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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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At border, Trump declares US 'is full'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Tensions are rising, fingers are pointing and the search for solutions is becoming increasingly fraught.

With the country overwhelmed by an influx of migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border, President Donald Trump is grasping for something — anything — to stem the tide.

Trump, who campaigned on a promise to secure the border, has thrown virtually every option his aides have been able to think of at the problem, to little avail. He has sent out the military, signed an emergency declaration to fund a border wall and threatened to completely seal the southern border.

On Thursday, he added a new threat, warning of hefty tariffs on cars made in Mexico if the country doesn't abide by his demands.

Now, with the encouragement of an influential aide and with his re-election campaign on the horizon, Trump is looking at personnel changes as he tries to shift blame elsewhere.

The first move was made

Thursday, when the White House unexpectedly pulled back the nomination of Ron Vitiello to permanently lead U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, where he had been acting director. The abrupt reversal was encouraged by top Trump policy adviser Stephen Miller and was seen by some as part of a larger effort to bring on aides who share Miller's hard-line immigration views.

"We may go a different way. We may have to go a very tough way," Trump said in an interview with "Fox & Friends Weekend" that aired Saturday.

An empowered Miller is also eyeing the removal of Lee Francis Cissna, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which runs the legal immigration system, according to two people who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump has become increasingly exasperated at his inability to do more to halt the swelling numbers of migrants entering the country. Aides, too, have complained they are stymied by regulatory guardrails, legal limitations and a Congress that has scoffed at the

president's requests.

"There is indeed an emergency on our southern border," Trump said Friday during a visit to the southern border in Calexico, Calif., where his frustration was evident. "It's a colossal surge and it's overwhelming our immigration system, and we can't let that happen. So, as I say, and this is our new statement: The system is full. Can't take you anymore."

He went on to flatly declare: "Our country is full."

Immigration experts say Trump's own immigration policies have caused so much chaos along the border that they may be encouraging illegal crossings. The furor over family separations last summer helped to highlight the fact that families won't be detained for long in the U.S. if they're detained at all. And metering, in which people are asked to return to a busy port of entry on another day to seek asylum, may have encouraged asylum-seekers to cross illegally, said Andrew Selee, president of the Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank.

"This policy chaos, coupled

with a sense that the U.S. government may at some point really shut down the border, has generated an urgency to migrate now while it is still possible," he said.

Whatever the reasons for the migrant surge, there is a growing consensus that federal border resources are overwhelmed. While illegal border crossings are still down sharply from their peak in 2000, they have nonetheless reached a 12-year high. While most illegal border-crossers used to be single Mexican nationals coming to the U.S. in search of work, more than half are now parents and children who have traveled from Central America to seek refuge in the U.S.

Those families, along with unaccompanied children, are subject to specific laws and court settlements that prevent them from being immediately sent back to their home countries. Immigrant processing and holding centers have been overwhelmed, forcing officials to dramatically expand a practice Trump has long mocked as "catch and release."

6 finalists in running to house US Space Command

Alabama Media Group,
Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — A U.S. Air Force memorandum obtained by CNN Friday revealed the six military sites on the short list to house the new U.S. Space Command.

According to the memo, four Colorado sites, one Alabama site and one California base are on the list.

The Colorado finalists are

Buckley Air Force Base, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station, Peterson Air Force Base, and Schriever Air Force Base. Alabama's Redstone Arsenal also made the cut, while California's Vandenberg Air Force Base rounds out the list.

The final six locations were selected based on cost, co-location with an existing military organization that would become a component of the future Space Command, access to a

C-18 aircraft-capable airfield, communications connectivity, administration buildings and available base support, CNN reported.

The command could bring as many as 1,450 personnel, including 390 military officers, 183 enlisted personnel, 827 civilians and 50 contractors to the selected location.

Absent from the list of finalists were military installations in Florida. The state, which is

home to a number of space-related facilities including NASA's Kennedy Space Center, had actively lobbied the Air Force to be considered as the home for the new command.

The memo also identified Redstone's Space and Missile Defense Command as one of the existing military components that will be assigned to the Space Command.

The Space Force itself will fall under the Air Force.

Congress to OK \$400M for storm recovery

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Congress will approve a Pentagon request to move hundreds of millions of dollars to pay for recovery operations at major military bases that suffered catastrophic damage from two hurricanes last year, the top Marine said Friday.

“We have received word that Congress has agreed with the administration’s request to reprogram \$400M to help Marines and their families recover from damage inflicted by Hurricanes Florence and Michael,” Gen. Robert Neller, the commandant of the Marine Corps, tweeted.

That funding would be used primarily at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, said Ma-

rine Maj. Brian Block, a service spokesman. Hundreds of buildings were damaged or destroyed at Camp Lejeune in September as Hurricane Florence hovered over the installation for nearly three days, dumping more than 25 inches of rain on the base.

