing census forms and other materials.

But on Wednesday, department officials told a federal judge in Maryland they believed there could be a way to meet Trump’s demands.

“There may be a legally avail-

able path,” Assistant Attorney General Joseph Hunt told U.S. District Judge George Hazel during a conference call with parties to one of three census lawsuits. The call was closed to reporters; a transcript was made available soon after.

A department spokeswoman had confirmed on Tuesday that there would be “no citizenship question on the 2020 census” amid signs that the administration was ending the legal fight. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said in a statement that day that the “Census Bureau has started the process of printing the decennial questionnaires without the question.”

It was a Trump tweet on Wednesday — “We are absolutely moving forward” — that sowed enough confusion that Hazel and U.S. District Judge Jesse Furman, overseeing a census lawsuit in New York, demanded clarification.

“I don’t know how many federal judges have Twitter accounts, but I happen to be one of them, and I follow the President, and so I saw a tweet that directly contradicted the position” that a Justice Department lawyer took in a hearing Tuesday, Hazel said.

Court puts abortion restrictions on hold

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Trump administration rules that impose additional hurdles for low-income women seeking abortions are on hold once again.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco on Wednesday vacated a unanimous ruling from a three-judge panel and said a slate of 11 judges will reconsider lawsuits brought by more than 20 states and several civil rights and health organizations challenging the rules.

The rules ban taxpayer-funded clinics from making abortion referrals and prohibit clinics that receive federal money from sharing office space with abortion providers.

Critics say the rules would force many clinics to find new locations, undergo expensive remodels or shut down.

The Justice Department previously said its position “is supported by long-standing Supreme Court precedent, and we are confident we will ultimately prevail on appeal.”

Federal judges in Washington, Oregon and California blocked the rules from taking effect. U.S. District Judge Michael McShane in Oregon called the new policy “mad-

ness” and said it was motivated by “an arrogant assumption that the government is better suited to direct women’s health care than their providers.”

A three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit overruled them two weeks ago. The judges called the rules “reasonable” and said they align with a federal law that prohibits taxpayer funds from going to “programs where abortion is a method of family planning.”

With that decision vacated, the injunctions issued by the lower court judges are once again in effect. It’s not clear when new court arguments will be held.

“We are profoundly grateful the preliminary injunction is back in place,” said Clare Coleman, president of the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, which is involved in the cases.

She said the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services had not yet been enforcing the new rules, even though the three-judge panel’s ruling had given it the green light to do so.

The rules affect organizations that provide, and women who receive, health care through Title X, a 1970 law designed to improve access to family planning services.

Jarring images of border cells spark public outrage

Associated Press

“Inhumane.” “Shameful.” “Intolerable.” “Brutal.” Mounting revelations about squalid and dangerously overcrowded conditions at Border Patrol holding centers have fueled public outrage heading into the Fourth of July weekend, with protesters taking to the streets and social media to decry the situation as un-American and unacceptable.

The swelling furor over President Donald Trump’s immigration policies comes as the administration said Wednesday that it is looking for more properties to permanently hold unaccompanied children who cross the border. Jerry Gonzalez, executive director of the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials, called that trou-

blesome given the government’s “track record on abuses and child neglect that we have seen nationally.” Atlanta is one of five potential locations for new facilities to hold up to 500 children.

“I don’t think that this administration is capable of administering a program in a humane way,” Gonzalez said.

Headlines and searing images made public in past days and weeks have served as a stark reminder for Americans far from the border of a crisis for which solutions seem scarce. An immigrant father and daughter drowned in the Rio Grande. Reports that infants, children and teens have been locked up without adequate food and water. Revelations that five children have died in Border Patrol custody since December.

The Homeland Security Department’s internal watchdog provided new details Tuesday about severe overcrowding in Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings, noting children at three facilities had no access to showers and that some children under age 7 had been held in jammed centers for more than two weeks. Some cells were so cramped that adults were forced to stand for days on end.

Government inspectors described an increasingly dangerous situation, both for migrants and agents, with escape attempts and detainees clogging toilets with socks to get released during maintenance. The situation is a “ticking time bomb,” in the words of one facility manager.

California bans hairstyle discrimination

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Gov. Gavin Newsom on Wednesday signed into law a bill making California the first state to ban workplace and school discrimination against black people for wearing hairstyles such as braids, twists and locks.

