

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## Trump pardons sailor who took sub pics

*The Washington Post*

President Donald Trump on Friday pardoned a former Navy sailor whose conviction for unauthorized retention of national defense information became a rallying cry for conservatives who felt it showed Hillary Clinton was treated too leniently in the FBI's investigation of how she handled classified material.

Kristian Saucier, 31, of Vermont is the second person to be pardoned in the Trump administration; last year, the president controversially pardoned former Arizona Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who was convicted of criminal contempt of court for ignoring a judge's order to stop detaining people because he merely suspected them of being undocumented immigrants.

Kathleen Saucier, Saucier's mother, said

Friday that she and other supporters had waged an aggressive public campaign for the pardon, and she thought that effort — coupled with a more sympathetic new administration — helped her son.

Saucier, who now works as a garbage collector, pleaded guilty in May 2016 to one count of unauthorized possession and retention of national defense information, admitting he took photos of classified spaces on the USS Alexandria submarine, where he served as a machinist's mate.

The photos were taken in 2009, although they were not found until 2012. It was by chance the images were discovered at all. Saucier left his phone behind at a garbage dump in Hampton, Conn., where a supervisor powered on the device, saw the submarine photos and showed them to a friend

who had retired from the Navy, according to a 2015 report in Navy Times.

Saucier told federal agents who confronted him in 2012 that the phone belonged to him, but he denied taking the photos, according to the original criminal complaint.

Saucier was sentenced in August 2016 to a year in prison, and his case soon attracted the attention of Trump, who compared it with the investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server while she was secretary of state. The FBI ultimately recommended no charges for Clinton or her aides in that case, even though they found classified material had traversed her private server.

"He wanted to take a couple of pictures," Trump said of Saucier. "They put him in jail for a year."

## Afghanistan increasingly a forgotten war for many

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is bolstering its military presence in Afghanistan, more than 16 years after the war started. Is anyone paying attention?

Consider this: At a Senate hearing this past week on top U.S. security threats, the word "Afghanistan" was spoken exactly four times, each during introductory remarks. In the ensuing two hours of questions for intelligence agency witnesses, no senator asked about Afghanistan, suggesting little interest in a war with nearly 15,000 U.S. troops supporting combat against the Taliban.

**ANALYSIS** It's not as if the war's end is in sight. Just last month the bulk of an Army training brigade of about 800 soldiers arrived to improve the advising of Afghan forces. Since January, attack planes and other aircraft have been added to U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

But it's not clear that the war,

which began in October 2001, is going as well as the U.S. had hoped seven months after President Donald Trump announced a new, more aggressive strategy. The picture may be clearer once the traditionally most intensive fighting season begins in April or May. Over the winter, American and Afghan warplanes have focused on attacking illicit drug facilities that are a source of Taliban revenue.

One of Washington's closest watchers of the Afghanistan conflict, Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote last month that the administration has made major improvements in military tactics and plans for developing Afghan forces but has "done nothing to deal with civil and political stability."

The administration "not only faces a deteriorating security situation, it has no clear political, governance or economic strategy to produce Afghan stability," Cordesman said. In his view, the U.S. military has been assigned a "mission impossible"

in Afghanistan.

The weak central government in Kabul and the resilient Taliban insurgency are not the U.S. military's only problems there. It also faces what Gen. Joseph Votel, the top U.S. general overseeing the war, calls interference by Russia. He told a congressional panel last month that Moscow is seeking to undermine U.S. and NATO influence in Afghanistan by exaggerating the presence of Islamic State fighters there and portraying this as a U.S. failure.

Stephen Biddle, a professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington University, said Americans' relative lack of interest in the war gives Trump political maneuver room to conduct the war as he wishes, but that dynamic is not necessarily a good one.

"The idea that a democracy is spending billions of dollars a year, killing people and sacrificing American lives waging war, and the elected representatives of the people aren't paying attention I think is inappropriate," Biddle said. "But to say it is inappropriate isn't to say it's surprising, because this is the way Congress has been behaving toward this war for a long, long time."

Last November, the U.S. commander in Kabul, Gen. John Nicholson, said the Afghan army, with U.S. support, had "turned the corner" and captured momentum against the Taliban. Since then, Taliban fighters have conducted a series of high-profile attacks in Kabul and elsewhere that have killed scores of civilians.

Dan Coats, the director of U.S. national intelligence, offered a less optimistic forecast when he testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday. "We assess the overall security picture will ... modestly deteriorate in the coming year, and Kabul will continue to bear the brunt of the Taliban-led insurgency," Coats said. Afghan forces, while "unsteady," probably will maintain control of most major population centers in 2018, he added.

# Army: Stop kissing soldiers in Ga. parade

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The Army wants to halt a favorite St. Patrick's Day shenanigan in Savannah that for decades has left marching soldiers with cheeks smeared in bright, red lipstick.

Roughly 200 soldiers from nearby Fort Stewart plan to take part in the March 17 parade, which organizers say could draw 500,000 or more revelers to Georgia's oldest city. Savannah's Irish immigrants and their descendants have marched on St. Patrick's Day since 1824. The sprawling celebration is now one of the

South's largest street parties after Mardi Gras.

