

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

## S. Korean virus cases drop, caution remains

BY KIM GAMEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea's daily coronavirus count dropped to double digits for the first time since the outbreak began nearly a month ago, officials said Sunday.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention logged 76 new cases Saturday, raising the total of positives to 8,162. The number of COVID-19 deaths rose to 75, while 834 patients have been discharged.

It was the first time the number fell below 100 since Feb. 21, when a woman in the southeastern city of Daegu tested positive and the virus spread rapidly through a religious sect after she attended services.

Most of the infections have

been in Daegu and surrounding areas, with over 60% linked to the Shincheonji Church of Christ, which has apologized for its role in the crisis.

Authorities have expressed concern over new infections elsewhere, however, including a call center in Seoul and the government complex in Sejong.

"We want to ask you to continue to maintain social distancing and refrain from visiting any crowded places and any social gatherings," Kwon Jun-wook, the vice head of the central disease control headquarters, said during a briefing.

The top U.S. commander in South Korea, meanwhile, said the number of military-affiliated infections remained steady at nine, and fewer people are being quarantined due to fears

of the rapidly spreading virus.

"Currently, South Korean trends are trending downward and looking good," Gen. Robert Abrams said Friday during a video-teleconference with reporters at the Pentagon.

"We are not out of the woods yet here in Korea," he added. "We must all remain vigilant, and everyone must do their part in our efforts to control the virus."

Abrams, the commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said Friday that 392 service members, family members and civilians were in self-quarantine at the peak of the crisis in late February.

"Today we sit at 55," he added. "That number fluctuates daily, but we've seen a downward trend for the last two weeks."

Only one soldier has tested positive along with his wife; the others included three dependents and four South Korean employees.

USFK, which commands about 28,500 service members, has sharply restricted access to bases and banned troops from nonessential travel or outside social activities to prevent the spread of the virus.

That has led to a 60% reduction in the number of people entering installations, Abrams said, stressing that the number of confirmed infections comprises a fraction of the 58,000-strong military community.

The South Korean military has said that 38 service members have been infected and nearly 3,000 have been quarantined as a protective measure.

## Navy Exchange says lodges can be used for quarantine

BY SETH ROBSON  
AND CHRISTIAN LOPEZ  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The Navy Exchange has declared war on the coronavirus, procuring tens of thousands of masks and containers of hand sanitizer and preparing on-base hotels to host those who may be infected, according to a Friday statement by Navy Exchange Service Command.

"The Navy Lodge Program is prepared for any of its 39 facilities worldwide to be used as an official isolation or quarantine site," Naval Exchange Service Command CEO Robert Bianchi said in the statement.

The exchange set up a crisis team March 2 to deal with issues caused by the virus.

"Navy Lodge Regional Directors developed a list of precautions and reminders displayed

at all locations," he said. "All Navy Lodges are fully stocked with the necessary cleaning supplies, and staff have received additional training on the sanitization of common surfaces and types of chemicals to us."

Last week, the exchange acquired 24,000 masks and more than 70,000 units of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes for its stores, Bianchi added.

If there are impacts on shipping, the exchange will work with ocean carriers and Military Surface Development and Distribution Command to try to keep products flowing to stores, he said.

Bianchi said that the exchange employs procurement teams in Europe and Japan to hunt for additional supplies in those areas.

"We are diligently pursuing

all available avenues for the products you are in need of at this time," he said.

When suppliers have products available, the exchange is one of the first to get them, he added.

Petty Officer 1st Class Chateece Chappelle, a gas turbine systems technician at Yokosuka, said that items such as hand sanitizer are available at base stores, although there are purchase limits.

"There was one point initially where they had a couple items sell out since everyone was purchasing [certain items] so rapidly," she said.

Some exchanges impose purchase limits on certain products to meet increased demand, Bianchi said.

A number of stores have also instituted "social distancing" for customers in line.

At locations like Bahrain and at Naples and Sigonella in Italy, where base schools have closed, the Navy Exchange school lunch program can still provide food to commands and military families at a moment's notice, Bianchi said.

The exchange is trying to find alternatives to base barber shops and beauty salons that host nations ordered closed, which happened in Italy, he said.

The exchange is also working with installations to keep overseas food courts open and ensure that enough bandwidth is available to meet increased demand for Wi-Fi on bases, Bianchi said.

"We understand the use of Wi-Fi is very important to our patrons overseas who may be confined to their homes," he said.

## Doctor says Trump has a negative virus test

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has tested negative for the new coronavirus, according to the president's personal physician.

The White House released the test results Saturday night after Trump told reporters hours earlier that he had taken the coronavirus test, following days of resisting being screened despite the fact that he had been in recent contact with three people who tested positive for the virus.

Trump told reporters at a White House briefing Saturday that he had his temperature taken and it was "totally normal," shortly before stepping into the room to discuss the government's efforts to halt the spread of the virus. The pandemic has now infected more than 2,200 people in the U.S. and caused at least 50 deaths.