Last month, the Pentagon asked Congress for approval to move \$600 million within its fiscal year 2019 budget for hurricane recovery. The request sought the \$400 million for the Marine Corps and \$200 million for the Air Force. The Air Force needs funding for recovery at Tyndall Air Force Base on the Florida Panhandle, which was ravaged by Hurricane Michael in October.

The Marine Corps said Friday that it would use about two-thirds of the reprogrammed

funds to repair damaged roofs and building interiors at Camp Lejeune. The rest of the funds would be used for other needed infrastructure repairs including fixing damage to railroad lines, the flight line, fencing, training roads, and utility systems to mitigate disruptions to operational readiness, said Capt. Joe Butterfield, another Marine spokesman.

Once approved, the \$600 million represents a small fraction of the funding that the Marine Corps and Air Force have said they need to fix damages at Camp Lejeune, Tyndall Air Force Base and several other installations damaged by natural disasters since last summer. The Pentagon has estimated it needs some \$9 billion to recover from those storms and the recent flooding that caused sig-

nificant damage at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. That assessment includes an estimated \$3.6 billion of damage at Camp Lejeune and almost \$5 billion of destruction at Tyndall and Offutt.

In addition to reprogramming the money in the fiscal year 2019 budget, the Air Force and Marine Corps have asked Congress to provide them emergency money in the next two years for recovery at those bases.

The Air Force cautioned last week that without \$1.9 billion of supplemental funding in the coming weeks for Tyndall and Offutt other important infrastructure programs at 18 other bases would have to be delayed and warned they could negatively impact combat readiness of the force.

Trump attorney claims IRS can't legally release returns

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An attorney representing President Donald Trump says a congressional request for Trump’s tax returns “would set a dangerous precedent” if granted and that the IRS cannot legally divulge the information.

Democratic Rep. Richard Neal of Massachusetts, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, has asked the IRS to provide six years of Trump’s personal tax returns and the returns for some of his businesses. Democrats are seeking information about Trump’s financial dealings and potential conflicts of interest.

But William Consovoy, whose firm was retained by Trump to represent him on the matter, said in a letter Friday to the Department of Treasury’s general counsel that the tax code zealously guards taxpayer privacy. He said requests for tax returns “must have a legitimate legisla-

tive purpose.”

Consovoy said that Neal’s request for Trump’s tax information is to damage him politically.

“His request is a transparent effort by one political party to harass an official from the other party because they dislike his politics and speech,” Consovoy said.

Neal requested Trump’s personal and business returns in a letter to IRS Commissioner Charles Rettig. He asked for returns covering 2013 through 2018. He also asked for the documents in seven days, setting an April 10 deadline.

Trump declined to provide his tax information as a candidate and as president, something party nominees have traditionally done in the name of the transparency. But Trump has said he won’t release the information because he is under audit, something he reiterated again Friday while visiting the U.S.-Mexico border.

Foundation rescinds award to Secretary of State Pompeo

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A foundation that advocates for the safety of journalists and the release of Americans held hostage abroad has rescinded an award it planned to present to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, prompting him to accuse the organization Friday of bowing to media bias against him.

The James W. Foley Legacy Foundation said it canceled plans to present Pompeo with its “hostage freedom award” at its annual dinner last week because of what it felt was an inadequate response by the administration to the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi.

The foundation, named for an American journalist who was killed in Syria in 2014, issued a statement saying it changed its plans because the “administration did not press for genuine accountability from the Saudi

government” for the slaying of Khashoggi in October.

Instead of Pompeo, the Foley foundation gave the award to Brett McGurk, a former senior diplomat who was the special envoy for the U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition until he resigned in protest over the administration’s plans to withdraw American troops from Syria.

Pompeo called the cancellation “unfortunate,” and did not accept the explanation.

“I regret that there was pressure applied by the media for that award to be withdrawn,” the secretary said in an interview with “Fox & Friends.”

In a second statement later Friday, the foundation said the award would have conflicted with a core mission of the organization: promoting the safety of journalists. “Our decision had nothing to do with whether we received media pressure,” it said.

Cops: ND suspect tried to avoid detection

Associated Press

MANDAN, N.D. — A North Dakota man charged Friday with killing four people at a business that manages the mobile home park where he lives tried to avoid detection by picking up shell casings, changing his clothing and cleaning a knife and gun with bleach, according to court documents.

The documents allege that after shooting and stabbing the victims, Chad Isaak, 44, took one of the company's vehicles to drive about one block, then walked to his own truck parked less than a mile away at a McDonald's.

Authorities traced his steps with help from surveillance video at businesses along the route, the documents say.

The affidavit and complaint filed Friday offer the most details yet on a mystery that has gripped the area since authorities found the bodies of four people last Monday morning at RJR Maintenance and Management in Mandan, a town of 22,000

near the state capital, Bismarck.

A judge set bond for Isaak at \$1 million after a hearing where Morton County Assistant State's Attorney Gabrielle Goter argued that the killings "show a level of preplanning and a level of intent to disguise his actions" that suggested that witnesses and others could be at risk if he is freed.

"It appears that RJR was targeted," said Goter, although court documents do not reveal a motive.