As the parade winds around Savannah's oak-shaded squares, women in the crowd traditionally slather on red lipstick as they wait for the uniformed troops to approach in formation among kilt-wearing pipe bands and floats pulled by shamrock-decorated pickup trucks. Then they dart into the street to plant messy kisses on the soldiers' faces.

But Fort Stewart commanders and organizers of the Savannah parade want the soldier smooching to stop. Parade adjutants posted along the route are being asked to help turn

back any would-be kissers.

"They need to look like soldiers when they march. They need to look professional," Fort Stewart spokesman Kevin Larson said Thursday. "It's hard to look professional as a soldier with red lipstick on your cheeks. Red lipstick is not part of the uniform."

Kissing the troops, Irish or not, has been a St. Patrick's Day pastime in Savannah for at least 40 years.

Brian Counihan, chairman of the Savannah parade's organizing committee, said he recalled seeing it when he marched in the parade in the 1970s as a teenage cadet from Benedictine

Military School.

"It was sporadic. A few of your girlfriends and your moms would run out," Counihan said. "In the last six or eight years, it's come to a point where the military's almost halted. ... It's a fun thing, but it's gotten out of hand."

Counihan, a deputy commander for the local sheriff's department, said having random spectators dash up to the moving parade raises safety and security concerns. Organizers also want to avoid any appearance of sexual misconduct at a time when the #MeToo movement has heightened awareness.

## Trump's parade will feature troops, planes but no tanks

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It looks like President Donald Trump is getting the military parade he wants in Washington — though he may get no tanks for the effort.

A Pentagon planning memo issued Thursday and released Friday says the parade being planned for Nov. 11, Veterans Day, will "include wheeled vehicles only, no tanks — consideration must be given to minimize damage to local infrastructure." Big, heavy tanks could tear up District of Columbia streets.

But the event will "include a heavy air component at the end of the parade," meaning lots of airplane flyovers. Older aircraft will be included as available.

The memo from the office of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis offers initial planning guidance to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose staff will plan the parade along a route from the White House to the Capitol and integrate it with the city's annual veterans' parade.

Northern Command, which oversees U.S. troops in North America, will execute the parade.

Trump decided he wanted a military parade in Washington after he attended France's Bastille Day celebration in the center of Paris last July. As the invited guest of French President Emmanuel Macron, Trump watched enthusiastically from a reviewing stand as the French military showcased its tanks and fighter jets, including many U.S.-made planes, along the famed Champs-Élysées.

Trump praised the French display months later when he and Macron met in New York, saying, "We're going to have to try and top it."

But outdoing the French may be difficult without any tanks.

Trump thinks the parade, which some lawmakers in both political parties have criticized, would boost the spirit of America.

"We have a great country and we should be celebrating our country," he told Fox News Channel in a recent interview.

The Pentagon memo did not include a cost estimate for the parade. The White House budget director recently told Congress the cost to taxpayers could be between \$10 million and \$30 million.

## Veteran of Afghanistan kills 3 at PTSD facility in California

Associated Press

YOUNTVILLE, Calif. — Three women who devoted their lives to helping traumatized veterans were killed by a patient who had been kicked out of their Northern California treatment program, authorities and a relative of a victim said.

A daylong siege at The Pathway Home ended Friday evening with the discovery of four

bodies, including the gunman. He was identified as Albert Wong, 36, a former Army rifleman who served a year in Afghanistan in 2011-2012.

Investigators were still trying to determine when and why Wong killed two executives and a psychologist at The Pathway Home, a nonprofit post-traumatic stress disorder program at the Veterans Home of Cali-

fornia-Yountville in the Napa Valley wine country region.

It was "far too early to say if they were chosen at random" because investigators had not yet determined a motive, California Highway Patrol Assistant Chief Chris Childs said.

Gov. Jerry Brown ordered flags flown at half-staff at the capitol in memory of the victims. They were identified as

The Pathway Home Executive Director Christine Loeber, 48; Clinical Director Jennifer Golick, 42; and Jennifer Gonzales, 29, a clinical psychologist with the San Francisco Department of Veterans Affairs Healthcare System.

Golick's father-in-law, Bob Golick, said in an interview that she had recently expelled Wong from the program.



# US: Summit plan doesn't go easy on North Korea

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House tried to swat away criticism Friday that the U.S. is getting nothing in exchange for agreeing to a historic face-to-face summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said North Korea has made promises to denuclearize, stop its nuclear and missile testing, and allow joint U.S.-South Korean military exercises. But questions remained over exactly what North Korea means by “denuclearize” and what the U.S. might be risking with a highly publicized summit that will build up Kim’s stature among world leaders.

Sanders added: “We are not going to have this meeting take place until we see concrete actions that match the words and the rhetoric of North Korea.”

Still, the White House indicated that planning for the meeting

was fully on track.

“The deal with North Korea is very much in the making and will be, if completed, a very good one for the World. Time and place to be determined,” Trump tweeted late Friday.