The president had multiple direct and indirect contacts with people who have since tested positive for the virus, including three people he spent time with a week ago at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

The Brazilian Embassy in Washington said late Friday that the country's charge d'affaires, Nestor Forster, tested positive after sitting at Trump's dinner table. So, too, have a top aide to Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who took a photo with Trump and attended a party with him, and another person who attended a campaign fundraiser with the president that Sunday, according to two Republican officials who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss private health matters.

Trump, after days of insisting that he was not exhibiting symptoms, relented after being pressed by reporters about his resistance to testing.

# US military in Europe steps up virus response, locks down

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military in Europe stepped up its response to the deadly coronavirus last week as six new cases were diagnosed in defense communities in Germany and Italy, and the World Health Organization declared Europe the epicenter of the global pandemic.

Service members were banned from traveling to or from most European countries from the U.S. after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that transmission of the virus was widespread on the Continent and raised Europe to Level 3 on its Travel Health Notices.

American bases in Italy locked down, along with the rest of the country, after Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte extended restrictions on movement and public gatherings from the north of the country, where Aviano Air Base and

U.S. Army Garrison Italy are situated, across the entire nation of 60 million.

Department of Defense Education Activity schools in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain will close for students starting Monday, DODEA spokesman Stephen Smith said. DODEA schools in Italy and Bahrain had already closed because of the virus.

Service members around Europe — and the globe — were placed on a 60-day stop movement order that applied to "permanent changes of station, temporary duty assignments, government-funded travel, personal leave and non-official travel, temporary duty, government funded travel, personal leave, and other non-official travel," a message posted on Naval Air Station Sigonella's Facebook page said.

At Air Force bases in the U.K., which, with Ireland, was added Sunday to a list of coun-

tries whose citizens are barred from traveling to the U.S. because of the coronavirus, officials said "zero" airmen have shown signs of coronavirus infection.

In Norway, where the 501st Combat Support Wing has a base in Stavanger, 1,056 people had been diagnosed with COVID-19 as of Saturday, a steep rise from 227 positive cases at the start of last week, and two people have died. Prime Minister Erna Solberg has ordered schools and universities to close, and bars and restaurants that can't keep customers at least 1 meter apart to shut down.

Sailors at Naval Station Rota were urged to "remain calm" as Spain imposed restrictions around the country, where more than 100 people died of the virus between Friday and Saturday, and around 2,000 more people were diagnosed with COVID-19.

## Sasebo 1st to ban guests amid concerns

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE

Stars and Stripes

The base that is home to warships of the Navy's amphibious force in the Pacific has banned escorted guests — effective immediately — due to the coronavirus.

Sasebo Naval Base on the Japanese island of Kyushu made the announcement Friday afternoon, according to the installation's Facebook page. The order applies to all base facilities, including Naval Beach Unit 7's Yokose Landing Craft Air Cushion facility, fuel and ordnance facilities and off-base housing areas.

Government-issued ID cardholders, contractors and vendors will still be allowed ac-

cess, the post said. The restrictions will remain until further notice.

"In order to minimize the presence of non-mission related personnel on base and to ensure the welfare and safety of everyone in the base community, escorted guests will be prohibited on all [Sasebo Naval Base] facilities until further notice," the post said.

A spokesman for U.S. Forces Japan, Air Force Lt. Col. Robert Firman, said this is the first such restriction he is aware of in Japan. USFJ provides baseline policy and direction but local commanders are given the discretion to implement additional measures, he said in an emailed statement Friday.

Similar restrictions have

been implemented in South Korea, which has been designated a Travel Health Notice Level 3 country by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A CDC level 3 advisory means a widespread community transmission of the disease is occurring.

Japan is part of a level 2 CDC travel advisory, which means a sustained community spread of the disease is underway.

"Every installation's process and protective measures will vary depending on available resources and capability," Firman wrote. "As long as all standing policies are adhered to, commanders retain the authority and flexibility to address issues at their installations."

# Virus screenings jam US airports

Associated Press

Weary travelers returning to the U.S. amid coronavirus-related travel restrictions are being greeted by long lines and hourslong waits for required medical screenings at airports.

The dense crowds at 13 airports where travelers from Europe are being funneled — among the busiest across the country — formed even as public health officials called for “social distancing” to stem the spread of the pandemic.

Austin Boschen was returning from a spring break trip to Jalisco, Mexico, with his girlfriend and described the situation at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport as “atrocious, no semblance of a line beyond the barriers and no officials or staff around to direct.”

He and his girlfriend managed to get near the front of the crowd and learned people there had already been waiting for two hours, he wrote in an email; he reached the head of the line 2½ hours later, and then waited another hour and a half to see an agent.

“The entire time people in the crowd would yell out in anger, and Customs officers would yell at people to not take pictures,” he wrote. “Short

chants among the room would start and stop periodically. It was very tense at times, the crowd was very agitated.”

