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North Korea test-fires 2 more missiles

BY KIM GAMEL

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea test-fired two short-range ballistic missiles off its eastern coast Wednesday for the second time in just under a week, South Korea's military said, casting a shadow over hopes that nuclear talks may resume soon.

The launch raises pressure on the United States as it tries to restart talks aimed at persuading the North to abandon its nuclear weapons. North Korea is likely angling to increase its leverage in negotiations while expressing anger over planned joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises and continued sanctions, experts said.

The missiles flew about 155 miles from the town of Wonsan and reached an altitude of less than 20 miles before splashing into the sea, according to the South's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The first one was launched at 5:06 a.m. and the second at 5:27 a.m., it said, updating its earlier statement that "several projectiles" had been fired.

Military officials said the North launched the missiles from a truck. The South tracked the flights using intelligence assets, including radar and a destroyer equipped with an Aegis combat system.

"The repeated missile launches by North Korea are not helpful to efforts to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula and we urge North Korea to stop this behavior," the South's Joint Chiefs said.

The South Koreans and Americans were still analyzing the launch for more details.

The missiles fired Wednesday fell short of Japan's territorial waters, according to Japan's Defense Ministry.

"It is extremely regrettable that North Korea continues firing missiles that violate (United

Nations) resolutions," Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya told reporters.

U.S. Forces Korea, the main command for the 28,500 American troops based in the South, was "aware of the two launches" and was assessing the situation, said spokesman Col. Lee Peters.

On July 25, the North fired two short-range ballistic missiles from the same area. South Korean military officials later said they were a new type of weapon similar to Russia's Iskander. The Joint Chiefs said those missiles flew more than 370 miles and reached an altitude of 30 miles, which experts said was likely designed to evade U.S. and South Korean defense systems on the divided peninsula.

The North called it a "solemn warning" to South Korea against joining the U.S. in joint military exercises expected to take place next month as well

as purchasing more state-of-the-art fighter jets from the United States.

So far, the missile tests have not drawn a strong reaction from President Donald Trump's administration. Trump insists he maintains a good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. The leaders have met three times in just over a year, most recently on June 30 in a surprise encounter on the heavily fortified border that divides the Korean Peninsula.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was cautiously optimistic about the chances for resuming working-level talks, which have been deadlocked since a February summit between Trump and Kim in Vietnam ended without agreement.

"We think they'll be started before too long. I'm very hopeful," he told reporters en route to Thailand.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.

IG: DOD workers buy Chinese gear with spying risks

CQ Roll Call

WASHINGTON — Defense Department employees have procured thousands of printers, cameras and computers that carry known cybersecurity risks, and the practice may be continuing, according to an audit released Tuesday by the Pentagon's inspector general.

More than 9,000 commercially available information technology products bought in fiscal year 2018 could be used to spy on or hack U.S. military personnel and facilities, the report said. Without fixing oversight of such purchases, more risks lie ahead, potentially including perils for top-dollar weapons that use such "commercial-off-the-shelf," or

COTS, devices.

The auditors also wrote that the Pentagon has a pattern of buying products from companies such as Huawei, ZTE or Kaspersky Lab long after other federal agencies have identified the companies as posing cybersecurity risks and right up until the point that Congress outlaws purchases from the companies. What's more, the report said the department's list of approved commercial products still includes some that can pose cyber risks, including computers made by Lenovo Group, China's largest computer manufacturer, whose products contain cyberespionage hardware and software, according to U.S. authorities.

"If the DoD continues to

purchase and use COTS information technology items without identifying, assessing, and mitigating the known vulnerabilities associated with COTS information technology items, missions critical to national security could be compromised," said the declassified and formerly secret report, which remains partially redacted.

The Pentagon did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

The report is a window into part of a larger, well-documented Defense Department problem with cybersecurity that includes a history of harmful hacks that have led to the loss of vital military information and the continued vulnerability of numerous U.S. military

computer systems.

The new audit showed, for example, that Army and Air Force personnel spent at least \$33 million in fiscal 2018 on suspect products.

At issue are not just ordinary office products but also systems that connect to high-tech weapons. Even F-35 fighter jets use commercially available "internet of things" products to improve pilots' so-called situational awareness, the report said.

The auditors recommended that the Pentagon take a number of steps to improve the situation. Those include creating a process for identifying, testing and weeding out high-risk commercial products.

Paratroopers killed in Afghanistan ID'd

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon has identified two American paratroopers who were killed in combat in Afghanistan on Monday.

Spc. Michael Nance, 24, of Chicago, and Pfc. Brandon Kreischer, 20, of Stryker, Ohio, died Monday in southern Uruzgan province from combat-related injuries, a Defense Department statement said Tuesday. The incident is under investigation.

Both soldiers were assigned to 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., and were supporting the NATO-led Operation Freedom's Sentinel, the statement said.

"These young men were true all Americans and embodied the qualities of selfless service and courage as they answered our nation's call to deploy to Afghanistan," Col. Arthur Sellers, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, said in a statement.