The law by Democratic Sen. Holly Mitchell, of Los Angeles, a black woman who wears her hair in locks, makes California the first state to explicitly say that those hairstyles are associated with race and therefore protected against discrimination in the workplace and in schools.

“We are changing the course of history, hopefully, across this country by acknowledging that what has been defined as professional hairstyles and attire in the workplace has historically been based on a Euro-centric model — based on straight

hair,” Mitchell said.

Stephanie Hunter-Ray, who works at a makeup counter, said she typically wears her hair braided or in an afro, but one day she showed up to work with it straightened and styled in a bob. Her manager told Hunter-Ray her hair had never looked so normal.

“It bothered me,” Hunter-Ray said in an interview at the hair salon she owns in Sacramento that specializes in natural hair styles. “What do you mean by ‘normal?’ Your normal is not my normal. My normal is my ‘fro or my braids.”

Alikah Hatchett-Fall, who runs Sacred Crowns Salon in Sacramento, said she’s had black men come into her salon asking to have their hair cut off because they can’t find jobs.

The law, she said, “means that psychologically and mentally people can be at

ease and be able to get the jobs they want, keep the jobs they want, and get promoted at the jobs they want.”

California’s new law, which takes effect Jan. 1, is significant because federal courts have historically held that hair is a characteristic that can be changed, meaning there’s no basis for discrimination complaints based on hairstyle. The U.S. Supreme Court recently declined to hear the case of an Alabama woman who said she didn’t get a job because she refused to change her hair.

The issue burst into public view last December when a black high school wrestler in New Jersey was told by a referee that he had to cut off his dreadlocks if he wanted to compete.

California’s Democratic governor said the video was a clear example of the discrimination black Americans face.

Ky. bourbon warehouse destroyed by fire

Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. — A fire destroyed a massive Jim Beam warehouse filled with about 45,000 barrels of aging bourbon in Kentucky, and state officials worried that runoff whiskey seeping into nearby waterways would kill fish.

Firefighters from four counties responded to the blaze that erupted late Tuesday. It sent flames shooting into the night sky and generated so much heat that firetruck lights melted.

Lightning might have been a factor, but fire investigators haven’t been able to start looking for the cause, Woodford County Emergency Management Director Drew

Chandler said.

The warehouse was a total loss. Looking to reassure consumers of Jim Beam bourbon, Beam Suntory indicated it amounted to a drop of the iconic brand’s total aging inventory.

No injuries were reported, Chandler said. The fire was contained but was allowed to burn until midday Wednesday, he said.

“The longer it burns, the more of the distilled spirits burn with it,” he said in a phone interview. “So when they go to put it out, there will be less contaminated runoff that goes into a drinking water tributary.”

By Wednesday afternoon, firefighters were dousing the warehouse’s charred re-

mains with water to try to extinguish the fire, Chandler said. As they kept working, the focus turned to the environmental impact of the leaking bourbon.

The distiller hired an emergency cleanup crew, and state environmental officials were coordinating efforts to control bourbon runoff into a nearby creek that flows into the Kentucky River, said John Mura, a spokesman for the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet.

“We do know there has been runoff enter the creek,” Mura said. “And it has made its way into the Kentucky River.”

The runoff could have a “serious impact on aquatic life,” he said.

Fla. agency encourages killing of non-native iguanas

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Non-native iguanas are multiplying so rapidly in South Florida that a state wildlife agency is now encouraging people to kill them.

A Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission news release says people should exterminate the large green lizards on their properties as well as on 22 public land areas across South Florida.

It doesn’t say just how civilians should try to kill them.

“Homeowners do not need a permit to kill iguanas on their own property, and the

FWC encourages homeowners to kill green iguanas on their own property whenever possible,” the agency says.

Iguanas aren’t dangerous or aggressive to humans, but they damage seawalls, sidewalks and landscape foliage and can dig lengthy tunnels. The males can grow to at least 5 feet long and weigh nearly 20 pounds.

The commission says female iguanas can lay nearly 80 eggs a year, and South Florida’s warm climate is perfect for the prehistoric-looking animals. Iguanas are native to Central America, tropical parts of South America and some Caribbean

islands.

“Some green iguanas cause damage to infrastructure by digging burrows that erode and collapse sidewalks, foundations, seawalls, berms and canal banks,” the wildlife commission says. “Green iguanas may also leave droppings on docks, moored boats, seawalls, porches, decks, pool platforms and inside swimming pools.”