In the end, he and his girlfriend missed their original flight, and then missed a re-booked flight, finally managing to catch a third after racing across the airport.

Posts on social media over the weekend indicated that passengers at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport waited upward of four hours in winding lines, eliciting criticism from elected Illinois officials.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker tweeted at President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, noting that the customs process is under federal jurisdiction and demanding that they take action to address the crowds. His concerns were echoed on Twitter by his fellow Democrats, Illinois Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth.

The Trump administration should have bolstered staffing at the receiving airports in anticipation of long lines, Pritzker said Sunday on ABC’s “This Week,” but instead, passengers “were flooding into O’Hare Airport, they were stuck in a small area, hundreds and hundreds of people, and that’s exactly what you don’t want in

this pandemic.”

Sunday, he said, “it’s going to be even worse.”

While U.S. citizens, green card holders and some others are allowed to return home, travelers from Europe are being funneled to the 13 airports where they are subject to health screenings and quarantine orders.

Acknowledging the long lines at those airports in tweets posted just after midnight, the Department of Homeland Security’s acting secretary said that the screenings take about a minute per passenger.

“Right now we are working to add additional screening capacity and working with the airlines to expedite the process,” Chad Wolf tweeted. “I understand this is very stressful. In these unprecedented times, we ask for your patience.”

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government’s top infectious disease expert, said on “Fox News Sunday” that the airport crowds could spread the disease, but that they are likely to continue. American citizens, he said, need to understand that there is no need to rush back from Europe, but “when people see a travel ban, they immediately want to hunker and get home.”

# Virus fears close brothels in Stuttgart

BY JOHN VANDIVER

Stars and Stripes

STUTT GART, Germany — Brothels in U.S. European Command’s hometown of Stuttgart were among a slew of sites that city officials have ordered to close their doors to help in the fight against the coronavirus.

In fact, any form of prostitution was banned, and clubs, bars, movie theaters, museums and public baths were also ordered to temporarily shut down to help in the city’s effort to contain the fast-spreading virus.

Prostitution is legal in Germany, and big cities like Stuttgart often have red light districts where brothels line the street.

More than 20,000 Americans with ties to the military live in the Stuttgart region.

For U.S. troops, the closure of the brothels — and ban on all other prostitution as well — shouldn’t have a large impact on weekend plans, at least in principle.

Troops can face criminal charges for the solicitation of prostitution, even in countries where it is legal.

# Tests available in Japan for those showing symptoms

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — With the coronavirus on the minds of U.S. service members and their families in Japan, a sniffle or a cough may raise sudden concern.

Tests for the disease are available at military hospitals, but patients must show symptoms — fever, cough, shortness of breath — before they are given one, according to military doctors who posted informational videos online or spoke at base public meetings recently.

“We don’t test everybody —

we don’t test you if you have no symptoms,” preventive medicine physician Maj. Andrew Fisher said during a U.S. Forces Japan virtual town hall on COVID-19 concerns March 2.

“This is a limited resource, so we test the people who it makes sense to test, and there’s specific criteria that governs who qualifies to get tested based on who’s most at risk,” said Fisher, who serves as the public health emergency officer at Yokota Air Base.

Military hospitals in Japan may administer the tests, but must send the samples for analysis to local Japanese health agencies, to Tripler Army Med-

ical Center in Hawaii, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta or Naval Medical Center San Diego, Fisher said.

Results may be returned in three to seven days, said Capt. Drew Bigby, commander of Naval Hospital Yokosuka, in a video posted Thursday to U.S. Naval Forces Japan’s Facebook page.

As of March 9, Defense Department laboratories had conducted 143 tests for the coronavirus, Joint Staff Surgeon and Air Force Brig. Gen. Paul Friedrichs told reporters in Washington on Tuesday. The tests are processed at 13 DOD

clinical labs across the nation, according to a Tuesday Defense Department statement.

In his video, Bigby described the testing process. First, those who have flu-like symptoms should contact their hospital before arriving there, he said.

At the doctor’s office, patients will report their medical history and undergo a physical exam before possibly undergoing testing for a streptococcus infection, the flu or the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, Bigby said.

As of Thursday, 620 people in Japan had tested positive for the coronavirus, according to the WHO.

# Biden wins NEA endorsement

Associated Press

The nation's largest labor union has lined up behind Joe Biden's presidential campaign, with the National Education Association on Saturday endorsing the former vice president for the Democratic nomination over his last remaining primary rival, Bernie Sanders.

The NEA's board of directors chose Biden following a recommendation from the organization's political action committee board, following months of surveying the organization's 3 million members and multiple presidential candidate forums held around the country.

NEA President Lily Eskelsen Garcia, whose union tops 3 million members, called Biden a "tireless advocate for public education" and "the partner that students and educators need now in the White House."

The union's decision came with Biden on the cusp of stretching out an insurmountable delegate lead over Sanders. The two candidates meet Sunday for their first one-on-one debate, two days before four populous states — Arizona, Florida, Illinois and Ohio — hold primaries with a combined 577 delegates up for grabs.