Afghan officials told Stars and Stripes on Tuesday that both men were shot by an Afghan soldier at a military base in the Shah Wali Kot district in southern Kandahar province. The 82nd Airborne confirmed

the soldiers were struck by small-arms fire in Kandahar.

The Pentagon said Nance and Kreischer died in Tarin Kot, the capital of Uruzgan province, which borders Shah Wali Kot, suggesting the pair were transported to a U.S. forward operating base located in Tarin Kot.

Ahmad Sadiq, a spokesman for the Afghan army's 205th Corps, said the attacker was wounded and taken into police custody.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi commended the attack in a statement, saying it was carried out by a "sensible Afghan soldier," although not one of the militant group's fighters.

The American paratroopers deployed to Afghanistan just weeks before they were killed.

Nance was on his first deployment to the country, according to family members who spoke with WMAQ-TV, Chicago's NBC affiliate.

"He loved his country and wanted to serve his country," Nance's cousin, Trevor Harris, told the television station. "He died doing something that he loved."

Nance joined the Army in 2017. His awards include the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart. His remains were returned to Dover Air Force

At least 32 killed when Afghan bus hits bomb

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A roadside bomb tore through a bus in western Afghanistan on Wednesday, killing at least 32 people, including children, a provincial official said.

Mohibullah Mohib, spokesman for the police chief in Farah province, said 15 others were wounded with most in critical condition, indicating the death toll could rise.

The bus was traveling on a main highway between the western city of Herat and the southern city of Kandahar.

No one immediately claimed responsibility, but

Taliban insurgents operate in the region and frequently use roadside bombs to target government officials and security forces. The Taliban have kept up a steady tempo of attacks even as they have held several rounds of peace talks with the U.S. aimed at ending the war.

The attack came a day after the U.N. mission in Afghanistan released a report saying that most civilian deaths in the first half of the year were caused by Afghan forces and their international allies. The report apparently referred to civilians killed during Afghan and U.S. military operations against insurgents.

Base, Del., on Wednesday.

Kreischer, who enlisted in June 2018, was remembered as "an inspiration" by members of the gym he trained at in Ohio.

"We thought of Brandon as our own son," a Facebook post by the Iron Faith gym said.

"He was very inspirational.

He was upbeat. He was such a go-getter," Annette Bowers, a co-owner of the gym, added.

Kreischer is survived by his wife, of Fayetteville, N.C. His awards also include the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Military working dogs honored with new 'forever' stamp

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

The furriest members of the armed forces will grace the U.S. Postal Service's newest stamps to be released Thursday.

The new red, white and blue stamps featuring military working dogs were designed to "honor the nation's brave and loyal canines," according to a Postal Service statement last week.

The stamps will feature artist renderings of four breeds

commonly used as military working dogs — German shepherd, Dutch shepherd, Labrador retriever and Belgian Malinois — according to an image of the stamps. In four stamps, each breed is pictured wearing a working harness, posing against a backdrop of a white star against a red or blue background.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael DeCarli, a master-at-arms at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, said he plans to purchase

a stamp and feels honored to have his profession featured on the classic icon.

DeCarli, of Evansville, Ind., deployed last year to Qatar and Syria with his military working dog, Adam. DeCarli and the 6-year-old German shepherd worked to detect explosives and went on patrols in the two countries from April to December 2018.

The U.S. has used military working dogs alongside servicemembers since World War

I, according to the U.S. War Dogs Association. Their senses of smell and sight "are literally superhuman," allowing dogs to do what servicemembers alone could not, according to the group.

The military working dog stamps will be issued as "forever" stamps, meaning they "will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price," according to the Post Office statement. Postage rates are 55 cents per stamp.

'Welfare for All' attacked in Dems' debate

Associated Press

DETROIT — The signature domestic proposal by the leading progressive candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination came under withering attack from moderates in a debate that laid bare the struggle between a call for revolutionary policies and a desperate desire to defeat President Donald Trump.

Standing side by side at center stage Tuesday, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren slapped back against their more cautious rivals who ridiculed "Medicare for All" and warned that "wish-list economics" would jeopardize Democrats' chances for taking the White House in 2020.

"I don't understand why anybody goes to all the trouble of running for president of the United States just to talk about what we really can't do and shouldn't fight for," said

Warren, a Massachusetts senator, decrying Democratic "spinelessness."

Sanders, a Vermont senator, agreed: "I get a little bit tired of Democrats afraid of big ideas."

A full six months before the first votes are cast, the tug-of-war over the future of the party pits pragmatism against ideological purity as voters navigate a crowded Democratic field divided by age, race, sex and ideology. The fight with the political left was the dominant subplot on the first night of the second round of Democratic debates, which was notable as much for its tension as its substance.

Twenty candidates were to be spread evenly over two nights of debates. The second night was to feature early front-runner Joe Biden, the former vice president, as well as Kamala Harris, a California senator.

While much of the debate was dominated by attacks on

the preferred liberal health care policy, the issue of race emerged in the second hour. The candidates, all of whom are white, were unified in turning their anger toward Trump for using race as a central theme in his reelection campaign. Sanders called Trump a racist, while others said the president's rhetoric revived memories of the worst in the country's history, including slavery.