The previous night’s announcement of the summit marked a dramatic turnaround after a year of escalating tensions and rude insults between the two leaders. A personal meeting would have been all but unthinkable when Trump was being dismissed as a “senile dotard” and the Korean “rocket man” was snapping off weapons tests in his quest for a nuclear arsenal that could threaten the U.S. mainland.

North Korea’s capabilities are indeed close to posing a direct atomic threat to the U.S. And the wider world has grown fearful of a resumption of the Korean War that ended in 1953 without a peace treaty.

The prospect of the first U.S.-North Korea summit has allayed

fears somewhat. The European Union, Russia and China have all welcomed the move.

North Korea’s government has yet to formally comment on its invitation. South Korea said the president agreed to meet Kim by May, but Sanders said no time and place had been set.

The “promises” on denuclearization and desisting from weapons tests were relayed to Trump by South Korean officials who had met with Kim on Monday and brought his summit invitation to the White House. Trump discussed the offer with top aides on Thursday. Some expressed their reservations but ultimately supported the president’s decision to accept it, according to U.S. officials who were briefed on the talks and requested anonymity to discuss them.

Still, some lawmakers and foreign policy experts voiced skepticism about the wisdom of agreeing to a summit without preparations by lower-level officials.

## Trump cautioned tariffs may backfire

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The Trump administration’s decision to impose tariffs on aluminum and steel imports drew warnings Friday from businesses and U.S. trading partners that the measure could backfire, provoking a trade war without resolving the problems it’s intended to address.

President Donald Trump said the tariffs, due to take effect in 15 days, are needed to protect U.S. workers. Businesses say the 25 percent tariff on imported steel and 10 percent levy on aluminum will jack up costs, raising prices for consumers and potentially putting people out of work.

Trump has singled out China as being unfair in its trade practices and for dumping cheap steel on the global markets, depressing prices. But experts say the new tariffs will, in fact, not affect China much but rather will hurt key allies like the European Union and South Korea.

The move drew consternation outside the U.S.

The Chinese government said it “firmly opposes” the move but gave no indication whether it might make good on threats to retaliate. “These measures could make a significant impact on the economic and cooperative relationship between Japan and the U.S., who are allies,” said Japan’s Foreign Minister Taro Kono.

The EU said it hoped to be exempt from the tariffs, like Canada and Mexico are, or that the issue might be solved in international arbitration at the World Trade Organization.

If not, the EU vowed to retaliate.

“We will have to protect our industry with rebalancing measures,” said Cecilia Malmstrom, the EU trade commissioner who last week confirmed that EU states are finalizing a list of U.S. goods — from peanut butter to bourbon — to hit with retaliatory tariffs.

## Group wants porn actress payment investigated

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A nonprofit watchdog group has asked the Justice Department and the Office of Government Ethics to investigate whether a secret payment to an adult film actress made prior to the 2016 presidential election may have violated federal law because President Donald Trump did not list it on his financial disclosure forms.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington lodged the civil and criminal complaint on Thursday. The group argues Trump attorney Michael Cohen’s \$130,000 payment may have been a loan to Trump and, if so, needed to be disclosed. And CREW noted Special Counsel Robert Mueller may also want to investigate because of “a similar pattern of potential blackmail” in personal matters involving Trump.

Stormy Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, claimed in a lawsuit filed this week that the \$130,000 payment made as part of a nondisclosure agreement was to ensure she didn’t share details of an extramarital affair with Trump.

Clifford sought to invalidate their agreement in order to “set the record straight.” She alleged that

Trump “has been fully aware of the negotiations ... the existence and terms of the Hush Agreement, the payment of \$130,000, (and) the use of (Essential Consultants LLC) as a conduit.”

CREW argues that Trump’s 2016 financial disclosure form did not include any reference to Cohen or Essential Consultants LLC, and that if the allegations are true, it should have.

If “Mr. Trump intentionally omitted this material information from his financial disclosures as part of a larger scheme to hide his relationship with Ms. Daniels, that would be no small thing,” said Norm Eisen, chairman of CREW.

The letter also states that Cohen is required under the New York Rules of Professional Conduct to keep Trump informed about “all material developments,” including settlements, with Clifford.

The White House has said that none of the allegations are true and that the Clifford case has already been won in arbitration. The White House and the Trump Organization did not respond to requests for comment on Friday. The Justice Department declined to comment.

# NRA sues to block Florida's new gun law

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Weeks after their children were gunned down in the worst high school shooting since Columbine, parents of the victims stood in the Florida Capitol and watched Gov. Rick Scott sign a far-reaching bill that places new restrictions on guns.

Hours later, the National Rifle Association filed a federal lawsuit to block it.

The new law capped an extraordinary three weeks of lobbying after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with student survivors and grieving families working to persuade a Repub-

lican-run state government that had shunned gun control measures.

Surrounded by family members of the 17 people killed in the Valentine's Day shooting, the GOP governor said the bill balances "our individual rights with need for public safety."

"It's an example to the entire country that government can and has moved fast," said Scott, whose state has been ruled for 20 years by gun-friendly Republican lawmakers.