In the four states that vote Tuesday, almost 760,000 voters live in households with at least one NEA member, according to the union. NEA officials said the union's PAC would immediately push digital advertising into the four states on Biden's behalf while also communicating with NEA households.

Democratic presidential candidates in 2020 were mostly in-step with education unions, with Biden and the rest vowing to replace President Donald

Trump's education secretary, Betsy DeVos, with someone who's had classroom experience, while vastly increasing federal spending on early childhood, primary and secondary education.

Biden's proposals come with an estimated \$850 billion price tag over 10 years. Among other ideas, he calls for universal access to pre-kindergarten programs for 3- and 4-year olds, tripling Title I spending for schools with a higher concentration of students from low-income households, federal infrastructure spending for public school buildings and covering the cost of schools' compliance with federal requirements for teaching students with disabilities. Biden also opposes taxpayer money being routed to for-profit charter school enterprises.

# Turkey and Russia start patrols on Syrian road

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish and Russian troops began joint patrols Sunday on a key highway in northwest Syria, Turkey's Defense Ministry said, while both the Russian government and Syrian opposition activists said the patrols were shortened because of protests.

Patrols on the highway known as the M4, which runs east-west through the Idlib province, are part of a cease-fire agreement between Turkey and Russia signed earlier this month. The cease-fire ended an escalation in fighting that saw the Turkish military in rare direct conflict with Syrian government troops.

The vital highway, which runs through northern Syria from the Mediterranean to the Iraqi border, has been partially closed since 2012.

For the past three days, residents of rebel-held parts of the highway have protested in rejection of Russian troops patrolling the road.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that Turkey and Russia carried out their first joint patrol mission along the M4 highway Sunday adding that "the patrols' route was shortened" after militants used women and children to block the way. The Defense Ministry's statement was carried by state-run news agency Tass.

Syrian opposition activists said that residents blocked the highway with burning tires near the village of Nairab on the southern edge of Idlib in rejection to patrols by "Russian occupation forces."

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor with activists on the ground in Syria, said that the joint patrols were not successful, as they moved a short distance west of the government-held town of Saraqeb before being stopped by the protests.

# Holy Week services to go on without public

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican's Holy Week ceremonies will go ahead, but without public attendance as Italy tries to contain the coronavirus outbreak, the Holy See said Sunday.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement that "as far as Holy Week liturgical celebrations are concerned, I can specify that all are confirmed."

But Bruni added, "As things stand, under study are the ways they would be carried out and who would participate while respecting the security measures put in place to avoid spread of the coronavirus."

He added that in any case, faithful will be able to follow the ceremonies on TV, radio and through online media.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on April 5, culminating on Easter Sunday a week later, with tradition calling for an outdoor Mass in St. Peter's Square on both Sundays. Tens of thousands of faithful usually turn out for the celebration.

Italy is under severe lockdown, with the public restricted from leaving their homes except to buy food, go to work or a few other urgent reasons, and when outside must stay at least about three feet away from each other. For most people, the disease causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, it can cause more severe illness.

It is not clear if the Italian decree's restrictions will be extended well into April. But fear of spreading the virus could also jeopardize the

traditional Way of the Cross procession on Good Friday on April 10 at the Colosseum, even without the public.

In any case, virus fears and travel restrictions by many countries toward Italy have made tourism virtually vanish.

With St. Peter's Square closed to the public, and one case of infection reported by the Vatican recently, Pope Francis on Sunday delivered his traditional weekly commentary and blessing from the Apostolic Library instead of from a window overlooking the vast square.

Francis praised priests for "creativity" in tending to their flocks, especially in the region of Lombardy, northern Italy, where thousands are hospitalized or in quarantine. He said that their efforts demonstrated there are "a thousand ways to be near" to the faithful, if not physically.

Some churches in Italy are being allowed to stay open for individual prayer, but all public Masses are forbidden during lockdown to discourage crowding.

Francis didn't cite the Rev. Giuseppe Corbari, pastor of San Robbiano church in the town of Gussano, six miles from Milan, but he well could have.

Corbari printed all the selfies he received from faithful and attached them to the church pews, offering a vivid reminder of the powerful sense of community among Catholics.

Francis did single out for praise the Milan archbishop, who last week went atop the roof of the city's iconic Duomo, or cathedral, to pray alone before a statue of the Madonna.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Doctors to train at new medical building

**NV** LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas-area officials said a new medical building at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, will help train more doctors but more steps need to be taken to address a physician shortage.

Nevada has about 200 doctors for every 100,000 residents, which puts the state at 47th in the country.

At a joint meeting between the Las Vegas City Council and Clark County Commission, Las Vegas Director of Economic Development Bill Arent told officials that Nevada can't rely on just trying to recruit more doctors from other states.

UNLV's medical school, which opened in 2017, is helping to address that, and the creation of a new medical education building for the school is expected to expand the effort.