They also can carry salmonella bacteria.

Like other non-native species, authorities say, iguanas brought to Florida as pets or hitchhiking on ships have begun to flourish in the state.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Squirrel leads officers on chase at station

NH STRATHAM — Two New Hampshire police officers had a little run-in with a squirrel in a pursuit caught on video.

A Facebook post by the Stratham Police Department shows the two officers opening a garage door entry when the squirrel comes running inside.

The animal appears to run around in a circle, with the officers scampering after it in an attempt to corner the squirrel or chase it back out.

Customs agents seize rat meat at airport

IL CHICAGO — Officials said U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport thwarted a man's attempt to import several pounds of African rat meat.

Customs spokesman Steve Bansbach said that the man declared the 32 pounds of meat on June 26 when his flight arrived from the Ivory Coast. The meat was confiscated and destroyed.

Bansbach said customs officials prohibit the entry of African meats to prevent the spread of African swine fever.

Inmates use veggies to make alcohol

AL PRATTVILLE — An Alabama sheriff said jail inmates were caught making some truly "disgusting" alcohol out of fermenting vegetables.

News outlets reported it turned up when dozens of officers conducted a shakedown for contraband at the Autauga Metro Jail.

Autauga County Sheriff Joe Sedinger said it was the first

time he'd seen vegetables being used to make alcohol. He said the jail stopped serving inmates fruit years ago because they made wine with it.

Customer accused of drive-thru assault

TN BROWNSVILLE — A Tennessee woman upset about waiting for her fast-food order is accused of trying to drag a restaurant worker out through the drive-thru window and using a stun gun on him.

Marquenta Glidwell, 28, of Brownsville, was charged with aggravated assault.

WREG-TV reported McDonald's manager Jacob Jordan said Glidwell left her vehicle and attacked him when he told customers in the drive-thru lane to stop blowing their horns. A security video shows Jordan being punched by someone trying to pull him out of the window.

Electrocuted squirrel hung on wire for week

NY SYRACUSE — An electrocuted squirrel hanging from a power line was removed more than a week after an upstate New York man began posting pictures on social media.

Chet Seidel, of Syracuse, said he reached his limit after the rodent was still hanging in front of his home three days after it died biting a utility wire.

Seidel began to post daily photos and videos of the squirrel.

The Syracuse Post-Standard reported Seidel called National Grid to remove it. The utility initially said it only responds when squirrels cause a power outage.

But the utility removed the squirrel, saying it didn't want neighbors trying to dislodge it.

Police: Man robbed after cashing check

PA PHILADELPHIA — Police said a man was held up at gunpoint and robbed of \$100,000 he had just received after cashing a check in Philadelphia.

A police spokeswoman said the 44-year-old man got into a work van after receiving the money from a check-cashing establishment in south Philadelphia.

Police said a white van crashed into the man's work van, and as he got out to exchange information with the other driver two men pointed a gun and demanded the money.

Man who clogged toilets gets jail time

WI SHEBOYGAN — A Sheboygan man will serve time behind bars for causing property damage by repeatedly clogging women's toilets.

A criminal complaint said Patrick Beeman, 35, told police he gets urges to do odd things, like look for bottles in the garbage to clog toilets and cause them to overflow.

He was sentenced to serve 150 days in jail and serve three years of probation on five counts of criminal damage to property. He must also pay \$5,500 in restitution and complete 100 hours of service.

Police: Man burned wife's belongings

ME MILO — Authorities in Maine said they charged a man with arson after he threw his wife's belongings on the front lawn, poured gas on them and set them ablaze.

Fire marshals said Jeffrey Stevens, 39, of Milo was arrest-

ed Monday.

Fire marshals said articles of clothing and personal items owned by Stevens' wife were destroyed in the blaze.

Coyotes attack and kill dog in suburbs

MA WOBURN — A suburban Boston police department warned residents to keep an eye on their pets after a dog was attacked and killed by at least two coyotes.

Paul McDonald told The Boston Globe that he let his 16-year-old Jack Russell terrier into his backyard to relieve herself and she was only outdoors for a few seconds when he heard "unbelievable screeching."

He said he beat the coyotes off with a baseball bat but it was too late. The dog was euthanized at an animal hospital.

Marathon disqualifies senior runner

CA LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Marathon disqualified runner Frank Meza, 70, saying video shows he left the course during his record-setting performance in March and that his time during one stretch was so fast it was "impossible," according to a report. Meza has repeatedly denied cheating.