Tony Montalto, whose daughter, Gina, was killed in the shooting, read a statement from victims' families: "When it comes to preventing future acts

of horrific school violence, this is the beginning of the journey. We have paid a terrible price for this progress."

The bill fell short of achieving the ban on assault-style weapons sought by survivors. The gunman who opened fire at the school used such a weapon, an AR-15 rifle.

Nevertheless, the bill raises the minimum age to buy rifles from 18 to 21, extends a three-day waiting period for handgun purchases to include long guns and bans bump stocks, which allow guns to mimic fully automatic fire. It also creates a so-called guardian program enabling some teachers and

other school employees to carry guns.

The NRA insisted that the measure "punishes law-abiding gun owners for the criminal acts of a deranged individual."

The Parkland gunman "gave repeated warning signs that were ignored by federal and state officials. If we want to prevent future atrocities, we must look for solutions that keep guns out of the hands of those who are a danger to themselves or others, while protecting the rights of law-abiding Americans," Chris W. Cox, executive director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, said in a statement.

## Critics silenced ahead of vote on China's move to end Xi term limits

Associated Press

BEIJING — The day China's ruling Communist Party unveiled a proposal to allow President Xi Jinping to rule indefinitely as Mao Zedong did a generation ago, Ma Bo was so shaken he couldn't sleep. So Ma, 70, a renowned writer, wrote a social media post urging the party to remember the history of unchecked one-man rule that ended in catastrophe.

"History is regressing badly," Ma thundered in his post. "As a Chinese of conscience, I cannot stay silent!" Censors silenced him anyway, swiftly wiping his post from the internet.

As China's rubber-stamp legislature prepared to approve on Sunday constitutional changes abolishing term limits for the president, signs of dissent and biting satire have been all but snuffed out. The stifling censorship leaves intellectuals, young, white-collar workers and retired veterans of past political campaigns using roundabout ways to voice their concerns. For many, it's a foreshadowing of greater political repression ahead.

The result has been a surreal political atmosphere laced with fear, confusion and even moments of dark comedy that undermines the picture of swelling popular support for the measure being peddled relentlessly by state media.

"There's a lot of fear," said Ma, who writes under the pen name Old Ghost.

"People know that Xi's about to become the emperor, so they don't dare cross his path. Most people are just watching, observing."

Once passed, the constitutional amendment would upend a system enacted by former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping in 1982 to prevent a return to the bloody excesses of a lifelong dictatorship typified by Mao Zedong's chaotic 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution.

Party media say the proposed amendment is aimed only at bringing the office of the president in line with Xi's other positions atop the party and the Central Military Commission, which do not impose term limits.

Its passage by the National People's Congress' nearly 3,000 hand-picked delegates is all but certain. But observers will be looking to see how many delegates abstain from voting as an indication of the reservations the move has encountered even within the political establishment.

After Ma's post on Chinese social media went viral two weeks ago, the writer decided to switch to Twitter, which can be accessed inside China only by using a virtual private network, to continue issuing warnings about China moving dangerously backward.

"The police have not visited me yet," he told The Associated Press on Friday from his Beijing home. "But I'm preparing for it."

## DOJ supports bump stock ban

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration said Saturday it has taken the first step in the regulatory process to ban bump stocks, likely setting the stage for long legal battles with gun manufacturers while the trigger devices remain on the market.

The move was expected after President Donald Trump ordered the Justice Department to work toward a ban following the shooting deaths of 17 people at a Florida high school in February. Bump stocks, which enable guns to fire like automatic weapons, have become a focal point in the gun control debate.

The Justice Department's regulation would classify the hardware as a machine gun banned under federal law. That would reverse a 2010 decision by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives that found bump stocks did not amount to machine guns and could not be regulated unless Congress amended existing firearms law or passed a new one.

A reversal of the department's earlier evaluation could be seen as an admission that it was legally flawed, which manufacturers could seize on in court. Even as the Trump administration moves toward banning the devices, some ATF officials believe it lacks the authority to do so.

A bid to ban the accessory fizzled last year, even as lawmakers expressed openness to the idea after nearly 60 people were gunned down in Las Vegas.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## State considers self-service beer taps

**KS** TOPEKA — Self-service beer taps could soon be coming to Kansas bars to give patrons a new drinking experience that supporters say a bartender just can't match.

Automated beer taps are prohibited in Kansas, but a new piece of legislation under consideration in a Senate committee this week aims to change that.

A trio of Topeka entrepreneurs is behind the bill and hoping to open a self-service bar called the Brew Bank downtown if it passes.

Self-serve establishments exist all over the country, including Missouri. In Springfield, Zach Campbell owns and operates the 417 Taphouse and sees self-service taps as more convenient.

## It's break and beer is flowing — on a highway

**FL** CRESTVIEW — Spring break is underway, and the beer is already flowing — onto a Florida interstate highway.

Okaloosa County Sheriff's officials said on Facebook on Wednesday a tractor-trailer carrying Busch beer spilled its cargo onto Interstate 10 in the Florida Panhandle.

In a news release, the Florida Highway Patrol said Michael Nolan Powell, 44, of Simpsonville, S.C., failed to maintain his lane, resulting in the truck running onto the shoulder of the road before overturning. He was treated for minor injuries at the scene and is charged with careless driving.