The medical education building for UNLV's three-year-old medical school is still being designed, and four years of construction is expected start in February 2021, according to interim UNLV medical school dean John Fildes

Once the building opens, the school will be able to train more students, raising class sizes from 60 students to 90 or 120, said Maureen Schafer, who leads the Nevada Health and Vital Science Asset Corp.

## 200 first responders fight mill building fires

**RI** PAWTUCKET — Mill buildings in Rhode Island went up in flames in spectacular fashion.

Video posted by a bystander showed huge, pulsing balls of flame consuming the vacant buildings.

Pawtucket Mayor Don Grebien said that four buildings caught fire, but that no injuries were reported, WJAR-TV reported.

Nearby streets were blocked off as firefighters from nearby departments joined in on the response. The cause of the fire will be investigated by the state fire marshal.

The Salvation Army says members of its emergency disaster team supplied breakfast and hydration to approximately 200 first responders who worked to combat the blaze.

## Inmates transfer after concerns of poor care

**VA** CHESTERFIELD — Concerns about inadequate medical care at a regional jail in Virginia have prompted officials in one county to begin removing nearly 200 inmates.

Chesterfield County Sheriff Karl Leonard said he has received nearly daily phone calls, emails and text messages from family members of inmates who say their loved ones are receiving poor or negligent medical care at the Riverside Regional Jail.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported that Leonard recently told the Chesterfield Board of Supervisors that the next 96 inmates who are booked in the Chesterfield Jail will remain at the county facility instead of being transferred to Riverside, as they typically would be. He said another 100 Chesterfield inmates will be transferred to another regional jail in the state.

Riverside has been dogged by allegations of mismanagement. It is currently under state probation for three years following two inmate suicides in 2017 that state officials said were directly or indirectly caused by

staff shortcomings and policy violations.

Riverside spokeswoman Lt. Charlene Jones declined to comment on Chesterfield's plans to remove inmates or on the allegations of inadequate medical care. Judy Lilley, a spokeswoman for Wellpath, Riverside's medical provider, said in a statement the company could not comment on any specific patients due to state and federal privacy laws.

## State hopes to raise minimum smoking age

**FL** TALLAHASSEE — Florida is poised to raise the minimum age for smoking and vaping to 21.

The state Senate joined the House in approving a measure that would also ban the sale of vaped nicotine products used in so-called electronic cigarettes. The legislation now heads to Gov. Ron DeSantis for consideration.

Health advocates said the measure is necessary to protect public health, particularly among young tobacco users.

While smoking among youth has been on the decline in recent years, vaping has surged. The rise has alarmed health advocates who worry about nicotine addiction and the stunting of brain development.

## Man pleads guilty to stealing student loans

**IL** WHEATON — A man who pleaded guilty to stealing more than \$225,000 in student loans from the College of DuPage was sentenced to six years in prison.

Judge Alex McGimpsey handed down the sentence to Cedric Ramsey, 43, of Roselle, the DuPage County state's attorney said.

Ramsey pleaded guilty in

December to one count of theft over \$100,000. His co-defendant, Mary Allen, 40, pleaded guilty to one count of forgery and was sentenced to serve 30 days in county jail and pay \$9,000 in restitution.

An investigation found that Ramsey recruited friends who gave him information to apply for admission to the College of DuPage and get federal loans and grants. The recruits then withdrew from classes, received tuition refunds, and split the cash with Ramsey.

State's Attorney Robert Berlin said the scheme began to unravel when a woman said she had received a tuition bill but had never attended. Ramsey will be required to pay restitution of nearly \$217,000.

## Diver hired to help farms with flooding

**MI** BAY CITY— A Michigan county hired a diver to keep farm fields from flooding amid rising water levels in Lake Huron and other Great Lakes.

Joseph Rivet, the Bay County drain commissioner, said this is the first time the county has hired someone to maintain their flap gates. Flap gates are check valves that prevent water in the Saginaw River from overflowing into ditches, WNEM-TV reported.

Rivet said high water makes it harder to remove blockage in the flap gates, resulting in flooded farmland.

"The bay water is going to be higher than the ground we're standing on. So being familiar and aware of that and trying to protect your property as best you can and your valuables is important," Rivet said.

Diver Don Middleton noted that checking the gates will keep him busy all spring.

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STARS AND STRIPES®

# Virus dashes Dayton's dream season

## No. 3 Flyers had hoped for first Final Four appearance in 53 years

*Associated Press*

DAYTON, Ohio — The coronavirus outbreak has abruptly roused the University of Dayton's men's basketball team, and the city it uplifted, from a dream of a season.

The 29-2 Flyers, ranked No. 3 in The Associated Press poll, were rolling into tournament play on a 20-game winning streak that had lifted spirits in a city battered in the past year by a mass shooting and devastating tornadoes.