Isaak's attorney, Robert Quick, had requested \$100,000 cash bond, citing "zero criminal history" and family in the community. Isaak, a chiropractor and Navy veteran, faces four counts of murder and other charges. The victims were RJR co-owner Robert Fakler, 52; employee Adam Fuehrer, 42; and married co-workers Lois Cobb, 45, and William Cobb, 50.

The police affidavit portrays a grisly crime scene in which the Cobbs and Fuehrer were shot and stabbed several times.

Fakler had multiple lacerations and stab wounds, and first responders tried in vain to resuscitate him. Fuehrer and the Cobbs were all dead when officers arrived. Lois Cobb's death was attributed to a cut to her neck, though she also had been shot, according to the affidavit.

Surveillance video shows the assailant entering RJR wearing brightly colored clothing, then leaving in dark clothing about 15 minutes later, the documents say. An employee at the McDonald's told police that she saw a man wearing a camouflage ski mask, dark pants and dark shoes get into a white Ford F-150 that morning.

Police later linked the vehicle to Isaak, who lives in the small town of Washburn, about 35 miles north of Mandan.

Navy records show Isaak enlisted in the service in 1992 and left in 1997 as a hospital corpsman 3rd class, with a Good Conduct Medal and National Defense Service Medal.

Ex-convict charged in case of long-missing boy

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — An ex-convict accused of pulling a cruel hoax by pretending to be a long-missing Illinois boy was charged Friday with making false statements to federal authorities.

The FBI said Brian Rini, 23, had made false claims twice before, portraying himself as a juvenile sex-trafficking victim.

The Medina, Ohio, man was jailed in Cincinnati on Thursday, a day after telling authorities he was Timmothy Pitzen, 14,

who disappeared in 2011 at age 6. The FBI declared Rini's story a hoax after performing a DNA test.

The charge should send a message about the damage such false claims can do, said U.S. Attorney Benjamin Glassman. "It's not OK to do it because of the harm that it causes, the pain for the family of that missing child," Glassman said.

Rini's story had briefly raised hope among Timmothy's relatives that the youngster's disappearance had finally been solved after eight long years. But those hopes were

dashed when the test results came back.

"It's devastating. It's like reliving that day all over again," said Timmothy's aunt, Kara Jacobs.

Rini was jailed for a bail hearing. His public defender did not immediately return a message. Rini could get up to eight years in prison.

Rini was found wandering the streets on Wednesday and told authorities he had just escaped his captors after years of abuse, officials said. He claimed he had been forced to have sex with men, according to the FBI.

Local governments sue over Calif. pot delivery law

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — California has entered a potentially landmark legal fight against some of its own cities over one of the most basic questions in the nation's largest legal marijuana market: Where can you buy it?

Beverly Hills and 24 other local governments sued California regulators Friday to overturn a rule allowing home deliveries statewide, even into communities that banned commercial pot sales.

Ultimately at issue is who is in charge: the state bureaucracy that oversees the market or local governments where pot is grown and sold.

When California adopted the delivery rule in January, the League of California Cities and police chiefs complained that unrestricted home deliveries would create an unchecked market of largely hidden pot transactions, while undercutting the local control guaranteed in a 2016 law broadly legalizing marijuana sales.

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Chairman Ryan Coonerty said in a statement that the state rule damages local marijuana businesses and "betrays the promise made to the voters" in 2016.

The significance of the lawsuit goes beyond home deliveries. It represents an important early court test of Proposition 64,

the law that legalized pot sales for adults in California.

The state Bureau of Cannabis Control, which wrote the rule, had no immediate comment on the lawsuit, which was filed late Thursday in Fresno County Superior Court.

The lawsuit asks the court to invalidate the rule and prohibit state regulators from enforcing it.

The rule "permits commercial cannabis deliveries to any physical address in the state" — which conflicts with the authority of local governments to prohibit marijuana deliveries within their boundaries, the lawsuit says.

Saudis arrest 12 more rights activists

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Saudi Arabia detained 12 people, including two dual U.S.-Saudi citizens, in a new round of arrests in the kingdom targeting individuals supportive of women's rights and those with ties to jailed activists, people with knowledge of the apprehensions said Friday.

It marks the first sweep of arrests to target individuals perceived as critics of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman since the killing of writer Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in October. The arrests come despite a global outcry over Khashoggi's grisly

killing by Saudi agents in an operation directed by former top aides to the crown prince.

The arrested individuals, nearly all of whom were detained on Thursday, are not seen as front-line activists. They are writers and advocates who quietly supported greater social reforms and most had ties to the group of women's rights activists currently on trial.

The Associated Press spoke with five people with knowledge of the arrests, who all spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

Those detained include a pregnant woman and 11 men, among them two U.S.-Saudi

nationals: Badr al-Ibrahim, a writer and physician, and Salah al-Haidar, whose mother is prominent women's rights activist Aziza al-Yousef who was recently temporarily released from prison.