Troopers said about 60,000 pounds of Busch beer was tossed from the trailer.

## Underage lottery winner charged with fraud

**IA** COUNCIL BLUFFS — A young woman who tried to claim \$50,000 she won from an Iowa scratch-off lottery ticket has been charged with fraud: She was too young to buy the ticket.

The Daily Nonpareil reported that Katelyn Dolezal, of Macedonia, is charged with lottery fraud. Court records don't list the name of an attorney who could comment for her.

Iowa law requires players to be 21 or older. Authorities said she was 19 when she bought the winning ticket Nov. 18. A relative went to the Iowa Lottery office in Council Bluffs to claim the prize for Dolezal, and a check was issued in the relative's name. They tried to cash the \$35,000 check — \$15,000 in taxes had been withheld — but a bank placed a hold on it.

## Guilty plea in sexting free speech challenge

**MN** HASTINGS — A former middle school cafeteria worker who argued the sexually-explicit photos and texts she sent to a student were constitutionally-protected free speech has now pleaded guilty to felony charges in Dakota County.

Krista Ann Muccio, 44, entered the plea Thursday to one felony count of communication with a minor describing sexual conduct. Muccio was a lunchroom worker at Inver Grove Heights Middle School and was charged in March of 2015. The St. Paul Pioneer Press said Muccio challenged the constitutionality of the state's "sexting" law, arguing the pictures and texts were free speech protected under the First Amendment.

The Minnesota Supreme Court last year reversed a state appeals court decision and ruled the law does not violate the Constitution.

## Students push back on school's do-rag ban

**MA** LYNN — A Massachusetts charter school has banned students from wearing do-rags, headgear students argue is part of their culture.

Gisnael Silva, 17, a junior at KIPP Academy Lynn Collegiate, told the Daily Item he and other students of color have faced suspensions or have been removed from class for refusing to take off their do-rags.

Students were scheduled to meet with faculty Friday to suggest changes to the dress code.

## Cheese championship crowns new cheese king

**WI** MADISON — A new king cheese has been crowned in Wisconsin.

The winner of the 2018 World Championship Cheese Contest is a hard sheep's milk cheese called Esquirrou. The announcement was made Thursday in Madison.

Esquirrou is made in France at Mauleon Fromagerie by Michel Touyarou and imported by Savencia Cheese USA of New Holland, Pa.

Twenty cheeses out of a record 3,402 entries were finalists for the top prize. The Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, which hosts the contest, said five of those cheeses were from Wisconsin.

The contest began Tuesday. Judges had to sniff, taste and inspect 121 classes of dairy products, with entries from 26 nations.

## Bill would ban 'The Bachelor' from state

**MN** SAINT PAUL — Drew Christensen, a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives, is drafting a bill to ban Arie Luyendyk, of "The Bachelor" from the state after Luyendyk broke up with his fiancée, Becca Kufrin, when she thought they were heading into a romantic weekend alone. Kufrin is a Minnesota native.

On Monday night, Christensen tweeted, "If this gets a thousand retweets I'll author a bill banning Arie from Minnesota."

His message got 20,000 retweets, and on Wednesday Christensen shared images of the bill, calling for "a right to live free from the presence of Arie Luyendyk Jr."

Christensen told the Prior Lake American, a newspaper covering the Minneapolis exurbs, that his bill is tongue-in-cheek and likely unconstitutional, but he will keep his word and introduce it anyway.

## Police: Runaway zebra killed by car in suburb

**AZ** CHANDLER — Police said a zebra was killed when a number of the animals broke out of the grounds of an Arizona festival and were wandering on a nearby road.

The accident Wednesday morning occurred near the grounds of the Chandler Ostrich Festival in a suburb of Phoenix.

The Ostrich Festival, which was held over the weekend, usually attracts hundreds of thousands of people. Activities include ostrich races and ostrich-themed activities and a parade.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Browns shake up roster with 3 trades

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Maybe the losing and laughing will finally stop. The Browns aren't fooling around.

With three stunning trades on the eve of free agency, Cleveland landed a proven starting quarterback, a game-breaking, three-time Pro Bowl wide receiver and a shut-down cornerback.

After 16 straight losses on the field, victory.

Two months after a winless season mercifully ended, new general manager John Dorsey addressed major roster needs Friday by acquiring mobile quarterback Tyrod Taylor in a deal with Buffalo, wide receiver Jarvis Landry from Miami and cornerback Damarious Randall from Green Bay, a person with direct knowledge of the overhaul told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Teams are not permitted

to announce any trades until next week.

In exchange, the Browns shipped quarterback DeShone Kizer and swapped late-round picks with the Packers, gave the Dolphins a fourth-round pick this season and a seventh rounder in 2019 and sent the Bills the No. 65 overall pick in this year's draft.

All in a day's work for Dorsey, who brought in major talent without giving up any of the team's five picks in the first two rounds this year.

And the makeover came as the team awaits word from Pro Bowl left tackle Joe Thomas on his future. Thomas, who played more than 10,000 straight snaps before tearing his left triceps last season, is mulling retirement.