Officials with Conquer Endurance Group, which operates the marathon, began reviewing race video and security footage from the 26.2 miles from Dodger Stadium to Santa Monica.

It showed Meza, a retired physician, stepped off the course and reentered at another point, officials said.

Officials also cited him for wearing his numbered bib on his hip instead of pinning it to his shirt.

From wire reports

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Angels are playing through their pain

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Giancarlo Stanton knows from his own heart-wrenching experience what the Los Angeles Angels are feeling, and will experience moving forward after the death of a teammate during the season.

The slugger's message to the Angels, playing with heavy hearts after the death of 27-year-old pitcher Tyler Skaggs, is to "hug each other, laugh, cry, lift the ones taking it extra hard up."

Stanton, now playing for the New York Yankees, was still with the Miami Marlins three years ago when 24-year-old two-time All-Star pitcher Jose Fernandez was killed in a boating crash late that season.

Los Angeles returned to the field with an emotional 9-4 win over the Rangers on Tuesday night, a day after Skaggs was discovered unresponsive in his hotel room in Texas. No cause of death has been reported.

"You're going to wonder why all of this is happening, is it real, why are u suiting up to play a game that seems irrelevant," Stanton wrote in an Instagram post. "Some Anger will ensue while u have to grieve in a fish bowl. A lot will go through your mind. So stay together through that."

Stanton said the Angels need to understand how important their strength is for Skaggs' family, as well as their fans and "anyone looking for the power to overcoming something."

Justin Bour, a first-year Angel who had a two-run single in his only at-bat Tuesday, was also with the Marlins in 2016.

"I know how tough it's going to be every single day," Bour said after the game. "And it takes a really long time for it to sink in.

And it still, sometimes it just doesn't."

Texas catcher Jeff Mathis also played for the Marlins in 2016, and with Los Angeles in 2009 when 22-year-old Angels rookie pitcher Nick Adenhart was killed by a drunk driver after only his fourth game in the big leagues.

"It was almost like we were playing that season for him," Mathis said about the 2009 Angels. "Obviously, it was something very dear to us to honor him in just the best way we could. Every time we stepped on that field that was part of the reason that we played the way we played."

The Angels won the AL West in 2009. They swept Boston in the AL Division Series, but lost the AL Championship Series in six games to the New York Yankees.

"The team is such a family, and when you take a piece away from the family, there's always a hole," Angels owner Arte Moreno said Tuesday after traveling to Texas to join his grieving team.

Moreno described it "like a punch in the heart" when general manager Billy Eppler called him Monday with the news about Skaggs. That also brought back memories of Adenhart's death 10 years ago.

Rangers pitcher Jesse Chavez spent 2017 with the Angels, and before Tuesday's game ran around the outfield to go greet and embrace former teammates such as Mike Trout and Kole Calhoun.

"It's a little bit harder, especially when you're playing a team that you played with him on," Chavez said somberly. "He was a kid, plain and simple."

Angels manager Brad Ausmus and Seattle manager Scott Servais both played for the Astros, though were teammates at different times in Houston with Darryl Kile, who in June 2002 with the St. Louis Cardi-

nals died in a Chicago hotel room during a road trip. Kile was 33. Current Angels first baseman Albert Pujols was on that Cardinals team with Kile.

Servais, an assistant GM for the Angels when they reacquired Skaggs after the 2013 season, said playing after a tragedy isn't easy, but provides some therapy by being back on the field.

"It's really hard to get through," Servais said. "You have to lean on each other. That's what you really have to do."

Servais was among the managers, some who had been through similar situations, who reached out to Ausmus.

"To a man, it's the same advice, and that is there's no handbook for this," Ausmus said. "Just kind of got to go with your honest feelings. If you do that, I think then you're not going to be wrong."

Ausmus, who broke down in tears talking about Skaggs, described the feeling as identical to when Kile died.

"Once the game starts it actually is a refuge because it takes your mind off, it distracts you for a while," Ausmus said. "When you go back to your hotel room, you're reminded of reality. ... I know it gets easier, but it's difficult."

Asked about the challenge of managing under such circumstances, instead of playing like he was after Kile's death, Ausmus said everybody feels a tremendous loss but understands that life and the baseball season have to go on.

"It'll move forward at different paces for different guys, but this is just a reminder that professional athlete or not, we're all human and it can strike just the same," Ausmus said. "But as far as wearing the manager hat, I'm just wearing a hat right now. I'm just wearing an Angel hat."