"The legacy of slavery and segregation and Jim Crow and suppression is alive and well in every aspect of the economy and the country today," said former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke, adding that he supported the creation of a panel to examine reparations for the descendants of slaves.

The marathon presidential primary season won't formally end for another year, but there was an increasing sense of urgency for many candidates who are fighting for survival. More

than a dozen could be blocked from the next round of debates — and effectively pushed out of the race — if they fail to reach new polling and fundraising thresholds implemented by the Democratic National Committee.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, in his first debate appearance, took a swipe at Sanders: Working people "can't wait for a revolution," he charged. "Their problems are here and now."

While he avoided any direct confrontations with his more liberal rivals, Pete Buttigieg tried several times to present himself as the more sober alternative in the race. He rejected extreme positions, quoted scripture and abstained from calling out his opponents.

The 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Ind., also subtly emphasized the generational difference between himself and Sanders, the candidate 40 years his senior.

Democrats' campaign arm sees exodus of top aides

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A mass departure of top aides shook the House Democrats' campaign arm Tuesday, an exodus that followed complaints from Hispanic and black lawmakers that the organization's staff lacked diversity and that came amid a war of words between the party and President Donald Trump over race.

Rep. Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., chairwoman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said in a statement late Monday that she had "fallen short" and promised to "work tirelessly to ensure that our staff is truly inclusive." Executive Director Allison Jaslow announced her departure Monday, and a DCCC aide said five other senior aides had also resigned hours later.

The tumult comes as race has become a partisan battlefield, following a series of Twitter attacks by Trump on House Democrats of color. In his latest blasts, he has disparaged Democratic Rep. Elijah Cummings and his city of Baltimore, which is majority black, as a "disgusting" place where "no human being would want to live."

The shakeup also occurred as both parties are already fundraising and recruiting candidates for the elections in 2020, when

Democrats will be defending their House majority. The DCCC outspent its counterpart, the National Republican Congressional Committee, in 2018 elections that saw Democrats gain House control after eight years in the minority.

Lawmakers complaining about the DCCC's staff have included Texas Democratic Reps. Filemon Vela and Vicente Gonzalez and Ohio Rep. Marcia Fudge, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Bustos spent Tuesday talking about how to address the problem with leaders of House caucuses representing Hispanics, blacks and other minority groups and with Democratic incumbents expected to face competitive reelection races, the DCCC aide said.

The aide provided supportive statements from several lawmakers, including Rep. Cedric Richmond, D-La., former head of the Congressional Black Caucus. Richmond said he was happy to see Bustos "hear the concerns of her colleagues and tackle issues of diversity and inclusion head on."

Hispanic lawmakers became disenchanted after Bustos, 57, replaced top staffers, including many minorities, with aides who were largely white, said an aide to Gonza-

lez who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly. New committee leaders often name longtime aides to their staffs.

Liberals in and out of Congress were angered when Bustos announced the DCCC would not do business with political consultants who help Democrats challenging incumbent House Democrats. Much of DCCC's money comes from dues paid by House Democrats, and incumbents have argued that an organization they finance should not give some of its lucrative business to consultants who work for challengers trying to unseat them.

Many Democrats were also unhappy when Bustos planned to attend an event in support of fellow Illinois Democratic Rep. Dan Lipinski, an abortion opponent and one of the most conservative House Democrats. Bustos ended up not attending.

Jaslow, an Iraq War veteran, said in a statement that "sometimes selfless service means having the courage to take a bow for the sake of the mission — especially when the stakes are so high."

Bustos has appointed a council of aides to search for a permanent replacement for Jaslow.

Boston dig finds not-so-ancient artifacts

Associated Press

BOSTON — An archaeological dig in Boston's historic Chinatown has been cut short after it turned up a 1980s music cassette, a toy dinosaur and other bric-a-brac.

The city's Archaeology Program tweeted Tuesday that it was wrapping up its three-week excavation because researchers reached the water table and it was unsafe to dig further.

The excavation of a vacant lot near the neighborhood's distinctive gateway had been expected to last until early autumn.

In recent days, researchers have been humorously tweeting some of their "finds," including a cassette by Boston R&B group New Edition, a toy

dinosaur, linoleum flooring and other items from the 1970s and 1980s.

They've also showcased small porcelain pieces, some of which likely came from nearby Chinese restaurants, as they dug methodically through layers of brick, concrete and other material.

Researchers had hoped to turn up artifacts shedding new light on Boston's immigrants — not only those from China but also Syria, Ireland and England who sought new lives in Chinatown from 1840 to 1980.

City archaeologist Joe Bagley said the dig was the first in Chinatown, and his team will "now have a better understanding of how complex and deeply buried backyards may be" there.

"We were tantalizing close to the older deposits," Bagley said. "It was frustrating to see the water on the site after weeks of work trying to get down to deeper/older deposits."

The neighborhood, at the edge of the city's Theater District, drew thousands of newcomers attracted by cheap housing and plentiful warehouse jobs in the adjacent Leather District starting in the late 1800s.

"Boston is a city of immigrants, and this is an important piece of Boston's history," Mayor Marty Walsh said when the dig, the city's first in Chinatown, commenced.