The Browns gave him more to think about.

Not long after Dorsey's tri-fecta, Thomas tweeted: "@Browns are en fuego!! Here's to John Dorsey tonight!!

The acquisition of Taylor would seem to change Cleveland's plans to pursue a veteran quarterback in free agency, which begins Monday when teams are permitted to contact agents. It was assumed the Browns would target Cincinnati's AJ McCarron, whom they tried to land in a trade last season before the deal was squelched when the teams failed to properly file paperwork to the league.

McCarron wants to start and it's unlikely he would want to compete with Taylor, who led the Bills to their first postseason appearance since 1999. The dynamic Taylor, who finished with a 23-21 record in three seasons with Buffalo, can affect the game as a passer or runner and he's the type of quarterback Browns coach Hue Jackson has sought since coming to Cleveland.

However, even with Taylor around, the Browns are still expected to select a quarterback with the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft and Dorsey and his staff are in the process

of deciding if that's Southern Cal's Sam Darnold, UCLA's Josh Rosen, Wyoming's Josh Allen or Oklahoma's Baker Mayfield, the Heisman Trophy winner who scares some Cleveland fans because of his Johnny Manziel-like showmanship.

Cleveland's next starting quarterback will be the team's 29th since 1999.

But unlike Kizer, who led the NFL with 22 interceptions, went 0-15 and went through numerous growing pains as a rookie starter, Taylor will have offensive weapons around him.

Landry is as good as they get.

The 25-year-old, who caught a league-best 112 passes last season, immediately upgrades a Cleveland offense that finished last in scoring and didn't have any player who threatened a defense until wide receiver Josh Gordon made his late return from an indefinite NFL suspension. With Gordon on the outside, Landry in the slot and Taylor behind center, the Browns have the makings of a potent attack.

## NFL briefs

# Seahawks cut ties with star cornerback Sherman

Associated Press

The Seattle Seahawks cut ties on Friday with star cornerback Richard Sherman, who became one of the NFL's premier cornerbacks during his seven seasons with the team.

The team informed Sherman early in the day he would be released, and he confirmed the decision in a text message to The Associated Press. The move appeared to be building after he met with the team Wednesday to discuss his future. Sherman declined to comment after the meeting.

Sherman was an overlooked fifth-round draft pick who went on to become a two-time All-Pro who helped anchor a defense that was the league's best

for several years.

He will be 30 years old going into next season and coming off an Achilles tendon injury that cost him half of the 2017 season.

But the biggest reason for his release was financial. Sherman was due \$13 million for the 2018 season and his release gives Seattle a salary cap savings of about \$11 million.

## Bucs extend Evans

TAMPA, Fla. — Tampa Bay's Mike Evans has agreed to a five-year, \$82.5 million contract extension that makes him the second-highest paid receiver in the NFL.

The deal confirmed Friday

includes \$55 million guaranteed and also makes Evans the highest-paid player with the Buccaneers with an average annual salary of \$16.5 million. That's second among NFL receivers behind Antonio Brown's \$17 million.

Evans acknowledged the extension, which runs through 2023, in an Instagram post, noting he will be "spending the next several seasons in Tampa Bay" with a singular focus on helping the Bucs win a Super Bowl.

## Ellis staying put

ALAMEDA, Calif. — The Oakland Raiders have agreed to a 3-year contract worth more

than \$15 million to keep defensive tackle Justin Ellis off the free-agent market.

A person familiar with the deal said Friday that Ellis will be guaranteed at least \$6 million. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the team has not announced the signing.

Ellis was slated to become an unrestricted free agent next week before the Raiders decided to keep the stout run-stopping defensive tackle.

Ellis was originally a fourth-round pick by Oakland in 2014. He has started 41 of the 60 games he has played in four seasons with the Raiders and is strong against the run.



# UConn fires Ollie amid NCAA probe

Associated Press

UConn fired basketball coach Kevin Ollie on Saturday, with the team under NCAA investigation and the Huskies having completed a second straight losing season.

The university said in a statement it has "initiated disciplinary procedures" to dismiss him for "just cause." The school says it would have no further comment until its disciplinary process and the ongoing NCAA inquiry are complete. The scope of the investigation is not clear.

"Our goal, above all, is to ensure we have a program that UConn Nation can be proud of, including our students, alumni, fans and all our committed supporters," said Susan Herbst,

the university president.

The dismissal comes four years after Ollie led the Huskies to the NCAA title. Athletic director David Benedict said it was "unfortunate that this decision became necessary." He added that the team must be held to the "highest standards" and a search for a new coach begins immediately.

Ollie was in the second year of a five-year deal valued at \$17.9 million that was signed amid reports he was a candidate for several NBA jobs. He is not owed the remainder of his contract if fired for just cause, which would include committing serious NCAA violations.

Ollie spent six seasons at UConn and was an assistant under Hall of Fame coach Jim Calhoun on the 2011 NCAA title

team. The team went 14-18 this season, including 7-11 in the American Athletic Conference. Ollie's career record at UConn is 127-79.