Dutch reach first final, will face United States

Associated Press

LYON, France — When Jackie Groenen received the ball, even though she was outside the penalty area, the Dutch midfielder knew she had to seize her opening.

It was 99 minutes into a grueling Women's World Cup semifinal, and neither the Netherlands nor Sweden was finding a clear path to the goal Wednesday night.

"I saw a nice angle," Groenen said. "We've been discussing this for a couple of weeks now

that I need to take shots more often. The ball just came really nicely, and I thought, 'Let's do this.'"

A slick passing sequence ended with Groenen driving a shot past goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl. A first shot on target in France produced her first goal of the tournament.

"I'm not much of a scorer," she said. "But I'm very happy today I got to score."

It sent the Netherlands into its first Women's World Cup final, where the Dutch will face the United States on Sunday,

back in the Stade de Lyon.

Two years after the Dutch won their first major trophy — the European Championship — Groenen is already dreaming of a first world title in only their second attempt.

"It kind of went through my mind as soon as I got off the pitch," she said. "The Americans are massive, they have massive players. They are the biggest team in the world but I can't wait to play."

After a draining game in sweltering central France, the Dutch have one less day than

the Americans to prepare for the title game and they will have to be more potent up front to overcome the athletic three-time champions.

The second semifinal was no match for the drama, tension and high energy of the previous night when the U.S. beat England 2-1.

The game featured few scoring chances and was only lit up by the goalkeeping in regulation time — particularly in the second half.

CONCACAF Gold Cup

Pulisic's 2 goals lift US over Jamaica

Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Christian Pulisic ensured the CONCACAF Gold Cup final will have the marquee match-up it lacked since 2011: United States vs. Mexico.

Pulisic had two goals in the second half and Weston McKennie scored for a second straight game, leading the U.S. over Jamaica 3-1 in Wednesday night's semifinal.

The Nissan Stadium crowd of 28,473 was chanting "We Want Mexico!" in the closing minutes.

"It's definitely going to be a fun game," McKennie said. "I think the fans want it. You heard them saying, 'We Want Mexico!' I think we want it. I think we're ready for it, looking forward to it."

The Americans face El Tri at Chicago on Sunday night in the finale of a tripleheader of finals. The U.S. women play the Netherlands in the World Cup final at Lyon, France, and Brazil faces Peru for the Copa America title at Rio de Janeiro.

The U.S. is 6-4 in Gold Cup

finals, including 1-4 against Mexico with a win in 2007 and losses in 1993, '98, '09 and '11. The defending champion Americans have won a team record 10 straight Gold Cup matches.

"We've already started preparing, already started watching them the last couple of days," U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter said. "It's a good team, quality players, good team concept, a lot of intensity that they play with. They can hurt teams. Having said that, they're also vulnerable, and we'll plan to be able to hurt them as well."

McKennie put the U.S. ahead in the ninth minute with his third international goal. The game was halted in the 16th minute for 1 hour, 28 minutes because of a lightning storm.

"I haven't really dealt with something like that since, like, youth soccer," Pulisic said. "It was strange. We tried to keep ourselves going, and in the end everything worked out."

Pulisic made it 2-0 in the 52nd minute and Shamar Nicholson cut the deficit in the 69th. Pulisic got his second goal in

the 87th, giving the 20-year-old 13 goals in 30 international appearances. Nine of Pulisic's 12 international goals have come in competitive matches.

Nicholson's goal was the first against the U.S. in the tournament and ended a 482-minute scoreless streak by the American defense.

"I'm really disappointed that we conceded a goal in this tournament, but it's a learning moment and something that looking back on it now, I'm glad we did because the guys had to dig deep," Berhalter said.

Jamaica was trying to reach its third straight Gold Cup final following losses to Mexico in 2015 and the U.S. in 2017. The Reggae Boyz could not contain Pulisic and McKennie, a pair of 20-year-old midfielders.

"I think we lost the game in the center of the park tonight," Jamaica coach Theodore Whitmore said.

McKennie's goal developed from a long pass from Michael Bradley to Reggie Cannon on the side of the penalty area. Cannon crossed and Jozy Altidore had his back to the goal as

he tapped the ball to a charging McKennie. McKennie's shot from about 6 yards sailed over the right hand of goalkeeper Andre Blake.