The city Archaeology Program has excavated dozens of sites over the years.

Two years ago, researchers

unearthed an outhouse next door to the home of famed colonial leader Paul Revere in the city's North End. They recovered fragments of pottery, bottles and a tobacco pipe. In 2016, they dug at the boyhood home of Malcolm X in the city's Roxbury neighborhood.

Researchers turned up artifacts from the 1940s to 1960s likely belonging to the slain civil rights activist's family, but also Native American stone tool pieces dating to the time before Europeans came to Boston.

In 2015, they surveyed the courtyard at the old Boston City Hall building downtown and found remnants of the original Boston Latin, the nation's first public school.

Gangster Dillinger's body to be exhumed

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The body of notorious 1930s gangster John Dillinger is expected to be exhumed in September from a concrete-encased grave at an Indianapolis cemetery more than 85 years after he was killed by FBI agents outside a Chicago theater.

The upcoming exhumation could put to rest conspiracy theories suggesting that the violent criminal some people considered a folk hero during the height of the Great Depression isn't even buried in his marked grave.

The Indiana State Department of Health approved a permit July 3 sought by Dillinger's nephew, Michael C. Thompson, to have the body exhumed from Crown Hill Cemetery and reinterred there.

The permit doesn't give a reason for the request, and Thompson couldn't immediately be reached for comment. However, Dan Silberman, of A&E Networks, said the exhumation will be covered as part

of a documentary on Dillinger for The History Channel.

Indiana health department spokeswoman Jeni O'Malley said that based on the permit, the agency expects Dillinger's body will be exhumed and reinterred on Sept. 16 — the date listed on the document.

But digging up Dillinger's grave might prove a difficult task because days after his son's funeral, Dillinger's father had the casket reburied under a protective cap of concrete and scrap iron topped by four reinforced-concrete slabs, said Susan Sutton, a historian with the Indiana Historical Society.

The reason for the concrete-encased grave was to thwart would-be vandals, she said, citing "Crown Hill: History, Spirit, and Sanctuary" a 2013 book the historical society published about the cemetery's history.

"The main fear was that someone would come in and dig up the grave and either desecrate the corpse or steal it," Sutton said.

Wealthy use loophole to get aid meant for needy students

Associated Press

The U.S. Education Department is being urged to close a loophole that has allowed some wealthy families to get federal, state and university funding that's meant to help needy students.

Federal authorities were notified last year that some parents in Illinois were transferring custody of their children to friends or relatives to make it appear they came from poorer backgrounds. In doing so, they became eligible for scholarships and federal grants that are typically reserved for low-income students.

Disclosure of the practice comes at a time of intense debate over the fairness of college admissions. Earlier this year, federal authorities uncovered a sweeping scheme in which they said wealthy parents paid bribes to get their children into elite universities across the nation.

The latest case was uncovered at the University of Illinois after guidance counselors at nearby high schools caught

wind of the scheme and notified the school's admissions office. University officials soon noticed a pattern of students coming from certain Chicago suburbs with recent guardianship transfers and similar language in their applications. The school has identified 14 cases over the last year.

Andy Borst, director of undergraduate admissions, said that while the strategy appears to be legal, it's ethically questionable. By tapping into funding for needy students, he said, wealthy families deprive students who legitimately need help. Some of the families were able to obtain state grants that are first-come, first-served, while thousands of other students were turned away.

"Financial aid is not infinite," he said. "There are students who are eligible for need-based aid who are not receiving their awards because the state runs out."

The Education Department's inspector general said it's aware of the issue and is urging the agency to add new language to its rules to close the loophole.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Woman accused of urinating on potatoes

PA WEST MIFFLIN — Authorities said a woman suspected of urinating on potatoes at a Walmart in western Pennsylvania has turned herself in.

West Mifflin police said Grace Brown, 20, is facing multiple charges including criminal mischief, open lewdness and public drunkenness.

Brown turned herself in Tuesday after learning that authorities were looking for her.

A Walmart representative said an employee saw what Brown was doing. The company “immediately disposed of the affected products and sanitized the area.”

African elephant moves to new home

CA SAN DIEGO — An African elephant that spent a decade at San Diego Zoo Safari Park moved across the country to a new home at Zoo Atlanta.

The Union-Tribune reported that 30-year-old Msholo arrived last week at the Zambezi Elephant Center.

Msholo and two female African elephants, Kelly and Tara, will be the main attractions at Zoo Atlanta’s new African Savanna habitat, which opens Aug. 8.

Roadkill database could help critters

ME AUGUSTA — Maine conservationists are hopeful a new database about roadkill will protect the state’s critters from becoming statistics.

The Kennebec Journal reported Maine Audubon’s online

database will let residents who see roadkill report the sighting. That will allow the group to identify roadkill “hot spots” that are especially dangerous for animals.

Maine Audubon is working on the effort with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and University of California, Davis.

Officer chases bobcat that jumped on roof

NH STRATHAM — A New Hampshire police officer said the kitten he was trying to pick up in a parking lot turned out to be a bobcat, which jumped onto the roof of a fast-food restaurant.

