

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Esper confirmed as defense secretary

BY CAITLIN M. KENNEY

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Tuesday confirmed Mark Esper as defense secretary, ending seven months of turmoil about who would secure the top job at the Pentagon and lead the U.S. military.

Esper was confirmed in a 90-8 vote by the Senate. Sens. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.; Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.; Kamala Harris, D-Calif.; Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y.; and Cory Booker, D-N.J., who are all Democratic presidential candidates, were among the lawmakers who voted no.

Since former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis resigned Dec. 31, there have been three acting defense secretaries leading the Pentagon.

Former acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan was announced by the White House in May as President Donald Trump's intended nominee for the position, though it never happened. Shanahan resigned in June after several news outlets reported incidents of domestic violence within his family.

Trump then selected Esper to be acting defense secretary.

By July 15, his nomination to the position was submitted to Congress. Navy Secretary Richard Spencer then stepped in as acting defense secretary while Esper went through the Senate confirmation process.

Spencer will leave the post Tuesday after Esper is appointed to the job.

"We're in a very great position we're not very often in in that we have someone that is enthusiastically supported by Republicans, by Democrats, and he is obviously the right person who has the trust of our president, he has the trust of our military, the trust of Congress and the country to keep our nation safe," Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said before the Senate voted to confirm Esper.

Esper is the first defense secretary to have graduated from a service academy, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1986. He received a commission as an infantry officer and later worked on Capitol Hill as a staffer and then as the vice presi-

dent for government relations at Raytheon, the top lobbyist for the country's third-largest defense contractor.

Esper's confirmation to defense secretary was quick, lasting seven business days from his nomination to the vote approving his appointment to the job.

He faced a confrontation during his confirmation hearing July 16 with Warren, who raised concerns about potential conflicts of interests with his former employer, Raytheon. Despite Warren's objections, Esper was approved Thursday for the job by the Senate Armed Services Committee in a voice vote.

Trump was expected to sign the appointment letter for Esper as defense secretary Tuesday evening. Jonathan Hoffman, chief Pentagon spokesman, said Tuesday. His first day as defense secretary is expected to be Wednesday.

With Esper's move to defense secretary, Ryan McCarthy, the undersecretary of the Army, is expected to be nominated as Army secretary. Trump announced in June that McCarthy was his choice.

## S. Korea fires warning shots in Russian plane incident

BY KIM GAMEL

*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean fighter jets fired some 360 warning shots after a Russian military aircraft violated airspace twice Tuesday off the peninsula's east coast in an unprecedented breach, defense officials said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it had carried out a joint air patrol with China in the Asia-Pacific region for the first time. But it denied that any border violations took place.

The encounters occurred after three Russian and two Chinese warplanes entered South Korea's air defense identification zone, which is a buffer zone that's not defined by international law or treaty, the

officials said.

A Russian early warning and control plane then advanced and briefly flew over the easternmost islets of Dokdo, which South Korea considered a violation of its territorial airspace.

Seoul mobilized fighter jets, including F-15s and F-16s, which fired warning shots to block the Russian aircraft. Officials told reporters those included flares and machine-gun rounds that were fired toward an area more than half a mile ahead of the Russian plane.

The Russian plane left the airspace after three minutes but returned about 15 minutes later, according to a timeline provided by officials from the Joint Chief of Staffs and the Ministry of National Defense.

The Russian aircraft finally

left the airspace and flew out of the air defense identification zone after South Korean fighter jets responded again.

"This is the first time military planes from a foreign country violated our territorial sky," officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity according to department policy.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry summoned Russia's acting ambassador, while the military summoned Russia's defense attache to file a formal complaint with them.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it had joined China in conducting "the first joint air patrol by long-range aircraft in the Asia-Pacific region," according to the Tass news agency.

The ministry insisted that the flights were part of a military

cooperation plan and not directed against third countries.

It also dismissed reports of warning shots against the bombers, claiming "this would have triggered an immediate response." However, the statement didn't refer to an A-50 reconnaissance plane, which is what the South Koreans said entered their territory.

President Moon Jae-in's national security adviser, Chung Eui-yong, warned Moscow that South Korea takes the intrusion very seriously and "will take much stronger measures" if it happens again.

The South Korean fighters sent more than 30 radio messages trying to communicate with the Russian and Chinese aircraft but received no reply, officials said.

# Commandant's parental leave pledge praised

By NANCY MONTGOMERY  
*Stars and Stripes*

The new Marine commandant's pledge to significantly expand parental leave has buoyed advocates for military families, who say they hope that policies allowing for more caregiving time will spread beyond the Marine Corps.

Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger said in planning guidance released earlier this month that he planned to "do everything possible to provide parents with opportunities to remain with their newborns for extended periods of time," including considering up to a yearlong leave of absence for new mothers before returning to full duty.

"We are very excited to see the Marine commandant's decision," said Amy Barron Smolinski, the executive director of the advocacy group Breastfeeding in Combat Boots. "From our members and follow-

ers I can tell you there's tremendous support. It's saying we believe in you and your families."

Tina Sherman, of the advocacy group momsrising.org, said her organization was similarly optimistic.