But the NCAA's decision Thursday to cancel March Madness, one of many such cancellations decided this week as the virus spread, ended hopes for the small Roman Catholic school's first Final Four appearance since 1967, when an upstart Flyers team lost to Lew Alcindor-led UCLA in the championship game.

Flyers fans shook their heads Friday in the Oregon entertainment district, where the shooting occurred Aug. 4.

"I feel like they got robbed," said Shawn Mathews, 21, who said he is a cousin of guard Trey Landers.

His father, Norman Mathews, 49, said they had been "looking forward to them going all the way. Wow."

Canceling, though, was the right decision, with the virus spreading, he said.

"You don't know what to expect," the older Mathews said. "I guess we have to wait till next year."

Landers, a Dayton native, lamented on Twitter: "I wish that all of this was just a dream I could wake up from. ... wish I could play one more game with my brothers." He added a broken-heart emoji.

"To see it end like this makes my heart

hurt, but I am so grateful to get the opportunity to play at UD," another team leader, Ryan Mikesell, posted on Instagram. "It was an honor to wear 'Dayton' across my chest, and it allowed me to create memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life."

Coach Anthony Grant, who also played at Dayton, taped a thank-you message for "Flyer nation" Thursday night after returning to campus from the Atlantic 10 conference tournament in New York City without playing a game.

"Although we feel like there was more for us to try to accomplish over the course of the season, there's nothing that can take away what these young men did out on the court throughout the entire season," Grant said. "History was made in a lot of different areas. Just the effort, the love that they showed for each other I think represents this university, this community, in an unbelievable fashion."

Landers and Mikesell are seniors, and slam-dunking sensation Obi Toppin is likely NBA-bound, leaving Grant with big holes to fill and Dayton likely to begin next season as it did this one: unranked.

Mayor Nan Whaley, a UD alum, said Friday it's stunning that the Flyers' season was ended "not by a loss, but by an international crisis."

Dayton's athletic director and basketball head coaches on Friday offered thoughts and prayers to virus victims, along with hopes that the cancellations will help slow its spread.

"This is bigger than basketball," Grant said.

Both teams won their conferences, and

the coaches said it was tough to see them lose what could be a once-in-a-lifetime chance for a national title.

"They were heartbroken," women's Coach Shauna Green said. "It broke my heart."

Neil Sullivan, the athletic director, said that what the team has meant to a town that has gone through as much as Dayton has makes it "extremely tough."

The NCAA cancellation is also a setback for a struggling economy that annually hosts the tournament's First Four opening games. Whaley, a Democrat, said the impact of that loss will likely be "a drop in the bucket" compared to the financial hits ahead as schools close.

Besides "Go Flyers" messages, there were still banners up in the Oregon district welcoming First Four fans.

"We're all going to take a hit," said Gus Stathes, 35, who runs Barrel House bar with his wife.

The team, he said, had been "a sun ray bursting down from the storm" for Dayton.

Now that ray is gone.

"It's a very Dayton scenario," Stathes grumbled. While Flyers fans and the community are sad about what might have been, Whaley thinks the team is leaving behind fond memories that will endure.

"No matter what a pandemic did to stop them, it was a special season," he said. "I think this will go down as a team and a season that will be talked about for years."

## Virus doesn't deter horse racing but few fans show up

*Associated Press*

Drayden Van Dyke hopped off Charlatan after winning the sixth race by 10¼ lengths at Santa Anita on Saturday and celebrated by trading elbow taps in the winner's circle. No traditional post-race handshakes during the coronavirus pandemic.

The jockey, like all riders at the Southern California track where no fans were in atten-

dance, had already had his temperature taken. The jockeys' room has "hand sanitizer everywhere you look," Van Dyke said.

Bugler Jay Cohen blew his horn to an empty grandstand, with only trainers, jockeys and those working directly with the horses on hand to hear.

"It's a little strange looking up there and not seeing anybody," Cohen said before playing the traditional "Call to the

Post" that greets runners as they hit the track.

The usual scent of hand-carved sandwiches — turkey, corned beef and prime rib — wasn't wafting through the air. The food stands were shut down. There was no one manning the admission gates, selling programs and Daily Racing Forms or operating the elevators or gift shop, and no mutual clerks to sell and cash tickets.

Without fans yelling for their

favorites, the sounds of jockeys chirping to their mounts and horses' hooves pounding the dirt track as they flew toward the finish line were easily heard.

Even without fans around, workers could be seen cleaning various public areas of Santa Anita to defend against the coronavirus, which left horse racing as one of the few sports still going on in the U.S.

# NFL players approve labor deal

Associated Press

NFL players have approved a new labor agreement with the league that features a 17-game regular season, higher salaries, increased roster sizes and larger pensions for current and former players.

The deal, which runs through the 2030 season, was accepted by the 32 team owners last month. The NFL Players Association's membership spent the past week voting on the 439-page document after its executive board narrowly rejected it by a 6-5 vote, and the player representatives voted 17-14 in favor, with one abstention.