Stratham Officer Matt Callahan told Seacoastonline.com he was on patrol when he saw the “kitten” run under a car. It eventually climbed a tree near the restaurant.

Once Callahan realized he was dealing with a young bobcat, he called state Fish and Game officers. He also alerted customers in case the bobcat decided to come down, but it climbed onto the roof and took a cat nap.

Callahan said he and the conservation officer climbed the roof and put the bobcat in a crate. The bobcat was released at a wildlife refuge.

Police say man lost an eye in paintball attack

VA RICHMOND — Police in Virginia said a man lost an eye to a paintball attack and a second man suffered minor injuries in another such attack.

News outlets reported Richmond police said a man was shot in the face, chest and back with a paintball gun on July 22. He was taken to a hospi-

tal with injuries that weren’t life-threatening.

Police said in a news release that officers responded to a report of another paintball gun attack hours later on the same street. This time, a man had been shot in the face, chest and right eye.

Police charged Kemontray L. Lamberts, 19, with malicious wounding in the first assault and said they’re investigating the other incident.

Woman found dead 38 years ago ID’d

OH IRONTON — Investigators said they used complex forensic techniques to figure out the identity of a woman found dead in an Ohio well nearly four decades ago.

Lawrence County, Ohio, officials and experts from the nonprofit DNA Doe Project announced the real name of the notorious “Belle in the Well” victim was Louise Virginia Flesher, of West Virginia.

Authorities said the mystery began in 1981 when a couple of teenagers found the decomposing remains of a woman inside an abandoned cistern.

After years of dead ends, a DNA sample was finally obtained from Flesher’s youngest daughter to confirm the identity.

Woman charged in machete attack

MA SHARON — A woman police said used a foot-long serrated machete to attack three men in a Massachusetts hotel parking lot was held without bail pending a hearing to determine whether she is dangerous.

Allison Maitland, of Hanson, faced charges of assault and battery with a dangerous

weapon causing serious injury and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon.

Police said Maitland and her boyfriend were in a vehicle in a Sharon hotel parking lot making “sexual” noises when one of three other men in the parking lot said “get a room.”

An attorney for Maitland said she was defending her boyfriend, who was being beaten by the three men.

Taser used to stun man with knife

NY NEW YORK — New York City police used a Taser to stun a man who walked into their precinct wielding a knife and asking officers to shoot him.

After he entered the police precinct, the man is seen standing still holding the weapon and he’s quickly surrounded by officers with guns drawn. One deploys a Taser and the man drops backward to the floor.

Police said the man was treated at a hospital for minor injuries.

Suburb accepts school supplies for fines

KS OLATHE — A Kansas City suburb is allowing people to pay their parking fines with school supplies.

KMBC-TV reported that the city of Olathe is offering the option through Aug. 16.

Items that are being sought include No. 2 pencils, 1- and 3-inch three-ring binders and single-subject spiral notebooks.

City officials said only up to \$50 in school supplies can be donated per person.

From wire reports

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Mahomes earns nickname 'Showtime'

Associated Press

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Patrick Mahomes spent this past offseason riding horses through the surf and throwing passes on the beach, swapping jokes with Jimmy Kimmel and hobnobbing with celebrities on the red carpet.

He's the cover boy for this year's Madden video game. The Texas Tech die-hard who followed his alma mater all the way to the Final Four. The sports fan that suddenly pops up at the Stanley Cup Final, then makes sure to congratulate the St. Louis Blues on his uber-popular social media channels.

Mahomes also is the face of the Kansas City Chiefs, the reigning NFL MVP and without question the biggest star to land in the City of Fountains since George Brett was playing third base for the Royals.

"He's a rock star," Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce said.

One that was largely undiscovered just a year ago.

Mahomes was anointed the starter last offseason, when the Chiefs shipped Alex Smith to the Redskins, but his arrival at training camp came with plenty of question marks: Could his big arm buck the trend of Red

Raiders quarterbacks flaming out in the NFL? Could he run coach Andy Reid's complex offense? Could he live up to the expectations that come with being a first-round draft pick?

He answered all those questions in the season opener against the Chargers. In the awkward setting of a soccer stadium in Los Angeles, the mop-haired Mahomes threw four touchdown passes without a pick.

He threw six touchdown passes the next week in Pittsburgh. Three more against San Francisco. And he led the Chiefs to a 5-0 start before a road loss to New England, only to rebound with four more wins.

Mahomes wound up shattering the franchise records for completions (383), yards passing (5,047) and touchdown passes (50), along with more obscure metrics such as quarterback rating.

He finally led the Chiefs to a home playoff win, their first in nearly two decades, and nearly beat the Patriots in the AFC title game. The teams headed to overtime tied 31-all, the Patriots won the coin toss and marched downfield for the winning touchdown, denying Mahomes a chance with the ball.

It was a nightmare ending to

an otherwise dream season.

"Every win and every loss you use going into the next season," Mahomes said. "Obviously, we were super close to making the Super Bowl and we fell just short of that, but we're going to keep progressing forward and keep learning from that game, learn from what we didn't do as well."