"We're very excited that this is being talked about," she said. "We're celebrating all the steps forward. In the end, families are going to be benefitting from this."

Berger's guidance represents the first time a service chief has expressed plans for such an expansion of time off to care for newborns.

"We should never ask our Marines to choose between being the best parent possible and the best Marine possible," Berger's letter said. "Our parental/maternity leave policies are inadequate and have failed to keep pace with societal norms and modern talent management practices."

Marines, like women in the other three Pentagon services, are entitled to six

weeks of convalescent leave and six weeks of "primary caregiver" leave.

The plan, which would apply only to Marines, would more than restore the 18 weeks of leave sailors and Marines were granted by then-Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in 2015, a policy slashed to 12 weeks later by then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

At the same time, Carter's policy doubled the six weeks of leave provided earlier by the Army and Air Force.

The expanded maternity leave could more closely align leave policies with those of allied militaries.

Female Canadian, British and career Israeli troops, for example, get paid maternity leaves of at least 15 weeks, with up to a year of partially paid leave.

But those countries also have national health care and insurance programs that pay for maternity leave for working civilian mothers. In the U.S., there is no federally mandated parental paid leave.

## Iran's navy chief: All US ships in Gulf recorded

*The Washington Post*

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A fleet of drones has allowed Iran to watch every U.S. ship in the Persian Gulf region and develop an archive of their daily movements, Iran's top naval commander said in an interview published Tuesday.

The comments come days after President Donald Trump said that a U.S. warship de-

stroyed an Iranian drone. The Islamic Republic denied that a drone had been shot down and subsequently released a video of a U.S. ship that it claimed, without explanation, proved their version of events.

In an interview with a local news site, Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi, the head of Iran's navy, expanded upon that point, claiming that drones watch every U.S. ship in the region.

"Our drones have significant ranges and have no limitations in communication links. We have a complete archive of images of American vessels approaching from very far distances," Khanzadi said in an interview with the Young Journalists Club.

Khanzadi's remarks were greeted with skepticism by some analysts, who say that Iran has often inflated its capabilities in

a bid to rally domestic support and confuse foreign rivals.

Khanzadi's comments highlight the central role that unmanned aerial vehicles are playing in the dispute over the Persian Gulf. Last month, Iran shot down a U.S. drone that it said had entered its airspace.

In response, the United States planned a retaliatory attack, but Trump called it off at the last minute.

## Turkey hints at review of base access if US levies sanctions

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — If Washington slaps sanctions on Turkey over its acquisition of a Russian air defense system, U.S. use of two strategically vital bases could be at risk, the country's foreign minister suggested.

"We are currently running the process, whether it's Incirlik, Kurecik or other issues," Turkish Foreign Minister Mev-

lut Cavusoglu said Monday. "If America has very negative steps toward us, if there are sanctions or further steps, we will have answers to America."

Cavusoglu, who was speaking to Turkish TV news channel TGRT Haber, didn't elaborate on what that process entailed.

Incirlik has been a hub for operations in the Middle East dating to the early days of the Cold War. The base, where nuclear watchdogs say roughly 50

U.S. nuclear bombs are stored, has played a key role in operations against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

U.S. operations at Incirlik are continuing normally and the military-to-military relationship with Turkey hasn't been affected amid the diplomatic tension, Gen. David Goldfein, Air Force chief of staff, said Friday.

The U.S. also operates a radar on a mountaintop in Ku-

recik, which plays a key role in NATO's ballistic missile defense network.

Ankara's purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system, which arrived at a Turkish base last week and is expected to be operational by early 2020, has elevated tensions with Washington. In response, the U.S. has expelled Turkey from the F-35 program, ending the country's plan to acquire more than 100 of the stealth fighters.



## N. Korea's Kim inspects new sub amid tensions

By KIM GAMEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a new submarine and its weapons systems, state-run media reported Tuesday, the latest apparent effort to raise pressure on the United States amid efforts to resume nuclear talks.

He expressed “great satisfaction” after reviewing the operational and tactical and combat weapons systems of the new submarine, the Korean Central News Agency reported, adding that its operational deployment is “near at hand.”

“The operational capacity of a submarine is an important component in [the] national defense of our country bounded on its east and west by sea,” Kim was quoted as saying.

He also “stressed the need to steadily and reliably increase the national defense capability by directing big efforts to the development of the naval weapons and equipment” such as submarines, KCNA said.

The report came about a week after North Korea warned it may restart its nuclear weapons testing program if the U.S. conducts joint military exer-

cises with South Korea as expected next month.

KCNA didn't provide specifics about the submarine's weapons systems or a date for the inspection.

The U.S. has largely dismissed the saber-rattling by North Korean media as the administration presses to break the deadlock that stalled negotiations aimed at persuading Kim to give up his nuclear weapons.

President Donald Trump met with Kim on June 30 in a surprise summit in the truce village of Panmunjom on the heavily fortified border that divides the peninsula. He said the two leaders agreed to resume talks, but no date has been set.

Talks stalled after Trump and Kim ended a late February summit in Vietnam without agreement due to differences over their respective demands for complete denuclearization and incremental sanctions relief.