Altidore and Cannon had earned starts along with attacker Jordan Morris and central defender Matt Miazga as part of Berhalter's lineup shuffle.

Pulisic's first goal came after McKennie made a long pass to Morris, who ran free on a flank. Blake saved Morris' shot, but Pulisic was coming up from the left side and knocked in the rebound.

Nicholson scored on a header from Leon Bailey's cross. Blake made a diving save of Paul Arriola's shot from the left side, but Pulisic was again ready for the rebound and sent a shot into the left side of the goal.

Mexico reached the final despite a roster missing Javier Hernandez, Carlos Vela, Hirving Lozano and Miguel Layun.

"We know Mexico's a great team," Pulisic said. "I think it's going to be a great game. I'm so excited for it."

Serena Williams needs 3 sets to get to third round

Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Eight-time men's champion Roger Federer moved into the third round at Wimbledon.

Serena Williams had to come from a set down to stay on course for her eighth Wimbledon title.

Defending women's champion Angelique Kerber went out in the second round.

Williams was broken twice in the opening set on Thursday but recovered to beat Slovenian qualifier Kaja Juvan 2-6, 6-2, 6-4 and move into the third round.

With good friend Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, watching from the stands at No. 1

Court, Williams had a chance to serve out the match at 5-2 in the third but was broken. She made no mistakes on her second attempt, however, converting her first match point with an ace.

Williams improved to 23-0 against qualifiers at Grand Slam tournaments, having dropped only two sets against them in previous matches.

Juvan was making her Wimbledon debut. She lost in the first round of the French Open in May in her only previous Grand Slam appearance.

Federer advanced as expected, beating wild-card entry Jay Clarke 6-1, 7-6 (3), 6-2 on No. 1 Court. But unseeded American Lauren Davis pulled off the un-

expected, defeating Kerber 2-6, 6-2, 6-1 on No. 2 Court.

Davis said the turning point came when she was up a break at 3-2 in the second set and managed to hold after saving three break points.

Kerber beat Williams in last year's final. Federer won his eighth title at the All England Club in 2017 and was eliminated in the quarterfinals last year.

Despite his pedigree at Wimbledon, Federer played his British opponent on the second biggest court on the grounds instead of his usual spot on Centre Court.

If the pressure is getting to Ash Barty at Wimbledon, she's doing a great job of hiding it.

The top-ranked Australian came into the tournament after winning the French Open and a Wimbledon warm-up event in Birmingham. And she's now won two in a row at the All England Club to stretch her winning streak to 14 straight.

Barty beat Alison Van Uytvanck 6-1, 6-3, needing only 55 minutes on No. 2 Court to advance. And it could have been even quicker but she failed to serve out the match at 5-2 in the second set — the only time she was broken.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova, No. 9 Sloane Stephens and No. 15 Wang Qiang also advanced to the third round.

Strasburg solid for surging Nationals

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Once again, the Miami Marlins brought out the best in Washington Nationals pitcher Stephen Strasburg.

The right-hander struck out 14 in 7¹/₃ shutout innings and extended his personal winning streak against Miami to 11 as the Nationals continued their midseason surge with a 3-1 victory on Wednesday.

"He was utilizing his fastball both sides of the plate, but his changeup was really good and he threw some good curveballs," manager Dave Martinez said. "When he can throw the ball the way he wants, he is

nasty."

Brian Dozier and Matt Adams homered for Washington, which has won seven of its last eight and is 25-10 since May 24. The Nationals improved to 44-41, the first time they've been three games over .500 this season.

Strasburg (10-4) allowed two hits and two walks and didn't allow a man past first until the eighth. He is 20-7 with a 2.86 ERA in 34 career starts against the Marlins, and his 11 consecutive wins against them is tied with Los Angeles Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw's dominance of San Diego as the longest active winning streak in the majors against one team.

He earned his first three strikeouts on changeups, then effectively mixed pitches throughout the night to baffle Miami's hitters.

"I felt like my changeup has kind of gotten away from me," Strasburg said. "I just tried to get back to basics, and it seemed to be much better tonight."

Strasburg's gem included the first immaculate inning of his career. Strasburg needed just nine pitches to strike out Garrett Cooper, Neil Walker and Starlin Castro in the fourth.

"You didn't see a lot of guys coming back feeling like they had pitches to hit," Miami manager Don Mattingly said. "Guys coming back, when they go

check it, basically (said) 'He's hitting corners and basically giving you nothing to hit.' He was really good tonight."