Mahomes spent the offseason working on his footwork, which has always caused him trouble. He often gathered his wide receivers for impromptu passing sessions under the hot Midwestern sun. And he even made time to throw some passes to them when they took a quick trip to Turks and Caicos.

Yes, he somehow found time for plenty of football amid his many other demands.

Mahomes watched the Red Raiders in basketball's national semifinals in April, then landed on the Madden cover later that month. He signed a series of sponsorship and endorsement deals, walked the red carpet at the ESPY Awards, and left Kimmel laughing on his show just a few weeks ago.

That nickname of "Showtime"? Sounds about perfect.

His magnetic personality and otherworldly talent also has had a big impact on the Chiefs. Re-

cord crowds showed up for the first two days of training camp last weekend, where his No. 15 jersey outnumbered all others by about 2-to-1, and ticket sales for the upcoming season are skyrocketing.

"You look at the impact he's had on our business, it's multilayered," Chiefs president Mark Donovan said. "He has benefited us in terms of a lot of our big partners are partners with Patrick. It is a great activation point, and that's creating opportunities for other players."

Mahomes is wise enough to understand it could all be gone in a flash, though. He saw firsthand how quickly stars can fade in professional sports from hanging around big league clubhouses with his father, pitcher Pat Mahomes, and his godfather, longtime relief pitcher LaTroy Hawkins.

That's why he learned to say "no" this offseason, trying to strike a balance between work, business and pleasure. He showed up to training camp in better shape, the baby fat that he brought into the league replaced by lean muscle, and he exuded a certain self-assurance that was missing a year ago.

Hall of Fame linebacker Buoniconti dead at age 78

Associated Press

MIAMI — Pro Football Hall of Fame middle linebacker Nick Buoniconti, an undersized overachiever who helped lead the Miami Dolphins to the NFL's only perfect season, has died at the age of 78.

Bruce Bobbins, a spokesman for the Buoniconti family, said he died Tuesday in Bridgehampton, N.Y. A cause of death was not immediately known.

Buoniconti was bypassed in the NFL Draft but went on to a 15-year career. He helped the Dolphins win back-to-back Super Bowls, including the 1972 team that finished 17-0.

Following retirement, Buoni-

conti and his son, Marc, worked to raise more than a half-billion dollars in the search for a cure for paralysis. The younger Buoniconti was paralyzed from the shoulders down making a tackle for The Citadel in 1985.

Marc Buoniconti said his father was his biggest hero.

"He could have been sitting on the beach sipping champagne for the rest of his life," the younger Buoniconti said in 2017. "But what did he do? He went around and gave the rest of his life to help his son."

Nick Buoniconti was chosen for the all-time AFL team in 1970. He was chosen for the NFL Pro Bowl in 1972 and

1973.

Following retirement, Buoniconti worked as an attorney, as president of U.S. Tobacco and as an agent to such athletes as Bucky Dent and Andre Dawson. In recent years he struggled with symptoms of CTE, a degenerative brain disease associated with repeated blows to the head.

A native of Springfield, Mass., Buoniconti played guard on offense and linebacker on defense for Notre Dame. But at 5-11 and 220 pounds, he was small for an NFL linebacker.

He was taken in the 13th round by the Boston Patriots of the upstart AFL and played

for them from 1962 to 1968. He made the AFL All-Star Game six times and had 24 career interceptions for the Patriots, including three in a single game in 1968.

Buoniconti played for the Dolphins from 1969 to 1974 and in 1976. He was the leader of Miami's famed "No-Name Defense" and in 1973 he set a team record with 162 tackles. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2001.

In 1985, he and Marc Buoniconti helped to found the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, which has become the world's largest spinal cord injury research center.

Ellis quits as US women's soccer coach

Associated Press

Fresh off of a repeat performance as World Cup champions, the U.S. women's national team finds itself in flux.

On Tuesday, Jill Ellis announced she was stepping down after more than five years as the team's head coach. Under Ellis, the United States won eight total tournaments, including two World Cups, and lost just seven games.

Meanwhile, U.S. Soccer is in the process of naming the team's new general manager, who will report to President Carlos Cordeiro and chief executive officer Dan Flynn. The GM, expected to be appointed soon, will lead the search for a new coach.

Ellis, the national team's third female coach, hopes it will be another woman.

"I think there are a lot of qualified females. You also hope by doing it people have trust a female can do this," she said. "People have seen it and people potentially want to aspire to coach, not just soccer

but whatever sport. You really hope that is part of the legacy you leave behind."

Once named, the new coach will be taxed quickly with preparing the team for Olympic qualifying and next summer's Tokyo Games. Ellis said she'd be there for her successor: "I want whoever comes next to know that there will be that support."

Hanging over all of the immediate uncertainty is the legal dispute between the women's team and U.S. soccer. The players filed a federal lawsuit last March accusing the federation of gender discrimination in matters including pay.

The lawsuit capped a long-simmering dispute between the federation and the players, who claim they deserve to make as much as their counterparts on the men's national team.

The two sides have agreed to mediation now that the World Cup is over.

Ellis steps away after winning back-to-back titles in soccer's premier global tournament. Her contract was set to expire

following the World Cup, and she said Tuesday she started to think months ago about leaving following the event in France.