North Korea has been known to be working aggressively on building a ballistic-missile submarine, which poses major security risks because it would be harder to detect than land-based systems and able to maneuver in international waters.

## Sailor gets 39 years in child sex crimes case

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A Navy police officer was sentenced to 39 years in prison after his conviction Friday of seven child sex crimes involving an acquaintance's 6- and 8-year-old daughters.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Adam Pyron, 29, a former master-at-arms at Yokosuka, was found guilty of rape of a child, two counts of attempted rape of a child and four counts of sexual abuse of a child by indecent communication, indecent exposure and sexual contact after a weeklong jury trial.

The charges stem from the night of Feb. 4 after a Super Bowl party at a new friend's house, when Pyron was accused of exposing himself to the children, rubbing himself

on the 8-year-old and having the 6-year-old perform oral sex on him, according to court testimony.

The two families met while living temporarily in the base lodge after arriving in Japan, the victims' mother told Stars and Stripes in April. A few months later, after settling into their new home, the victims' parents invited acquaintances to watch the big game, the victims' mother told Stars and Stripes. But only Pyron showed up.

When night fell, he was too drunk to go home, so the family let him sleep on a couch, according to testimony. Because they are minor victims of a sex crime, Stars and Stripes is not identifying the family involved.

From staff reports

# Trump's comments about Afghanistan prompt dismay

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Afghan government has called for clarification of remarks made by President Donald Trump that he could end the war in Afghanistan in a matter of days by wiping the country “off the face of the earth,” although he would not do so.

Trump's comments in the Oval Office, ahead of a meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, came amid growing concerns that the Kabul government is being sidelined in discussions of the country's future.

“Given the multifaceted relationship between Afghanistan and the United States, the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan calls for clarification on the U.S. president's statements,” President Ashraf Ghani's office said in a statement Tuesday.

“While the Afghan government supports the U.S. efforts for ensuring peace in Afghanistan, the government underscores that foreign heads of state cannot determine Afghanistan's fate in the absence of Afghan leadership,” the statement added.

Months of preliminary peace negotiations between American and Taliban officials aimed at ending the war have excluded the government, though the U.S. says Kabul's eventual participation is mandatory.

U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad arrived in Kabul Tuesday for talks with the Afghan government to map out next steps in the peace process, the State Department said. Khalilzad will also meet in Afghanistan with civil society representatives, including women's rights groups, before traveling to Qatar to resume

talks with the Taliban aimed at ending the United States' longest war.

Trump on Monday described the U.S. military's continued presence in Afghanistan as “ridiculous.”

Some 14,000 American troops are in the country training Afghan forces and conducting counterterrorism missions as the war continues into its 18th year.

“I have plans on Afghanistan that, if I wanted to win that war, Afghanistan would be wiped off the face of the Earth,” Trump said. “It would be gone. It would be over in — literally, in 10 days and I don't want to go that route.”

The Trump administration instead is banking on a diplomatic solution that includes Afghanistan's neighbors, particularly Pakistan, whose cooperation is seen as vital for lasting peace.

Islamabad has long been accused of fomenting unrest in Afghanistan and providing the Taliban with sanctuary to orchestrate cross-border attacks. In January 2018, Trump cut off \$1.3 billion in annual aid payments to Pakistan for not doing enough to combat terrorism.

Islamabad has repeatedly rejected claims it is aiding the Taliban.

News of Monday's meeting between Trump and Khan, especially of Trump's comments, was avidly discussed by Kabul residents Tuesday.

Some called Trump's comments irresponsible and worried the Taliban would use them in their propaganda to recruit more fighters.

“As the leader of the U.S., Trump should have used better words,” said Sibghatullah Kakar, 26. “Statements like that can really harm this country.”

# Trump, Congress reach deal on budget

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump and congressional leaders announced Monday a critical debt and budget agreement that's an against-the-odds victory for Washington pragmatists seeking to avoid political and economic tumult over the possibility of a government shutdown or first-ever federal default.

The deal, announced by Trump on Twitter and in a statement by Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, will restore the government's ability to borrow to pay its bills past next year's elections and build upon recent large budget gains for both the Pentagon and domestic agencies.

"I am pleased to announce that a deal has

been struck," Trump tweeted, saying there will be no "poison pills" added to follow-up legislation. "This was a real compromise in order to give another big victory to our Great Military and Vets!"

The agreement is on a broad outline for \$1.37 trillion in agency spending next year and slightly more in fiscal 2021. It would mean a win for lawmakers eager to return Washington to a more predictable path amid political turmoil and polarization, defense hawks determined to cement military increases and Democrats seeking to protect domestic programs.

Nobody notched a big win, but both sides view it as better than a protracted battle this fall.

Pelosi and Schumer said the deal "will enhance our national security and invest

in middle class priorities that advance the health, financial security and well-being of the American people." Top congressional GOP leaders issued more restrained statements stressing that the deal is a flawed but achievable outcome of a government in which Pelosi wields considerable power.

However, it also comes as budget deficits are rising to \$1 trillion levels — requiring the government to borrow a quarter for every dollar the government spends — despite the thriving economy and three rounds of annual Trump budget proposals promising to crack down on the domestic programs that Pelosi is successfully defending now. It ignores warnings from deficit and debt scolds who say the nation's fiscal future is unsustainable and will eventually drag down the economy.