Al-Haidar has a family home in Vienna, Va., and lives with his wife and child in Saudi Arabia.

A third U.S.-Saudi national, Walid al-Fitaihi, remains imprisoned in Saudi Arabia since late 2017, when the crown prince detained more than 100 businessmen, princes and officials in a purported anti-corruption sweep. Al-Fitaihi, whose family alleges that he's been tortured in prison, worked as a physi-

cian in the Boston area before he returned in 2006 to his native Saudi Arabia, where he helped found a hospital built by his family.

Nearly all of those detained Thursday were taken from their homes in the capital, Riyadh. One individual was arrested in the eastern city of Dammam.

The individuals were not active politically on Twitter and were not widely quoted in foreign media. The group loosely had ties to one another, some as friends and others through intellectual circles, including with Saudi activists living abroad.

Officials: Taliban killed at least 7 police, 3 civilians

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Insurgents killed seven policemen and three civilians in attacks across Afghanistan on Saturday, provincial officials said.

Such attacks, blamed on the Taliban, have continued in recent months, even as the militants hold talks with U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad to negotiate an American troop withdrawal.

In a visit to Kabul last week, Khalilzad lobbied for "intra-Afghan dialogue" — talks that would encompass prominent Afghan figures, government representatives and the opposition, as well as the Taliban. The U.S. envoy has held several rounds of talks with the Taliban, most recently last month in Qatar, where both sides said progress was made.

But despite such talks, the Taliban continue to attack Af-

ghan forces. The insurgents, who control half the country, refuse to talk directly with the government in Kabul, considering it a U.S. puppet.

In eastern Ghazni province on Saturday, Taliban forces killed three policemen and wounded seven others in attacks on security checkpoints, said a spokesman for the provincial police chief, Ahmad Khan Serat. The group claimed responsibility.

In the northern Sari Pul prov-

ince, at least four policemen were killed when the Taliban stormed a security checkpoint, a provincial official said.

Mohammad Noor Rahmani, head of the provincial council, said five others were wounded in the attack on the outskirts of the province's capital city.

In eastern Nangarhar province, twin bomb blasts killed at least three civilians, said Attahullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor.

Militias say 100 rival forces marching on Tripoli captured

Associated Press

BENGHAZI, Libya — Militias in western Libya fought forces under rival army commander Khalifa Hifter on Friday, capturing 100 of his soldiers and waging an airstrike on one of his positions a day after he declared an offensive to seize Tripoli, the capital of the oil-rich nation.

The violence came as U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres wrapped up his visit Friday aimed at avoiding an expanded conflict.

He said he left with a "heavy

heart and deep concern."

The escalation comes after forces commanded by Hifter, who runs the self-styled Libya National Army based in the country's east, pushed westward. He brought his troops closer to Tripoli, which is controlled by the U.N.-backed Presidential Council and Government of National Accord and supporting militias.

A well-informed U.N. diplomat said late Friday that Hifter's forces were reported to be on the outskirts of Tripoli. So were militias from the western

city of Misrata who now control everything from the eastern edges of the capital to Libya's western border, the diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

A showdown between Hifter's army and the militias could plunge Libya into another spasm of violence, possibly the worst since the 2011 civil war that toppled and later killed longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

It would also put at risk upcoming peace talks between

rivals brokered by the U.N. and aimed at drawing a road map for new elections. Those talks are scheduled for April 14-16.

The U.N. Security Council held an emergency closed-door meeting Friday at Britain's request and called on Hifter's forces to halt all military movements. It also urged all Libya forces "to de-escalate and halt military activity."

Meanwhile, Hifter's forces say they have seized control of Tripoli's main airport, which has not been functional since fighting in 2014 destroyed it.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Driver in car dangling on 2nd floor rescued

FL MIAMI SPRINGS — Firefighters rescued a woman from a sport utility vehicle that was dangling from the second floor of a parking garage near Miami.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue said in an email that 11 units responded to the garage on Thursday afternoon. The tactical rescue team used a specialized heavy rescue vehicle to stabilize the car so they could get the woman out.

Officials said the woman wasn't injured.

Man pretending to be cop charged in pursuit

MO ST. LOUIS — Authorities said a man pretending to be a police officer chased another driver through St. Louis until the fleeing motorist crashed into several other cars.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Anthony Townsend, 27, of St. Louis, was charged Wednesday with a misdemeanor count of false impersonation of a law enforcement officer.

Charging documents said the pursuit started on Feb. 27 when Townsend flipped on emergency lights in his personal car and began chasing another car. It's unclear why. Drivers were forced to pull over to get out of the way, and multiple vehicles were hit.

Doctor convicted in 'ski rage' attack

NJ VERNON — A doctor accused of attacking a boy, 12, in a "ski rage" incident at a northern New Jersey resort has been convicted of child endangerment and other counts.

But a Sussex County jury also acquitted Samuel Caruthers of aggravated assault and a weapons charge. Caruthers, 47, could face up to seven years in prison when he's sentenced next month.