Clearly, there was some strong player opposition to this collective bargaining agreement, though. Many stars, including Aaron Rodgers, Russell Wilson, J.J. Watt and Todd Gurley, spoke out against it. The total vote, among the nearly 2,500 union members who participated, was 1,019-959.

Ratification required a simple majority, and results were announced Sunday.

"We are pleased that the players have voted to ratify the proposed new CBA, which will provide substantial benefits to

all current and retired players, increase jobs, ensure continued progress on player safety, and give our fans more and better football," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement.

"We appreciate the tireless efforts of the members of the Management Council Executive Committee and the NFLPA leadership, both of whom devoted nearly a year to detailed, good faith negotiations to reach this comprehensive, transformative agreement."

The 2020 NFL business season begins Wednesday with free agency and trades — though a delay is possible given league restrictions on travel as a safeguard against the new coronavirus. A 17-game schedule won't happen before the 2021 season. The mechanics for an uneven number of games — neutral sites or which teams get nine home games — will be worked out in the interim.

Extending the season was a nonissue with the players in 2011, when the current 10-year deal was finalized after a 4½ month lockout. But the gains they make

in the new agreement in sharing "a bigger portion of the growing pie," according to outgoing NFLPA President Eric Winston, swayed the vote this time.

Among those gains:

- An increase from the 47% of league revenues given to the players, with that percentage dependent on the length of the season.

- A reduction of the preseason, initially from four games to three. More time off during training camps.

- Upgraded pensions, with the addition of groups of previous players not included in past agreements.

- Two more roster spots per team, from 53 to 55; that's 64 more jobs.

- Larger practice squads with fewer limitations on movement of those players.

- Narrowing the testing period for players for marijuana use, plus lowered discipline for using it; and a reduction in on-field fines.

Adding two playoff teams was not part of the bargaining process; the owners can do so without union approval.

## NFL free agency still on for now

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Down, set . wait?

A lot of people around the NFL are expecting the league to push back this week's scheduled start of free agency in light of the coronavirus outbreak, following the lead of virtually every other sports league. The belief: The league will temporarily pause the ticking countdown clock.

For now, though, it's business as usual. The focus until Saturday night was on the pressing matter of players voting on a new collective bargaining agreement. The widespread belief is the league was waiting to address a potential free-agency delay until after the Saturday night CBA voting deadline passed. Players have approved a new labor agreement, so now the focus can shift to the business of free agency and trades.

As it stands, the legal tampering period — when teams and players can talk about potential deals — starts at 9 a.m. Pacific time Monday, followed by the official start of free agency at 1 p.m. Wednesday.

The possible delay isn't the only reason this year is different. The most successful quarterback in league history could be on the open market. New England's Tom

Brady, winner of six Super Bowl rings, is scheduled to become a free agent and could have a long line of suitors in addition to the Patriots, likely among them the Los Angeles Chargers, Las Vegas Raiders and Tennessee Titans. Possibly the San Francisco 49ers and others to boot.

But it's not all about Brady. Some lesser-known players are in line to get big paydays too, such as cornerback Byron Jones (currently with Dallas), guard Joe Thuney (New England) and defensive tackle Javon Hargrave (Pittsburgh).

Whereas some teams have an enormous amount of salary-cap space — Miami, Indianapolis, Buffalo, Tampa Bay and the New York Giants all have at least \$78 million to work with — others are close to bumping their heads on the \$200-million salary ceiling. San Francisco, Kansas City, Jacksonville, New Orleans, Atlanta and Pittsburgh all have less than \$15 million in wiggle room.

Some of the big-name free agents won't be going anywhere. New Orleans, for instance, is expected to work out a new deal with quarterback Drew Brees before free agency begins, and Kansas City is expected to apply the franchise designation to de-

fensive tackle Chris Jones.

Denver has franchised safety Justin Simmons, and Jacksonville has done the same with pass rusher Yannick Ngakoue.

There will be elite pass rushers to be had, however. Seattle's Jadeveon Clowney, a former No. 1 overall pick, figures to hit the open market, and the Los Angeles Rams will have to work some salary-cap magic to keep linebacker Cory Littleton and outside linebacker Dante Fowler.

There's a possibility the Patriots could lose coveted safety Devin McCourty, although they are expected to fight hard to keep that coveted safety in their lineup him.

Amari Cooper has been a star receiver for the Cowboys, but there's a good chance another franchise will outbid Dallas for his services. Then again, this is such a deep receivers draft, that clubs might choose to go the more economical route of drafting a developing wideout themselves.

Then, there's Philip Rivers. The longtime Chargers fixture is done with that club and is hoping to close out his career elsewhere, possibly in Indianapolis where he would be reunited with Colts coach Frank Reich, his onetime offensive coordinator.

# Back to school: Iona hires Pitino

## Hall of Famer was out of coaching in college since Louisville scandal

Associated Press

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — Hall of Famer Rick Pitino was named basketball coach at Iona College on Saturday.