## Deportation authority to expand across US

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The Trump administration announced Monday that it will vastly extend the authority of immigration officers to deport migrants without allowing them to appear before judges, its second major policy shift on immigration in eight days.

Starting Tuesday, fast-track deportations could apply to anyone in the country illegally for less than two years. Previously, those deportations were largely limited to people arrested almost immediately after crossing the Mexican border.

Kevin McAleenan, the acting

Homeland Security secretary, portrayed the nationwide extension of "expedited removal" authority as another Trump administration effort to address an "ongoing crisis on the southern border" by freeing up beds in detention facilities and reducing a backlog of more than 900,000 cases in immigration courts.

U.S. authorities do not have space to detain "the vast majority" of people arrested on the Mexican border, leading to the release of hundreds of thousands with notices to appear in court, McAleenan said in the policy directive published Tuesday in the Federal

Register. He said Homeland Security officials with the new deportation power will deport migrants in the country illegally more quickly than the Justice Department's immigration courts, where cases can take years to resolve.

The agency "expects that the full use of expedited removal statutory authority will strengthen national security, diminish the number of illegal entries, and otherwise ensure the prompt removal of aliens apprehended in the United States," McAleenan said.

The American Civil Liberties Union and American Immigration Council said they would

sue to block the policy.

"Under this unlawful plan, immigrants who have lived here for years would be deported with less due process than people get in traffic court," said Omar Jawdat, director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project.

"Expedited removal" gives enforcement agencies broad authority to deport people without allowing them to appear before an immigration judge with limited exceptions, including if they express fear of returning home and pass an initial screening interview for asylum.

## Boris Johnson will become next UK prime minister

The Washington Post

LONDON — Boris Johnson handily won the race to lead the Conservative Party on Tuesday, and will be prime minister within a day.

The bombastic, Latin-quoting, Oxford classicist with the mop of intentionally mussed yellow hair, who made his name as an over-the-top journalist in Brussels and then as London mayor and galvanized the successful Brexit campaign in 2016, will walk through the black enameled door of 10 Downing St. on Wednesday, fulfilling what

his biographers describe as his relentless "blond ambition" to follow his hero, Winston Churchill, into the top spot.

In a leadership contest involving only dues-paying members of the Conservative Party, the former foreign secretary Johnson faced the current foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt.

Johnson captured 92,153 votes to Hunt's 46,656 — a dominant victory that shows Tories want a leader who promises, above all else, to deliver Brexit.

After being chosen by the 160,000 dues-paying members of the Conservative

Party, the transfer of power now happens quickly.

On Wednesday, outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May will deliver her last remarks at a question and answer session in the House of Commons and then will travel to Buckingham Palace to resign. Johnson will follow her to the palace, where Queen Elizabeth II will ask him to form a new government. Johnson will be 14th prime minister during the queen's long reign.

Johnson, 55, will take up residence at Downing Street and within hours begin announcing his new Cabinet.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Wild turkey dies after flying into home

**UT** LONE PEAK — Police in northern Utah were surprised to learn the suspect in a reported burglary was a wild turkey.

Dave Ventrano, with Lone Peak police, said they received a call from a resident in Alpine who heard a window break in the house next door. The family that lives there was out of town.

Officers searched the house and found a dead turkey lying in a pile of broken glass underneath a window.

Ventrano said the turkey died after flying through the window.

## Melons to replace piglets in fair event

**CA** SANTA ROSA — Watermelons will replace piglets in an annual event celebrating agriculture at a California fair.

The Press Democrat reported that the Sonoma County Fair eliminated the pig scramble from Farmers Day due to rising public concern and protests over animal welfare.

In the long-running event at the fair in Santa Rosa, youngsters chased and tried to capture piglets weighing 40 to 60 pounds.

Officials said this year's event Aug. 4 will instead include elementary school children carrying watermelons slicked with vegetable oil around an obstacle course in a timed race.

## Couple holds contest for 'Hamilton' tickets

**RI** TIVERTON — A retired Rhode Island couple who spent their professional lives in the entertain-

ment industry wants to send two high school students to a performance of the award-winning musical "Hamilton."

Lou Viola and Celeste Ferendo, of Tiverton, asked students to write a one-page essay on "Seeing Hamilton in Providence this Summer is Important to Me Because ..."

Viola told the Newport Daily News he sees the contest as a way of "paying it forward," because he was inspired by theater professionals when in high school.

## Police: Pregnant woman found huffing

**LA** MONROE — A pregnant Louisiana woman was accused of huffing an electronic dusting product on a roadway.

The Monroe News Star reported Melissa Blair, 33, was charged with abuse of toxic vapors and obstruction of a public passage.

A police report from the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office said they found Blair lying partially in a roadway and partially in a ditch. A cold can of electronic duster was next to her, apparently recently used.

Blair also is being charged with failure to appear on charges of domestic abuse-battery and theft.

## Beef-A-Roo, iconic eatery, closes doors

**MI** MARQUETTE — The cowboy on the sign has served his last burger at a longtime Upper Peninsula restaurant.

Beef-A-Roo has closed in Marquette after nearly 50 years. The Mining Journal said locations in Iron River and Negaunee will remain open until the properties are sold.