She'll stay with the team through its five-game victory tour, which starts Saturday against Ireland at the Rose Bowl. After that, she'll serve as an ambassador for U.S. Soccer for at least a year.

Ellis said she wants to spend more time with her family.

"The timing of this is good. Not only on a personal level but also for the program in terms of preparing to start a new cycle," she said. "It's obviously been a fantastic run and fantastic ride. I'm going to enjoy these last few games."

The top-ranked U.S. team has been dominant throughout Ellis' tenure. The team went undefeated in the 2015 World Cup in Canada en route to a 5-2 victory over Japan in the title match. The United States gave up just three goals in the tournament.

The U.S. defeated the Netherlands last month to claim its second straight champion-

ship — pulling off challenging knockout victories over No. 4 France and No. 3 England. The Americans never trailed at the tournament and set records with 26 goals and a 12-game World Cup winning streak. Ellis became the first coach to lead a team to two Women's World Cup titles.

But there were also moments of disappointment. The defending champions were knocked out in the quarterfinals in the 2016 Brazil Olympics by Sweden, the team's earliest departure ever in the tournament. Afterward, there was some grumbling behind the scenes as Ellis shifted players and experimented with tactics.

Overall, Ellis led the team in 127 matches with 102 wins. She coached the team for more games than any of her seven predecessors.

Ellis became head coach in 2014, promoted after taking over on an interim basis following the dismissal of Tom Sermanni. She also served as interim coach after Pia Sundhage resigned in 2012.

Indians deal Bauer to Reds as part of 3-team trade

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The Indians added some power — and a little punch — for their playoff push.

Still chasing the homer-happy Minnesota Twins in the AL Central, Cleveland traded temperamental starter Trevor Bauer to the Cincinnati Reds on Wednesday in a three-team deal that landed the Indians two big bats to fill their power void, Yasiel Puig and Franmil Reyes,

The Indians, who have cut first-place Minnesota's lead from 11 1/2 games to three, dealt Bauer to the Reds for Puig and left-hander Scott Moss. The Indians also acquired Reyes, lefty Logan Allen and infield prospect Victor Nova from San Diego. The Padres acquired outfielder Taylor Trammel from the Reds.

Bauer's exit was nearly as stunning as his final start for Cleveland.

His trade was completed three days after the quirky right-hander with undeniable talent, along with a difficult side, angrily threw a ball from behind the mound over the center-field wall in Kansas City. Bauer called the act "childish" and was fined by Major League Baseball. It may have been the final straw for the Indians, who managed to get back five players to help in their playoff push and beyond.

Puig, who literally left Cincinnati swinging following another brawl with the Pirates on Tuesday night, and Reyes have 49 combined homers this season. They'll give manager Terry Francona some additional lineup options as well as a needed power surge.

The three teams agreed to the seven-player swap Tuesday, but medical reports didn't get approval until just hours before the trade deadline.

Dealing Bauer is not without risk for the Indians. Though he can be challenging, Bauer is a workhorse and at times has been the club's best pitcher this season while two-time Cy Young winner Corey Kluber (broken arm) and Carlos Carrasco (leukemia) have been sidelined. But Kluber and Carrasco are expected back in the weeks ahead, and the Indians have activated Danny Salazar, a 2016 All-Star whose career has been slowed by injuries.

"Over the last several weeks, we explored the trade market in an effort to enhance our competitive position, both by supplementing our major league roster and infusing

young talent into the organization," Indians President of Baseball Operations Chris Antonetti said. "We appreciate Trevor's contributions to the organization in his time with us and while it's never easy to part with a player of his caliber, we feel we've traded from an area of depth to help bolster our major league club for this year and the foreseeable future."

The bold move was applauded by Indians fans, many of whom were soured by the team's cost-cutting offseason when owner Paul Dolan demanded a slash in payroll, forcing Antonetti and general manager Mike Chernoff to make some difficult decisions. The Indians did not re-sign All-Star outfielder Michael Brantley and traded slugger Edwin Encarnacion, first baseman Yonder Alonso and catcher Yan Gomes.

Verlander fans 13 as Astros top Tribe

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Justin Verlander was on top of his game Tuesday night.

Verlander struck out 13 to reach double figures for the third straight start and sixth time this season, leading the Houston Astros over the Cleveland Indians 2-0.

In a matchup of All-Stars, Verlander (14-4) outpitched Shane Bieber and won his fourth consecutive start, tying Washington's Stephen Strasburg for the major league lead in wins. Verlander allowed two hits in seven innings and walked none for the sixth time in 23 starts this year.

Verlander had been 9-16 with

a 5.56 ERA in 28 career starts at Cleveland coming in.

"I exorcized some demons here today," he said. "I haven't pitched well in this ballpark, and to do it against a great pitcher in Bieber, that was good."

He allowed one runner to reach second. Cleveland's only hits were singles by Roberto Perez leading off the third and Greg Allen starting the sixth.

Verlander made his 53th career start against the Indians.

"I gather as much information as I can through scouting reports and asking questions, but the more important thing was I had 14 years of instinct to use today," he said. "I trust my eyes, I trust what I see, and

I process all of that when I'm facing a team that I'm very familiar with."