Pitino coached at Louisville from 2001-17 before being fired in a pay-for-play scandal and had been coaching in Greece. He replaces Tim Cluess, who resigned Friday due to health concerns after 10 years and six NCAA Tournament appearances.

“My passion in basketball started in New York and will end there at Iona College,” Pitino said in a statement released by the Catholic school located north of New York City in suburban Westchester County that has an undergraduate enrollment of 3,300 students.

“Tim Cluess has done a spectacular job creating success and a winning spirit,” Pitino added. “At Iona, I will work with the same passion, hunger

and drive that I’ve had for over 40 years.”

The 67-year-old Pitino has a 770-271 overall record in college and became the first coach to take three different schools to the Final Four. He won national championships at Louisville (2013) and Kentucky (1996) and also went to the Final Four with Providence in 1987.

Pitino coached twice in the NBA, with the New York Knicks (1987-89) and the Boston Celtics (1997-2001), where he was also team president.

Last June, Pitino coached Panathinaikos to the championship in the Greek League.

Iona President Seamus Carey said “after a thorough interview process, we are confident that Rick’s experience and commitment to Iona and our community make him the right person to continue to build on Tim Cluess’ success.”

Pitino’s return to college

basketball comes nearly six months after he and Louisville settled lawsuits stemming from his departure in the wake of a federal investigation of corruption in college basketball.

The coach had sued the University of Louisville Athletic Association for more than \$38.7 million in November 2017, alleging its breached its contract by firing him for cause.

The school had countersued and sought monetary damages for vacated games and bonuses. Pitino received no money in the settlement, with his personnel file changing from termination to a resignation effective 13 days before he was fired.

The settlement closed a bitter final chapter between the school and Pitino, who wasn’t named in the federal complaint. He repeatedly said he knew nothing about payments made to the family of a recruit to sign with Louisville.

The school’s acknowledgment of its involvement in the federal investigation occurred as it appealed NCAA sanctions that cost Louisville its 2013 national championship. In that case, the governing body ordered the vacation of 123 victories, including the Cardinals’ third national title and their 2012 Final Four appearance, following an escort’s book allegations that former Louisville men’s basketball staffer Andre McGee hired her and other dancers to strip and have sex with players and recruits.

Pitino said he was unaware of any of the activities described in the book. While Louisville reiterated in a joint settlement statement that infractions under his watch led to “serious consequences” for the school, it acknowledged Pitino’s success and commitment to his players and thanked him for his service.

# UFC holds full card in Brasilia in an empty arena

Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil — The UFC staged a full fight card in an empty arena Saturday night in Brazil’s capital city, sticking to its plan to keep fighting in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

Charles Oliveira stopped lightweight Kevin Lee with a guillotine choke in the third round of the main event in the UFC’s first show since many other sports organizations around the world postponed and canceled competitions.

The world’s biggest mixed martial arts promotion held 12 bouts in Brasilia with only the fighters, their camps, the television production crew and a few dozen essential personnel inside Nilson Nelson Gymnasium.

“It was a bit weird not having any fans inside the arena,” said Bea Malecki, a Swedish bantamweight who won a decision over Veronica Macedo in the opening bout. “But I was able to hear everything my coaches were saying, and it was good. Sometimes it is so loud out there. It was a crazy week. We didn’t know if the fight was going to happen

or not, but we stuck to the plan. It was really emotional.”

The UFC has not canceled any events in the wake of the pandemic, going against the plans of nearly all major sports leagues and organizations. UFC President Dana White has claimed the sports world is “panicking” with its cancellations, and he remains determined to stage four more shows over the next five weekends.

But White announced Saturday night that all four shows must take place at new, currently undetermined venues — including UFC 249, the promotion’s next pay-per-view event headlined by lightweight champion Khabib Nurmagomedov fighting top contender Tony Ferguson.

“We’re not stopping,” White said on ESPN, his promotion’s broadcast partner. “We will keep finding a way to put on the fights. I’m in the fight business. I’ve been doing this for over 20 years, and this stuff happens to me every weekend — obviously not at this level.”

The UFC had scheduled a show with fans inside London’s O2 Arena on March

21. The U.S. government’s new travel restrictions regarding the United Kingdom have forced the UFC to move the show, White said.

The London show is likely to be held in the U.S., but Europe-based fighters are unlikely to be able to compete on the card. White’s matchmakers are putting together a new undercard for the show, which is slated to be headlined by American welterweight Tyron Woodley against Britain’s Leon Edwards.

The UFC also intended to hold fan-free shows in Las Vegas on March 28 and April 11, but White said the Nevada State Athletic Commission’s decision to suspend any combat sports competition in the state until March 25 have made it impossible to stick with that plan. He intends to find new homes for those shows, which were initially scheduled for Columbus, Ohio, and for Portland, Ore.

The UFC broadcast from Brasilia included constant promotion that the UFC 249 would be headlined by the bout between Nurmagomedov and Ferguson.