Cami LaFayette, who owns

Beef-A-Roo with three siblings, said they want to try different careers.

## Police: Drunk, texting woman hit cruiser

**ME** LEBANON — Maine State Police said a woman was accused of striking a parked police cruiser while texting and driving under the influence.

Police said Molly Foisy, 22, of Springvale is accused of striking the cruiser that was behind a tow truck in the breakdown lane of Route 202 in Lebanon on Saturday.

Authorities said Foisy was traveling at a high rate of speed and narrowly missed hitting the tow truck as well.

## St. Lawrence River is best bass fishery

**NY** ALEXANDRIA BAY — New York's St. Lawrence River was named the best bass fishery in the nation.

It's a first for the river, which borders Canada in northern New York and was ranked in the top 10 twice in the last four years by Bassmaster Magazine.

Tournament results from June put the river at the top. The average weight of the entire 149-team field in the event was 20.3 pounds, topped by the winning team from Sam Houston State University, which averaged 24.4 pounds per day. The Big Bass Award for that event was a 6-pound, 7-ouncer.

## More schools join snow days project

**SC** ANDERSON — More school districts are joining a South Carolina experiment to have kids learn at home on days when roads are

too icy for school buses.

The Independent Mail reported that there weren't enough snow days last year for the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee to decide whether the "eLearning" days work.

Five districts participated. Ten will be in this year's pilot program.

## Woman impaled by spear in argument

**FL** HALLANDALE BEACH — Authorities arrested a man they say was arguing with his girlfriend when a spear she was holding snapped and went through her chest.

The SunSentinel reported Adam Reeceard Crespo grabbed Silvia Galva, 32, by the ankles and pulled her off the bed in their South Florida condominium.

An arrest report said Galva grabbed a spear at the foot of the bed as Crespo, 43, continued dragging her. Crespo said he heard a snapping sound. He saw that the spear had penetrated her chest and pulled it out, "hoping it was not too bad."

Crespo is charged with murder.

## Music festival halted over bird concerns

**IL** CHICAGO — A Chicago beachfront music festival set for August was canceled following concerns about its impact on endangered shorebirds.

Organizers of Mamby on the Beach said the Aug. 23-24 festival was canceled due to "circumstances beyond our control," including two federally-protected piping plovers nesting on Montrose Beach.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Stifling heat awaits NFL training camps

Associated Press

Until the NFL shortens its preseason, there will be one goal in late July and early August.

Stay healthy.

Unfortunately, nearly every team sustains significant injuries, some of which can be devastating for the regular season. Coaches and general managers will curse under their breath when they lose a key regular, then claim the “next man up” policy will take care of the problem.

Sometimes, they are right. Often, the swearing becomes more intense and louder.

As teams settle in at sweltering training camps this week, playbooks are distributed (digitally, of course), rookies and other youngsters try to catch the eye of decision makers, and fans wonder what their teams will look like in early September. And beyond.

Except, perhaps, in New England.

Some things to keep an eye on until the Packers and Bears kick off on Sept. 5 to open the league’s 100th season.

## Brady, yes; Gronk, no

We’re not likely to see much of Patriots quarterback Tom Brady until opening day. We won’t see any of his buddy and standout tight end, Rob Gronkowski, whose battered body caused him to retire.

It’s a big blow for the soon-to-be 42-year-old Brady, who somehow manages to overcome such obstacles.

“Yeah, it’s the first time in a long time and he was such a great player for our team,” Brady said of Gronk. “I think like any season, things are different and we’re going to have to adjust differently and teams are going to play us differently without him. We’ve seen it even when he’s been on the team.

“That’s got to be a position of strength even if it’s not one player but multiple players doing different roles. There were times in my career before that where we had similar approaches. No one’s going

to make any excuses for our offense. We’re going to do everything we can to be the best we can be, score every time we touch the ball, and the tight end position’s a big part of our offense and those guys are going to have to do a great job for us.”

Those guys include veteran Ben Watson, who also was ready for retirement before opting to come back to New England. But Gronk’s absence is the most critical difference for last season’s champions.

## Coaching carousel

When the spinning stopped, new head coaches landed in Tampa, Miami, Green Bay, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Arizona, Denver and New Jersey.

**Bruce Arians, Buccaneers:** One of two hires with previous head coaching experience (Adam Gase is the other), Arians is charged with developing the talent and instilling maturity in Jameis Winston. The quarterback never has lived up to his top overall draft pick status, but if anyone can push Winston toward elite status, it is QB whisperer Arians.

**Brian Flores, Dolphins:** For a while, it looked as if Miami was ready to tank this season as it reorganizes from top to bottom. But this is not the worst roster in the league. Still, Flores has to prove a Belichick protege can succeed as a head coach.

**Matt LaFleur, Packers:** Aaron Rodgers isn’t the easiest superstar passer to work with, so keep an eye on the transition in Cheesehead Land. The offense should be pretty good if A-Rod is healthy, so the biggest chore is upgrading a previously unreliable defense.