He played point guard for Calhoun from 1991-95 and played 13 seasons in the NBA before joining the UConn staff in 2010. He was his former coach's hand-picked successor.

Ollie guided the team to a 20-win season in his first year as coach, even though the program had been declared academically ineligible for postseason play.

UConn was a seventh seed in the 2014 NCAA Tournament. It made an improbable six-game run, culminating with a 60-54 win over Kentucky in the national championship game.

The Huskies went 20-15 the

following season, losing in the NIT, and bounced back with a 25-11 season in 2015-16, losing in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

But UConn went 16-17 a year ago and followed that with another losing one. The Huskies have been plagued by injuries and other issues. Touted point guard Alterique Gilbert has played just nine games over two seasons because of shoulder problems. VCU transfer Terry Larrier missed most of last season with a knee injury and has been hampered this year with a fractured sinus wall.

The NCAA also ruled that recruit Sidney Wilson had to sit out the season as a transfer after taking summer courses at St. John's.

## College tournament roundup

### No. 1 Virginia tops Clemson, advances to ACC title game

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Kyle Guy scored 15 points and No. 1 Virginia advanced to the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game with a 64-58 victory over No. 19 Clemson on Friday night.

The top-seeded Cavaliers (30-2) got several crucial plays from role player Jack Salt down the stretch and will face 12th-ranked and sixth-seeded North Carolina for the tournament title Saturday night in Brooklyn.

**No. 2 Villanova 87, Butler 68:** At New York, Mikal Bridges had 18 points and the Wildcats scored the first 19 points and cruised toward their fourth straight trip in the Big East Tournament championship game in a win over the Bulldogs.

**Providence 75, No. 3 Xavier 72 (OT):** At New York, Alpha Diallo hit a go-ahead jumper with 2:22 left in overtime and the fifth-seeded Friars rallied from a 17-point second-half def-

icit and stunned the top-seeded Musketeers in the semifinals of the Big East Tournament.

**No. 12 North Carolina 74, No. 5 Duke 69:** At New York, Luke Maye scored 17 points, including his team's last field goal with 5:33 remaining, and the Tar Heels held off a late rally by the Blue Devils in the the Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament semifinals.

**No. 8 Cincinnati 61, SMU 51:** Kyle Washington scored 15 points and Gary Clark added 12 points and 11 rebounds in Orlando, Fla., to help the Bearcats beat the Mustangs in the quarterfinals of the American Athletic Conference Tournament.

**No. 9 Kansas 83, Kansas State 67:** At Kansas City, Mo., Malik Newman poured in 22 points as the Jayhawks beat the short-handed Wildcats to reach the Big 12 Tournament title game.

**No. 11 Wichita State 89, Temple 81:** Landry Shamet scored 24 points, Rashard Kelly had 16 and the Shockers beat the Owls in the quarterfi-

nals of the American Athletic Conference tournament in Orlando, Fla.

**No. 13 Tennessee 62, Mississippi State 59:** At St. Louis, Lamonte Turner scored 15 points and the Volunteers locked down on defense to beat the Bulldogs in the quarterfinals of the Southeastern Conference tournament.

**No. 18 West Virginia 66, No. 14 Texas Tech 63:** At Kansas City, Mo., Daxter Miles Jr. had 22 points to help give the Mountaineers a win over the Red Raiders in the Big 12 Tournament semifinals.

**No. 15 Arizona 78, UCLA 67 (OT):** Deandre Ayton scored seven of his 32 points in overtime and grabbed 14 rebounds, lifting the Wildcats to a victory over the Bruins in the Pac-12 tournament semifinals.

**Alabama 81, No. 16 Auburn 63:** Collin Sexton scored 31 points and the Crimson Tide used a strong second half to defeat the Tigers in the quarterfinals of the Southeastern Conference Tournament.

**No. 21 Houston 84, UCF 56:** At Orlando, Fla., Galen Robinson scored 18 points, Rob Gray had 17 points, six assists and five rebounds, and the Cougars beat the Knights in the quarterfinals of the American Athletic Conference Tournament.

**San Diego State 90, No. 22 Nevada 73:** At Las Vegas, Devin Watson scored 20 points to lead the Aztecs to a blowout victory over the Wolf Pack in the Mountain West Conference semifinals.

**Arkansas 80, No. 23 Florida 72:** At St. Louis, Jaylen Barford scored 27 points and matched his career high with 10 rebounds to help send the Razorbacks to the semifinals of the SEC Tournament with a win over the Gators.

**No. 25 Rhode Island 76, VCU 67:** At Washington, Jeff Downtin scored 18 points, Jared Terrell added 16 points and Rhode Island survived a challenge from VCU in the Atlantic 10 Conference Tournament quarterfinals.

## NBA roundup

## Raptors halt Rockets' winning streak

Associated Press

TORONTO — Kyle Lowry scored 30 points, DeMar DeRozan had 23 and the Toronto Raptors beat Houston 108-105 on Friday night, snapping the Rockets' 17-game winning streak.

James Harden scored 40 points but the Rockets lost for the first time since Jan. 27 at New Orleans.