Indians manager Terry Francona was impressed by the dominating performance.

"If you watched, he had everything — fastball, offspeed, couple varieties of changeup," he said. "It's one of those nights where as a manager you're sitting there and you're rooting your guys on, but you're also glad you're not in the batter's box."

Cleveland, the AL wild-card leader, struck out 15 times. Will Harris fanned two in a perfect eighth and Roberto Osuna followed with a 1-2-3 ninth for his 24th save in 28 chances.

Houston, the AL West leader,

won its third straight. Verlander and Gerrit Cole top the rotation but the Astros have been seeking help for the back end ahead of Wednesday's trade deadline.

Bieber (10-4) gave up two runs and nine hits in seven innings with eight strikeouts and one walk. He had been 4-0 in six starts since losing at Texas on June 20.

"Biebs pitched terrific," Francona said. "That lineup gives you no ... there's no breath. They come at you one through nine. Give the kid credit. We've seen him do that before."

Verlander started the July 9 All-Star Game in Cleveland and Bieber was the MVP.

Puig goes out swinging in final game with Cincinnati

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Jared Hughes' errant pitch threw a load of fuel on one of the majors' most flammable rivalries.

Call it Pirates vs. Reds, round two — and a fitting farewell for Yasiel Puig.

Hughes hit Starling Marte with his first pitch in the ninth inning Tuesday night, setting the stage for the latest dust-up between the Ohio River rivals. Four Pirates and four Reds were ejected in Pittsburgh's 11-4 win, including Puig, who was in the process of being traded.

"The ball just slipped and it was real unfortunate and a lot of bad things happened afterward," Hughes said.

And it's not over.

Reds manager David Bell faces a suspension for coming back onto the field and going after Pirates manager Clint Hurdle during the fracas. Bell had already been ejected for arguing a strike call an inning earlier.

And there was Puig, who's headed to Cleveland as part of a three-team deal for starter Trevor Bauer, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press. The per-

son spoke on condition of anonymity because the trade had not been announced.

Puig prolonged the fight that started when Reds reliever Amir Garrett went toward the Pirates dugout and threw several punches.

Puig's summary of the inning: "That's crazy."

The NL Central rivals have been going at each other for years. The nastiness resumed this season when Derek Dietrich admired his homer at PNC Park in April, touching off a fracas.

Braves 11, Nationals 8: Adam Duvall had two home runs and four hits, Josh Donaldson added a three-run homer and visiting Atlanta beat Washington to reopen a 5½-game lead in the NL East.

Julio Teheran (6-7) allowed two runs and seven hits in 6⅔ innings for Atlanta.

Rays 6, Red Sox 5: Avisail Garcia homered and added the go-ahead, two-run double in the sixth inning of visiting Tampa Bay's win over Boston.

Diamondbacks 4, Yankees 2: Rookie Taylor Clarke (4-3) scattered three hits over 5⅓ innings and Arizona got home runs from Christian Walker

and Carson Kelly to beat host New York.

Dodgers 9, Rockies 4: Kristopher Negron homered in his first at-bat with visiting Los Angeles, one of four home runs in a win over Colorado.

The Dodgers became the first team in the majors to reach 70 wins and increased their lead in the NL West to 15 games over San Francisco.

Cardinals 2, Cubs 1: Paul Goldschmidt homered for the seventh time in eight games, a go-ahead drive off Yu Darvish (3-5) in the sixth inning that lifted host St. Louis into sole possession of the NL Central lead.

Phillies 4, Giants 2: Drew Smyly (2-5) tossed seven shut-out innings and Rhys Hoskins homered to lead host Philadelphia over San Francisco.

Orioles 8, Padres 5: Chris Davis hit a go-ahead home run in the eighth inning to snap an 0-for-18 slump, and visiting Baltimore rallied from a four-run deficit.

Twins 2, Marlins 1: Byron Buxton homered and Jake Odorizzi (12-5) followed his worst big league start by pitching one-run ball into the sixth inning, leading visiting Minne-

sota past Miami.

Mariners 8, Rangers 5: Kyle Seager had a solo homer, a tie-breaking two-run triple and drove in four runs as visiting Seattle stretched its winning streak to six games.

Blue Jays 9, Royals 2: Vladimir Guerrero Jr. hit a grand slam in the ninth inning to give him a career-high five RBIs, Sean Reid-Foley tossed five innings of four-hit ball in visiting Toronto's win over Kansas City.

Mets 5, White Sox 2 (11): Noah Syndergaard put aside trade talk to turn an eighth-inning lead over to his relievers, and visiting New York rebounded from another bullpen meltdown when Jeff McNeil and Michael Conforto hit consecutive home runs in the 11th.

Angels 6, Tigers 1: Matt Thaiss homered and drove in three runs, Shohei Ohtani had three hits, and Griffin Canning (4-6) threw four-hit ball over six innings as host Los Angeles beat Detroit.

Athletics 3, Brewers 2 (10): Matt Olson homered with one out in the 10th inning off Josh Hader and host Oakland beat Milwaukee to win its third straight.