**Zac Taylor, Bengals:** Good luck, Zac. The Bengals have the weakest talent group in the AFC North, with even their stars such as A.J. Green and Geno Atkins carrying big question marks. Of course, if Taylor ever wins one postseason game, he will have outdone Marvin Lewis.

**Freddie Kitchens, Browns:** The idea here is that Kitchens, QB Baker Mayfield and wide

receiver Odell Beckham Jr. will blend their skills and personalities to create a dynamic offense. And, yes, a winner on the shores of Lake Erie. Of all the new hires, Kitchens might be under the most pressure considering the ramped-up expectations in Cleveland — and the potential for major disruptions.

**Kliff Kingsbury, Cardinals:** Perhaps the strangest hire of this group because Kingsbury had a mediocre record at Texas Tech and was fired. But he specializes in the kind of offense top draftee Kyler Murray favors, and he is innovative. Kingsbury also is stuck with a weak roster.

**Vic Fangio, Broncos:** A career assistant who has built strong defenses for years — including in Chicago last season — Fangio is the latest sideline boss hired by John Elway. He has some studs on D with Von Miller, Chris Harris Jr. and Bradley Chubb, so improvement is possible. Can the offense, with Joe Flacco behind center, do the same?

**Adam Gase, Jets:** Developing Sam Darnold into the franchise QB the Jets believe he will become is Gase’s responsibility. While there’s been substantial turmoil in New York’s front office, the roster has been upgraded with the likes of RB Le’Veon Bell and LB C.J. Mosley. That gives Gase a chance to do what predecessor Todd Bowles could not: make the playoffs.

## Who are those guys?

New addresses for veterans now with the Jets, Browns, Raiders, Broncos and Jaguars on offense could have huge impacts. Defensively, the Cowboys, Chiefs, Cardinals, Rams and Redskins made major moves.

**Le’Veon Bell, Jets:** Bell will get plenty of work as a runner and receiver, and is critical to turning Darnold into a dangerous quarterback — and the Jets into a contender.

**Odell Beckham Jr., Browns:** If the histrionics and selfish attitude disappear, Beckham

could link with Mayfield for the best pass-catch combination in football.

**Antonio Brown, Raiders:** If the histrionics and selfish attitude disappear, Brown might make Jon Gruden and Mike Mayock look very wise with this trade.

**Joe Flacco, Broncos:** Flacco got hurt and lost his job to Lamar Jackson last year; he would have lost it eventually anyway. So Flacco gets a fresh start in the Rockies, but his receiving group is very questionable.

**Nick Foles, Jaguars:** The most intriguing move of the offseason. Foles was perfect for Philadelphia’s offense, and the Jaguars want to be more of a running team. There is something special about Foles, though, so don’t doubt him.

**Earl Thomas, Ravens:** Jerry Jones coveted this premier safety for years and didn’t get him for the Cowboys. Baltimore gets a somewhat battered player who should become a leader in the secondary and locker room and will never give less than his all.

**Frank Clark and Tyrann Mathieu, Chiefs:** Had the Chiefs boasted any sort of defense in ’18, they probably would be NFL champions. Now, they can boast a little bit, with Clark supplying a pass rush and Mathieu playmaking everywhere.

**Terrell Suggs, Cardinals:** This is likely Suggs’ last stop in a Hall of Fame-caliber career. He might get a lot of sacks, but the end game is the Cardinals won’t contend even if he does dominate blockers.

**Eric Weddle, Rams:** Savvy and versatile, though a bit beyond his prime, Weddle joins an already stout defense that lost an important cog in safety Lamarcus Joyner.

**Landon Collins, Redskins:** It was bad enough the Giants allowed their best defender to leave in free agency. Then he goes to a division rival, where he immediately is a huge upgrade. Collins should be very active in Washington — especially when the Giants are the opponent.



# Sun wins 200 free, gets snubbed again

Associated Press

GWANGJU, South Korea — Sun Yang was in the middle of controversy at the world swimming championships again. Only this time, it wasn't his doing.

The Chinese star still got shunned on the medals podium again.

Sun won the 200-meter freestyle Tuesday night after Danas Rapsys of Lithuania finished first and got disqualified for a false start.

Sun touched second, but got elevated after Rapsys had already celebrated in the pool.

Sun appeared surprised, clasping his hands to his face, but quickly sat on the lane rope and raised both arms in the air as a mix of cheers and boos rang out.

Katsuhiro Matsumoto of Japan took silver. Martin Malyutin of Russia and Duncan Scott of Britain tied for bronze.

On the podium, Scott wanted no part of sharing the moment with Sun.

Scott kept his hands clasped behind his back and refused to shake Sun's hand, standing off on his own while the other medalists joined Sun to pose for photographers.

Sun, who served a three-month doping ban in 2014, is being allowed by FINA to compete in Gwangju ahead of a Court for Arbitration in Sport hearing in September that threatens Sun's career.

After Sun won the 400 free, silver medalist Mack Horton of Australia refused to step on the podium or acknowledge Sun during the medals ceremony. FINA, swimming's governing body, sent warning letters to Swimming Australia and Horton for his actions.