Authorities have said Caruthers punched the boy and stabbed him with a ski pole in February 2016. That came after the youth fell into Caruthers and his then-10-year-old son while snowboarding on the bunny slope at the Mountain Creek resort in Vernon.

Woman buys, donates all of store's shoes

KS HAYS — A Kansas woman donated 204 pairs of shoes to Nebraska flood victims after buying everything that was left at a closing Payless store.

The Hays Post reported the shoes were part of a flood relief shipment taken to farmers in Nebraska by Fort Hays State University's agriculture sorority, Sigma Alpha, last weekend.

A graduate of Fort Hays State, Addy Tritt, said she wanted to help others because so many people have helped her in the past.

When the price at a Hays store dropped to \$1 per pair, Tritt negotiated with the business to buy the remaining shoes for \$100.

They included 162 pairs of baby shoes and two pairs of men's shoes. The rest were women's shoes. The retail price of the shoes would have been more than \$6,000.

Police pull over driver with baby goat in lap

NH MARLBOROUGH. — Police in New Hampshire said they cited a driver who had a kid in her lap — the baby goat kind.

Marlborough police said they pulled the woman over on April Fool's Day when they saw her using her cellphone. Then they realized she was driving without a valid license and with the goat.

Police said the driver, 60, was released on a citation for operating without a valid license.

Police posted the encounter on Facebook, with the comment, "I wish this was another April Fool's joke baaaht it's not."

Elephant that couldn't get up hoisted to feet

CO COLORADO SPRINGS — An aging elephant is recovering after being hoisted back to her feet with the help of firefighters at a Colorado zoo.

The Cheyenne Mountain Zoo said a 33-year-old African elephant named Malaika was found lying on her side early Monday and unable to get back up on her own, putting her in danger because of stress to her organs.

It said a team of about 20 workers and firefighters used an existing crane-and-hoist system to lift her up. A rope was also tied around her leg to try to prevent her from falling on rescuers after she stood up.

A video posted on Facebook shows rescuers cheering and applauding as she stood up.

Woman convicted on false kidnap report

WV CHARLESTON — A woman was criminally charged for falsely reporting that an Egyptian man tried to kidnap her daughter from a West Virginia shopping mall, a police detective told The Associated Press on Friday.

Barboursville police Detective Greg Lucas said they are

going to charge Santana Renee Adams with falsely reporting an emergency incident.

Adams initially told police Zayan grabbed her 5-year-old daughter by the hair inside a clothing store and tried to pull her away but stopped when she produced a gun, authorities said. But the story started falling apart when no witnesses could be found and mall surveillance video showed inconsistencies in the woman's original statement.

Restaurant dispute ends with 2 shot

PA PHILADELPHIA — Authorities said a dispute at a Philadelphia chicken restaurant ended with two men being shot, including a bystander who wasn't involved in the argument.

The shooting occurred at about 12:30 a.m. on Tuesday. The gunman fled the scene but was caught a short time later following a traffic stop.

Authorities said a man involved in the argument pulled out a gun and fired 11 shots. The man he was arguing with was hit by two shots, while another wounded the bystander.

Both victims were taken to a hospital and were listed in stable condition.

3 burned when hot air balloon hits power line

CA YOUNTVILLE — Authorities said three people were hospitalized with burns after a hot air balloon struck a power line in California's wine country.

The balloon, carrying 19 passengers and a pilot, hit the line Monday morning while descending at a vineyard near Yountville, in Napa County.

From wire reports

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MLB roundup

Dodgers hit 3 homers, defeat Rockies

Associated Press

DENVER — Cody Bellinger couldn't offer up a deep explanation on why the Los Angeles Dodgers are going deep so often.

"Everyone's feeling good," he said.

That's deep enough.

Bellinger, Max Muncy and Russell Martin homered as the Dodgers kept up their longball barrage, beating Colorado 10-6 on Friday in the Rockies' home opener.

After hitting a franchise-record 235 home runs last year, the NL champion Dodgers have connected a whopping 21 times in only eight games this season. They've homered in every game so far.

What's more, the 21 homers through their opening eight games are the second-most in major league history behind the St. Louis Cardinals, who had 23 in 2000.

"We have a talented lineup," Muncy said. "We're very deep.

On top of that, we're all up there and having fun."

Bellinger hit his sixth of the year, breaking the game open with a three-run drive in the fifth. To think, he didn't hit his sixth homer last season until game No. 41.

"I'm just feeling good and trying to keep it going," Bellinger said.

Muncy finished a double shy of a cycle, walking in the ninth. He can't remember the last time he ever accomplished the feat.

"That would've been pretty cool," Muncy said.

Trevor Story homered twice for the Rockies.

Diamondbacks 15, Red Sox 8: Ketel Marte homered from both sides of the plate, including a grand slam, and Arizona won its home opener by keeping Boston in a funk.

Angels 3, Rangers 1: Mike Trout hit two home runs to lead Los Angeles over Texas and snap a five-game losing streak.