Jonas Valanciunas had 14 points and 10 rebounds as the Raptors won their seventh straight in a matchup between the respective conference leaders.

The Rockets shot 9-for-27 from three-point range, matching their fewest made three-pointers of the season.

**Trail Blazers 125, Warriors**

**108:** CJ McCollum scored 30 points, Damian Lillard added 28 and host Portland won its ninth straight game with a victory over short-handed Golden State.

The Warriors had won seven in a row but didn't have Stephen Curry, Jordan Bell and Andre Iguodala, who were all out with injuries. Kevin Durant led Golden State with 40 points.

Portland has its longest winning streak since also winning nine straight in 2014. The Blazers' streak started when they beat Golden State 123-117 at the Moda Center on Feb. 14, the last game before the All-Star break.

**Clippers 116, Cavaliers 102:** DeAndre Jordan had 20 points and 23 rebounds, Tobias Harris scored 23 points

and Los Angeles beat visiting Cleveland.

**Wizards 116, Pelicans 97:** Otto Porter Jr. scored 19 points and Washington cruised past host New Orleans, which couldn't overcome the absence of All-Star Anthony Davis and had its 10-game winning streak snapped.

**Bucks 120, Knicks 112:** Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 13 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter, outmuscling visiting New York to help Milwaukee hold on.

**Nuggets 125, Lakers 116:** Paul Millsap scored 21 points and hit a key three-pointer in the final minutes, and host Denver beat Los Angeles.

**Pistons 99, Bulls 83:** Blake Griffin had 25 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and

host Detroit ended a four-game losing streak.

**Pacers 112, Hawks 87:** Bojan Bogdanovic scored 21 points, Cory Joseph scored 10 of his 18 points in the opening quarter, and Indiana was never seriously threatened in a rout of visiting Atlanta.

**Jazz 95, Grizzlies 78:** Jae Crowder scored a season-high 22 points and Utah won its fifth straight with a win over host Memphis, which has lost 16 in a row.

**Kings 94, Magic 88:** Kosta Koufos had a season-high 18 points and 13 rebounds, Garrett Temple scored 23 points and Sacramento beat visiting Orlando to give coach Dave Joergers his 200th career win.

## NHL roundup

## Jones scores two goals, lifts Jackets over Red Wings

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Columbus Blue Jackets are starting to look in front of them to see who they can catch.

Only a week ago, Columbus was simply aiming at hanging onto the final Eastern Conference wild-card playoff spot and hoping some teams behind in the standings would help out.

A 3-2 win over Detroit on Friday night, their fourth straight, put the Blue Jackets in the first wild-card spot with a one-point lead over New Jersey and just two points behind Philadelphia for third place in the Metropolitan Division.

Seth Jones scored twice in the second period and Sergei Bobrovsky returned from an illness to make 22 saves as the Blue Jackets beat the Red Wings to sweep a back-to-back. They have won six of their last eight.

"We always talked about

how we just want to make sure we're hitting our stride at the right time," Columbus captain Nick Foligno said. "We've got a little ways to go, but we feel more and more confident about our game as we get closer to the stuff that really matters. That's kind of always been our focus."

Jones got his tallies after winning Thursday night's game against Colorado with a goal 59 seconds into overtime.

"The puck's just going in," shrugged the 23-year-old defenseman, who has 13 goals and 33 assists. "You get stretches like that. Sometimes it goes in and sometimes you go 15 to 20 games without a point. That's just the way hockey is. It's a good time for me to be producing right now in the situation we're in."

**Stars 2, Ducks 1:** Devin Shore and Jamie Benn scored power-play goals in the third period and host Dallas beat Anaheim.

With the game tied at 1, Benn tipped John Klingberg's shot from the top of the slot past Anaheim's Ryan Miller for the go-ahead goal with 5:37 remaining.

Ryan Getzlaf scored Anaheim's goal in the first period.

Both teams entered with 80 points, but Dallas increased its lead for the first wild card from the Western Conference to three points over Los Angeles. Anaheim remained one point ahead of the Kings for third place in the Pacific Division.

**Flames 2, Senators 1:** Sam Bennett and Matt Stajan scored and David Rittich made 29 saves to lead visiting Calgary past Ottawa.

The win was the second straight for the Flames, who ended a four-game losing streak with a victory in Buffalo on Wednesday night.

Jean-Gabriel Pageau spoiled Rittich's bid for his first career shutout by scoring on a penalty

shot with 7:05 left in the game.

Mike Condon made 35 saves for the Senators, including a breakaway stop on Johnny Gaudreau with the score still 1-0 in Calgary's favor early in the third period.

**Wild 5, Canucks 2:** Eric Staal scored the go-ahead goal in the second period and visiting Minnesota surged past Vancouver.

Staal has 11 goals in his last nine games, giving him 37 for the season — just three behind Washington's Alex Ovechkin for the league lead.

Zach Parise, Matt Cullen, Marcus Foligno and Charlie Coyle, with an empty-netter, also scored for the Wild, who have won three straight and eight of their past 10. Minnesota leads Dallas by three points for third in the Central Division and trails Winnipeg by six points for second. Devan Dubnyk made 30 saves.