"FINA has currently done more to reprimand Mack Horton than they have done to reprimand Sun Yang," said American Lilly King, who won the women's 100 breaststroke.

Sun has been accused of smashing vials of his blood with a hammer during a clash last year with testers, and faces a lifetime ban if found guilty.

"He does quite a good job of making sure everyone continues to know about it," Scott said, referring to Sun's pending doping case. "So I guess that's all I've got to say about that."

Sun spread his arms apart and looked at Scott as the Brit turned to come off the podium. Sun and the other two medalists stopped for photographers

on the pool deck, but Scott kept on walking.

"The athletes are starting to stand up for themselves and stand up for what they believe in so, I commend them," King said. "That's incredibly brave."

There were more boos — and cheers from Chinese fans — in the crowd at Nambu University Municipal Aquatics Center.

"If people are booing him it's for a reason," British swimmer Adam Peaty said of Sun. "He should be asking himself now should he really be in a sport when people are booing him?"

Peaty said Scott's action was "completely right."

"The most important thing as a sports person is you have a right to a voice," Peaty said. "Duncan shared his voice and so did the crowd, so it's completely fair."

Sun, the current Olympic champion in the 200 free, earned his third straight medal in the event at worlds and second gold in a row.

He was timed in 1 minute, 44.93 seconds.

King and Russia's Yulia Efimova kept all the drama in the pool in the 100 breaststroke.

They were neck-and-neck down the stretch before King got her hand on the wall first,

touching in 1:04.93.

Efimova was second in 1:05.49. Martina Carraro of Italy took bronze.

Without three-time defending champion Katie Ledecky in the field, Simona Quadarella of Italy won the 1,500 freestyle in 15:40.89 — well off Ledecky's world record of 15:20.48.

Earlier Tuesday, the American star withdrew from the final because of unspecified illness. Ledecky also dropped out of the 200 freestyle heats.

Sarah Kohler of Germany earned silver and Wang Jianjiahe of China took bronze.

Olympic and defending world champion Ryan Murphy was upset in the men's 100 backstroke.

Xu Jiayu of China won in 52.43 seconds.

Evgeny Rylov of Russia took silver and Mitch Larkin of Australia got bronze.

Murphy, who was under his own world-record pace at the turn, faded to fourth. Fellow American Matt Grevers was fifth.

In the women's 100 back, Kylie Masse of Canada won in 58.60.

Minna Atherton of Australia took silver and American Olivia Smoliga earned bronze.

## Former, current Angels eulogize Skaggs at memorial

Associated Press

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Los Angeles Angels pitcher Andrew Heaney urged those at a private memorial service to remember a gift fallen teammate Tyler Skaggs gave to them.

"Take a moment, close your eyes and think of a story or even an image that reminds you of all the good times you had with Ty," Heaney said. "Take that memory and hold it in your hearts and in your minds. That is his lasting gift to everyone here."

Skaggs' teammates and family gathered Monday at a Catholic church in his native Santa Monica to remember Skaggs, who was found dead in his

hotel room in Texas on July 1. He died shortly before his 28th birthday.

The mourners remembered Skaggs as a beloved son, husband, teammate and friend whose upbeat personality brought joy to everyone around him. The altar was flanked by two large red-and-white floral arrangements prominently featuring No. 45, Skaggs' uniform number.

Hundreds of attendees laughed and cried at the eulogies from 14 speakers. Several family members related stories of Skaggs as a precocious, upbeat kid who just happened to grow into a world-class athlete.

"To Tyler's parents and fam-

ily, what an incredible job you did raising such a wonderful person," said Padres pitcher Garrett Richards, a longtime teammate who was drafted by the Angels along with Skaggs in 2009. "Carli, your husband had a big smile, but an even bigger heart. He truly cared about people. I feel so honored to have known and spent as much time with him as I did. He impacted me in so many areas of my life. Rest in peace, Skaggy."

The final speaker was Carli Skaggs, who made a last-minute decision to share poignant memories of her life since their marriage last winter.

"I didn't think I'd be able to do it," Carli Skaggs said. "Tyler

gave me some strength."

The current Angels and owner Arte Moreno were joined by former team members including longtime manager Mike Scioscia, Jered Weaver, Richards, David Freese and Matt Shoemaker. They were joined by Ryan Braun of the Milwaukee Brewers, Jack Flaherty of the St. Louis Cardinals and former major leaguer Trevor Plouffe, all Los Angeles-area natives and friends of Skaggs.

After the service, mourners were greeted by a catering truck from In-N-Out Burger, a Southern California institution and one of Skaggs' favorite meals.

# Extended netting debuts in Nova's win

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Ivan Nova stumped Miami again and improved to 5-0 against the Marlins.

Nova pitched a four-hitter that led the Chicago White Sox over Miami 9-1 on Monday night.

"I always want to do my best out there," Nova said. "I always work hard. Today it finally came out."

Jose Abreu hit a two-run homer, Yoan Moncada added a three-run shot, and James McCann and Ryan Goins later connected for back-to-back drives.

"Nothing that he does surprises me," Abreu said of Moncada. "Because I know all the time that he's looking to do more. He had been working hard. He's a great baseball player with a lot of talent and I still think that he can do more."