Fernando Rodney induced a double-play grounder to escape a bases-loaded jam in the eighth, and Sean Doolittle gave up a run in the ninth but stranded the bases loaded for his 19th save in 22 tries.

Miami's Sandy Alcantara (4-8), making his first start since earning an All-Star nod Sunday, matched Strasburg for five innings. But he hung a two-out, 0-2 slider to Dozier, who deposited it over the left field fence for a two-run homer in the sixth. Alcantara allowed two runs in 5²/₃ innings.

MLB roundup

Garver's go-ahead single in 12th lifts Twins over A's

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Matt Chapman knows how close he came to scoring the winning run in the 10th inning.

Instead, the Minnesota Twins triumphed in the 12th when Mitch Garver hit a go-ahead single with one out to send his team past the Oakland Athletics 4-3 on Wednesday night.

In the 10th, the A's challenged whether catcher Garver tagged Chapman at home trying for the would-be winning run on Mark Canha's slow chopper that third baseman Miguel Sano charged and fired home. The out call was upheld, though manager Bob Melvin said after the game, "he looked safe to me."

"It's one of those plays that's just bang-bang, it could go either way. I don't know if video was conclusive enough to overturn something, especially when it's going to end the game like that," Chapman said.

Angels 6, Rangers 2: Mike Trout homered twice and Jaime Barria, filling the roster spot of the late Tyler Skaggs, struck out a career-high eight batters

in five innings as visiting Los Angeles beat Texas.

Trout hit a three-run homer in the third inning and a solo shot leading off the sixth. He has hit 24 home runs this season, tied for the American League lead with the Yankees' Edwin Encarnacion, with eight against Texas.

Dodgers 5, Diamondbacks 4 (10): All-Star Cody Bellinger hit a tiebreaking homer, giving Los Angeles a fifth consecutive walk-off victory at home, over Arizona.

Bellinger hit a solo shot in the second and his 29 homers are the most in franchise history before the All-Star break. He broke a tie with Gil Hodges and Duke Snider, who had 28.

Reds 3, Brewers 0: Yasiel Puig homered for the second consecutive game and Cincinnati overcame the loss of second baseman Scooter Gennett to a groin injury, holding on for a victory over visiting Milwaukee.

Gennett left after two at-bats because of tightness in the left side of his groin. Gennett was an All-Star last year and the

Reds' most productive hitter over the last two seasons, but he suffered a severe injury to the other side of his groin during spring training and had been sidelined until last week.

Braves 9, Phillies 2: Josh Donaldson and Austin Riley hit three-run homers off Nick Pivetta and host Atlanta solidified its NL East lead by beating Philadelphia.

Blue Jays 6, Red Sox 3: Danny Jansen and Brandon Drury each hit two-run homers, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. added a solo shot and Toronto beat visiting Boston.

Pirates 6, Cubs 5: Jung Ho Kang scored on Corey Dickerson's sacrifice fly in the ninth inning to cap a frantic rally and lift host Pittsburgh over Chicago.

Yankees 5, Mets 1: Domingo German pitched six sharp innings in his return from injury, Didi Gregorius and Gio Urshela hit consecutive homers, and the Yankees beat the host Mets.

Indians 4, Royals 0: Mike Clevinger pitched six innings of four-hit ball, Carlos Santana and Roberto Perez went deep,

and visiting Cleveland beat Kansas City.

Astros 4, Rockies 2: Wade Miley tossed six strong innings and Yuli Gurriel and Alex Bregman homered to lead Houston over host Colorado.

Orioles 9, Rays 6: Renato Nunez hit a three-run homer to complete a six-run ninth inning, and visiting Baltimore held on to beat Tampa Bay.

White Sox 7-9, Tigers 5-6, (12, 2nd game): Jose Abreu hit a three-run homer in the 12th inning, Yoan Moncada and Ryan Cordell each went deep twice and host Chicago beat Detroit to complete a doubleheader sweep.

Giants 7, Padres 5: Evan Longoria and Alex Dickerson hit consecutive home runs in the third inning and visiting San Francisco scored four runs during an unusual rally in the sixth to beat San Diego for its first three-game sweep of the season.

Cardinals 5, Mariners 2: Tommy Edman capped St. Louis' big ninth inning with a two-out, three-run homer as the Cardinals rallied for five runs to beat host Seattle.