Brewers 13, Cubs 10: Ryan Braun and Eric Thames hit three-run homers and host Milwaukee connected five times in all, sending Chicago to its sixth straight loss.

Phillies 10, Twins 4: Rhys Hoskins had three hits and drove in four runs, including Bryce Harper from first base on a single, and host Philadelphia beat Minnesota despite Jorge Polanco hitting for the cycle.

Astros 3, Athletics 2: Carlos Correa homered and Jose Altuve and Alex Bregman added two hits each to help host Houston top Oakland.

Pirates 2, Reds 0: Joe Muro allowed three hits in seven efficient innings to out-duel Sonny Gray as host Pittsburgh handed Cincinnati its third straight shutout.

Indians 3, Blue Jays 2: Carlos Santana homered with one out in the ninth inning and made a familiar trot around the bases, leading host Cleveland

over Toronto in a game that featured little hitting and 24 combined strikeouts.

Braves 4, Marlins 0: Kevin Gausman (1-0) allowed only two hits in seven innings, Ronald Acuna Jr. and Tyler Flowers homered and host Atlanta beat Miami.

White Sox 10, Mariners 8: Yoan Moncada hit a go-ahead, two-run single in the seventh inning and Chicago won a wild home opener.

Padres 5, Cardinals 3: Rookie Fernando Tatis Jr. and pinch-hitter Hunter Renfroe homered as San Diego overcame another home run by Paul Goldschmidt and beat St. Louis in its home opener.

Rays 5, Giants 2: Yandy Diaz and Kevin Kiermaier hit back-to-back home runs in the first inning and Tampa Bay spoiled San Francisco's home opener for the best start in its franchise history.

Women's Final Four roundup

Defending champ Notre Dame, Baylor win semifinals

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — This time, Notre Dame needed Arike Ogunbowale a lot earlier.

A year after Ogunbowale hit an amazing pair of buzzer beaters in the Final Four, the Irish star rushed to the rescue early in the fourth quarter.

Ogunbowale scored 14 of her 23 points in the final period, leading a rally from a nine-point deficit with eight minutes left to help the defending champion Irish beat UConn 81-76 Friday night for a return trip to the title game.

"I don't think it was any mystery you know who was going to be taking the majority of their shots in the fourth quarter," UConn coach Geno Auriemma

said. "It's the way they've always played since Arike's been there. She still has to make those shots and she did. She's an almost impossible matchup 1-on-1."

The Irish will face Baylor for the crown Sunday night, trying to become the fourth different school to win consecutive championships — UConn, Tennessee and Southern California have done it.

Baylor beat Oregon 72-67 in the first semifinal, setting up a rematch of the 2012 national championship game the Lady Bears won 80-61.

This game between the Huskies and the Irish was a rematch of last season's Final Four classic that Notre Dame won on a last-second shot by

Ogunbowale. This one — the latest chapter in the greatest rivalry in women's basketball over the past decade — provided a fitting encore.

Baylor 72, Oregon 67: At Tampa, Fla., Kalani Brown scored 22 points and Lauren Cox added 21 as the Lady Bears held off the Ducks — Final Four newcomers — to reach the women's championship game for the first time since 2012.

Baylor (36-1) won its 28th straight game, exerting itself defensively down the stretch. Chloe Jackson delivered a tie-breaking layup with 39 seconds left and Brown and Cox finished out the victory with free throws for the overall top-seeded team.

All-American Sabrina Io-

nescu led Oregon (33-5) with 18 points, but didn't score in the fourth quarter. She missed a layup that would have given her team the lead in the final minute and the Ducks misfired on 11 of their last 12 shots.

Baylor coach Kim Mulkey gave Ionescu a hug and talked to her for a few moments in the postgame handshake line. Ionescu shot 6-for-24.

After Jackson's layup, Cox made two free throws and Brown finished with a foul shot in the closing seconds.

Ionescu shrugged off a scoreless first quarter in which she attempted just two shots. She gave Oregon a 34-33 halftime lead after making a long three-pointer while being bumped to the ground.

Bolts' Kucherov prefers passes to goals

Associated Press

The lesson Nikita Kucherov learned from childhood coach Gennady Kurdin is on display every time he laces up his skates and steps on the ice.

Kurdin taught Kucherov the very common Russian hockey philosophy that the sport is about sacrificing for your partner. Each day at practice, Kucherov studies how his Tampa Bay Lightning teammates like to shoot, stores that knowledge and spits it out in games in the form of tape-to-tape passes.

"I like to find the open guys and give him a pass that he would be comfortable with, shoot it and score it," Kucherov said. "It just gives me more joy to just give the great pass and land it perfectly on his stick or in his wheelhouse so he can just score a goal."

This should be a joyful season for Kucherov, who leads the NHL with 86 assists and 126 points and is the best player on by far the best team. But the intensely self-critical winger who should coast to a Hart Trophy as league MVP won't be satisfied until he wins the Stanley

Cup, and it's that motivation that keeps him looking to create as many goals for his teammates as he can.