Chicago opened a 10-game homestand by winning for the third time in its last 11 tries. The Marlins fell to 0-4 on their six-game road trip.

The White Sox became the first team in the majors to have protective netting in place from foul pole to foul pole, extending the safety measure for their first game at Guaranteed Rate Field since the All-Star break.

The new netting reaches a maximum height of 45 feet and, for ground rules, will be treated like a wall — any ball that bounces or is thrown off the nets will remain in play. The extra netting didn't come into play in its debut.

"I think it's awesome," Chicago manager Rick Renteria said. "I know they've been considering it and talking about it, a lot of people have been talking

about it throughout the league, obviously through injuries and things that have occurred. For (the organization) to be on the forefront of it speaks a lot to their desire to want to give both the fans safety and still see the ballgame very clearly."

The White Sox announced the safety measure last month, a week after a foul ball at the park sent a woman to the hospital with her head bleeding.

On Sunday in Cleveland, another fan was hurt by a foul. Indians star Francisco Lindor said he was told his line drive put a 3-year-old boy in the hospital.

"It's a great idea," White Sox pitcher Evan Marshall said. "It's a shame it wasn't done sooner and just almost a standard across baseball, I think. Finally the players are speak-

ing out because everybody is tired of seeing people get hit.

"It just sucks the air right out of the game and we see it happen. It's hard to move on to the next pitch or do whatever because somebody's going to the emergency room," he said.

Several fans, including a 2-year-old girl in Houston, have been injured by hard-hit fouls this season. Many players and fans have implored Major League Baseball to require pole-to-pole netting covering foul territory at every ballpark.

White Sox rookie star Eloy Jimenez hit the foul last month that injured the woman.

"It's really good because now the fans are going to be more safe," he said. "Especially because line-drive foul balls, most of the time they're super hard. I think it's going to be safe for the fans."

## MLB roundup

# Twins hit five homers, turn triple play to beat Yanks

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Most of the highlights for the Minnesota Twins in this remarkable season have been home runs, putting them on pace to smash the major league record.

That mark currently belongs to the New York Yankees, who watched the Twins whittle away at it on Monday night with a powerful start to this series between AL division leaders.

Mitch Garver hit two of five home runs by the Twins, who held on for an 8-6 victory over the Yankees after a tone-setting triple play in the first inning.

"Those are the teams that you're going to have to play at the end of the season if you want to hold up the trophy," said Garver, who has 19 homers in just 181 at-bats. "These are the games that are really good for us, because we're playing against the top level."

Jorge Polanco, Nelson Cruz and Max Kepler also went deep, giving the Twins their eighth

game with five or more homers this season. All but Garver's second solo shot came off starter CC Sabathia (5-5), who lasted only four innings.

"Just like our lineup, it's a tough lineup to face," Sabathia said, "so you've got to be sharp, and I wasn't."

Martin Perez was hit just as hard, serving up home runs to Gio Urshela in the third, Luke Voit in the fourth and AL batting leader DJ LeMahieu in the fifth.

The deciding factor, then, was those sharp grounders, starting with Edwin Encarnacion after back-to-back walks. The ball went straight to third baseman Luis Arraez, who stepped on the bag and deftly whipped the ball to second baseman Jonathan Schoop in the same motion to barely get Aaron Judge. Schoop's razor-sharp relay to first baseman Miguel Sano beat Encarnacion by a step.

Gary Sanchez grounded into an inning-ending double play in

the third. Judge did the same in the sixth.

**Red Sox 9, Rays 4:** J.D. Martinez homered and drove in four runs, including an RBI double in the ninth inning following Tampa Bay's curious decision to put a position player on the mound, and visiting Boston won going away.

**Indians 7, Blue Jays 3:** Mike Clevinger pitched seven innings to win his third straight decision, Oscar Mercado homered and tripled, and visiting Cleveland beat Toronto to improve to 13-3 in July.

**Astros 11, Athletics 1:** Gerrit Cole pitched seven strong innings and Aledmys Diaz, Yordan Alvarez and Yuli Gurriel homered as Houston jumped on Homer Bailey for nine runs early and sailed to a win over visiting Oakland.

**Cardinals 6, Pirates 5 (10):** Paul Goldschmidt hit his fifth career grand slam in the top of the 10th and right fielder Jose Martinez threw out the tying

run at the plate to help visiting St. Louis beat Pittsburgh.

**Reds 6, Brewers 5:** Eugenio Suarez hit a pair of home runs, including a two-run, go-ahead shot in the ninth inning off Jeremy Jeffress as visiting Cincinnati rallied past Milwaukee.

**Giants 5, Cubs 4:** Joe Panik hit a go-ahead double with two outs in a three-run eighth inning, and host San Francisco continued its winning ways since the All-Star break by rallying past Chicago.

**Mariners 7, Rangers 3:** Marco Gonzales recovered from a shaky start to throw seven strong innings, Austin Nola hit a three-run homer to put his team ahead for good, and host Seattle handed Texas its eighth straight loss.

**Diamondbacks 6, Orioles 3:** Eduardo Escobar tripled twice, Adam Jones had three hits against his former team and host Arizona beat Baltimore in the opener of a three-game series.