"Season's been, it's OK," Kucherov said. "My job is just go out there and play. It's not my job to just talk about it. I don't look back how many games we won. The more important games is ahead of us."

The Lightning are Cup favorites, and there's no player more important to his team this season than Kucherov. According to Hockey Reference analytics on goals created and shares of standings points, Kucherov leads the league in both categories — just ahead of Edmonton's Connor McDavid, who's widely considered the best player in the world.

And this isn't out of the blue after Kucherov put up 85 points in 2016-17 and 100 points last season. Agent Dan Milstein chalks up this growth to experience and Kucherov's willingness to look around the NHL for ways to improve.

"He's a student of the game, so he's constantly watching others, learning from others," Milstein said. "He's very much in

the know of what's happening around the league and what's happening around the hockey world. He works. Every free moment he has he spends improving his own skills."

Current and former teammates respect Kucherov even more because they see that work up close before and after practice.

"Sometimes if a guy puts up 100 points the year before, maybe he might sit back on it," said Chicago Blackhawks defenseman Slater Koekkoek, who played parts of five seasons with Kucherov. "But Kuch is always like the first on the ice, last one off. He's always working on it."

The work that went into making Kucherov the NHL's leading scorer also made him attractive to Adidas, which signed him last month to a multiyear marketing contract. After Kucherov signed a \$76 million, eight-year extension last summer, it's impossible to say he's underappreciated for his contributions, but the Adidas deal pushes him into another level of stardom — even if reluctantly.

"He's a creator in all sense of the word," Adidas senior director Dan Near said. "He's somebody that does the unexpected, that has his own personality, albeit humble. That's not a problem, right? Being modest and humble are an amazing character trait of hockey players. But his game on ice is filled with this confidence and swagger that I think is remarkable, actually, when you look at it for a guy his age who has had to adapt to American culture."

Kucherov is only 25, but he left his home country to adapt to North American hockey at the junior level in 2012 and chooses to spend most of the offseason in Florida. He has come back each season with a new tool in his toolbox of skills, from a better one-timer to even more precise passing.

Growing up, Kucherov wasn't a prodigy and has spent much of his time proving doubters wrong. A second-round pick of the Lightning in 2011, Kucherov is conscious of the fact he has had to earn everything and build his game block by block.

His mentality remains the same.

Sports briefs

Duke's Williamson selected AP player of the year

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Just about everything Zion Williamson did at Duke created a highlight or headline in a spectacle of a season.

The soaring dunks.

The open-court moves more nimble than his 6-foot-7, 285-pound frame should allow.

Even the freak occurrence of one of his feet tearing through its shoe in a fall to the court.

Handling all that attention became maybe the biggest lesson for the freshman, who quickly became the face of college basketball and the game's biggest star in years — then fittingly finished as The Associ-

ated Press men's player of the year.

Williamson claimed 59 of 64 votes from AP Top 25 voters before the NCAA Tournament in results released Friday. Freshman teammate RJ Barrett earned two votes as a fellow AP first-team All-American, while Virginia's De'Andre Hunter, Michigan State's Cassius Winston and Murray State's Ja Morant each earned one vote.

Williamson had hoped to be in Minneapolis preparing for Saturday's national semifinals like Hunter and Winston. But the Blue Devils fell to Winston's Spartans in the Elite Eight.

In a likely one-year college stop for a possible top overall

NBA draft pick, the 18-year-old Williamson averaged 22.6 points and 8.9 rebounds while ranking second nationally by shooting 68%

Elliott wins pole

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Chase Elliott earned his first pole on a short track with a fast lap around Bristol Motor Speedway in Friday qualifying.

Elliott turned a lap at 131.7132 mph Friday around the bullring to earn the fifth pole of his career. His previous four were at either Daytona or Talladega, the biggest and fastest tracks on the NASCAR circuit.

Elliott edged teammate Wil-

liam Byron for the top starting spot and an all-Hendrick Motorsports front row on Sunday.

Ryan Blaney qualified third in a Ford for Team Penske, followed by Joe Gibbs Racing teammates Erik Jones and Denny Hamlin.

Leader Kim aces 16th

SAN ANTONIO — First-round leader Si Woo Kim used a late-round hole-in-one Friday to build a four-shot lead at the halfway point of the Valero Texas Open.

Kim, the 2017 Players Championship winner, led by one heading into the second round before shooting a 6-under 66.

NBA roundup

Celtics win key showdown with Pacers

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Gordon Hayward executed the game plan perfectly for Boston on Friday night.

He made all nine of his shots. He made all three of his free throws. And, he gave the Celtics the clear edge for home-court advantage in the first round of the playoffs, too.

While Jason Tatum scored 22 points, Hayward became the first Celtics player since Kevin McHale in 1986 to make every shot and score at least 20 points as Boston pulled away from the Indiana Pacers 117-97 to break a tie for the No. 4 spot in the Eastern Conference standings.

The victory also gave Boston a 3-1 series edge to claim the first tiebreaker, essentially giving the Celtics a two-game lead with two remaining.

“I don’t know how you guys find all these stats. More important, we got the win,” said Hayward, who scored 21 points. “It was a great job by us, a big win.”

Admittedly, Hayward has done some of his best work in his hometown.

He won the 2008 high school state championship on the Pacers’ home court. Two years later, and just a few blocks away, he came within inches of making a half-court heave for Butler to beat Duke for a national title.

Nuggets 119, Trail Blazers 110: Nikola Jokic scored 10 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter, Paul Millsap finished with 25 points, and host Denver clinched the Northwest Division title.

Lakers 122, Clippers 117: Alex Caruso scored a career-

high 32 points, Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 25 points, and the Lakers rallied to beat the playoff-bound Clippers.

Spurs 129, Wizards 112: LaMarcus Aldridge scored 24 points, and Rudy Gay added 18 in visiting San Antonio’s win over Washington.

Magic 149, Hawks 113: Host Orlando used a franchise-record 81 points in the first half to cruise past Atlanta in its regular-season home finale and take another step toward a playoff berth.

Hornets 113, Raptors 111: Kemba Walker scored 29 points, and Jeremy Lamb made another clutch three-pointer as host Charlotte beat Toronto.

Grizzlies 122, Mavericks: Delon Wright set career highs with 26 points and 14 assists in his first triple-double, and visiting Memphis topped Dallas.

Thunder 123, Pistons 110: Paul George scored 30 points to help host Oklahoma City beat Detroit.

Timberwolves 111, Heat 109: Karl-Anthony Towns had 13 points and 12 rebounds and host Minnesota slowed Miami’s push for a postseason berth.

Rockets 120, Knicks 96: James Harden had 26 points, eight assists and eight rebounds in just 29 minutes to lead host Houston past New York.

Jazz 119, Kings 98: Donovan Mitchell and Grayson Allen each scored 23 points to lead host Utah to its seventh straight victory.

Suns 133, Pelicans 126 (OT): Josh Jackson scored eight of his season-high 35 points in overtime, and host Phoenix rallied from 15 points down to beat New Orleans in a matchup of short-handed teams.

NHL roundup

Blue Jackets outlast Rangers, clinch last playoff berth

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Artemi Panarin scored in the shootout and the Columbus Blue Jackets clinched the last playoff spot in the Eastern Conference with a 3-2 victory over the New York Rangers on Friday night.

Ryan Dzingel and Panarin scored in the third period for Columbus and Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 25 shots through overtime and all three Rangers attempts in the tiebreaker.

The Blue Jackets, 8-2-2 in their past 12 games, secured their third straight playoff berth and hold the second wild card in the Eastern Conference.

Columbus pulled within one point of Carolina for the first wild card heading into the final day of the regular season on Saturday. The Blue Jackets close the season at Ottawa, while the Hurricanes play at

Philadelphia.

Chris Kreider scored early in the second period and Pavel Buchnevich tied it in the closing seconds of regulation for the Rangers. Alexandar Georgiev finished with 39 saves in New York’s third straight loss and 16th in the past 20 (4-10-6) heading into the finale at Pittsburgh on Saturday night.

Blackhawks 6, Stars 1: Patrick Kane scored twice and Cam Ward made 25 saves in his 700th NHL game, helping host Chicago pound short-handed Dallas in its home finale.

Dylan Strome, Chris Kunitz and Dominik Kahun also scored for Chicago, which earned its second straight win and improved to 3-0-2 in its past five. Slater Koekoek added his second of the season, and Brent Seabrook had two assists.

Dallas (42-32-7) clinched a playoff spot with Tuesday

night’s 6-2 victory over Philadelphia, but it needs at least one more point to secure the Western Conference’s top wild card.

The Stars host Minnesota in their season finale, and Colorado is just one point back heading into its final game at San Jose later Saturday night.

Captain Jamie Benn, goaltender Ben Bishop, forward Mats Zuccarello and defenseman Roman Polak skipped the trip to Chicago. Bishop remained sidelined by a lower-body injury, and Benn, Zuccarello and Polak got a chance to rest.

Joel L’Esperance scored for Dallas in the third period, and Anton Khudobin made 26 stops.

Ducks 5, Kings 2: Korbinian Holzer scored his first NHL goal in just over two years, Sam Steel added a short-handed goal and host Anaheim punctuated a miserable hockey season

in Southern California with a victory over Los Angeles.

Daniel Sprong, Carter Rowney and Jakob Silfverberg also scored, and John Gibson made 44 saves as the Ducks earned their first victory in four games in this season’s Freeway Faceoff rivalry.

Both teams are missing the Stanley Cup playoffs in the same season for the first time since 2004, and the Ducks missed the postseason for the first time in seven years despite 11 wins in their final 17 games.

Michael Amadio and Carl Grundstrom scored and Jack Campbell stopped 28 shots for the Kings, who have the NHL’s second-worst record with one game to play — one point fewer than New Jersey.

Rookie Max Jones had two assists in his first career multi-point game for the Ducks (35-37-10).