

Congressman calls F-35 jet a ‘rathole’

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee called the Lockheed Martin-produced F-35 Joint Strike Fighter a “rathole” in a virtual event with the Brookings Institution on Friday, and suggested the U.S. should consider whether to “cut its losses” by investing in a range of competing fighter jets.

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., whose Seattle-area district depends heavily on Boeing for jobs and investment, said the F-35 “doesn’t work particularly well” and is too expensive to maintain. He also bemoaned the U.S. military’s long-term dependence on it.

“I want to stop throwing money down that particular rathole,” Smith said in a webcast conversation with Brookings’ Michael O’Hanlon.

He characterized the F-35 as overly expensive defense platform with disappointing capabilities. He criticized the jet’s sustainment costs as “brutal,” and said he was skeptical they would ever go down. The solution, he said, is to invest in other fighter jets so the Defense Department has a range of options at its fingertips.

“What I’m going to try to do is figure out

how we can get a mix of fighter attack aircraft that’s the most cost-effective. A big part of that is finding something that doesn’t make us have to rely on the F-35 for the next 35 years,” Smith said.

The F-35 is meant to serve as an attack aircraft that can carry advanced weaponry, employ sophisticated electronic jamming devices, and evade enemy detection by virtue of its stealthy design. It also has surveillance and communication capabilities that network it into the U.S. military’s other assets.

But the program is expected to cost more than \$1 trillion over the course of its 60-year life span, making it the most costly weapons program in U.S. history. Its unit price recently dropped below \$80 million, making it cheaper than Boeing’s competing F15-EX on a plane-by-plane basis. But the lower unit cost comes largely as a result of the fact that the Defense Department is buying more of them and spending more on the program on the whole. It has also been criticized for its high sustainment costs.

The F-35’s fortunes soared under former President Donald Trump as the Pentagon used its looser defense budget as an opportunity to buy the jets in bulk. A 2019 deal to purchase hundreds of them in a \$33 billion deal

was touted as the largest single procurement in the history of the U.S. military.

The F-35 is widely regarded in the aviation community as an advanced fighter asset whose combination of stealth, situational awareness, and firepower will deter aggression from hostile nations like Russia and China. But there have at times been severe difficulties with keeping the planes ready to fly, a problem caused largely by the logistical challenge of keeping its advanced spare parts readily available across the globe.

The Pentagon is already looking for alternatives. It is in the early phases of developing a completely new jet, called Next Generation Air Dominance, or NGAD, which will eventually replace the F-35. And the Air Force is also buying Boeing’s F15-EX to give it a competing option.

Doug Birkey, executive director of the Air Force Association-affiliated Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, said it would be foolish to significantly scale back the F-35 program at a time when it is just coming to fruition.

Scaling back the F-35 program at this point “would be like buying all of the lumber for a new house, getting halfway through building it, and then saying ‘you know what, I don’t want to pay for the paint,’” Birkey said.

Study: Preventive virus measures are effective

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A new national study adds strong evidence that mask mandates can slow the spread of the coronavirus, and that allowing dining at restaurants can increase cases and deaths.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the study Friday.

“All of this is very consistent,” CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said during a White House briefing Friday. “You have decreases in cases and deaths when you wear masks, and you have increases in cases and deaths when you have in-person restaurant dining.”

The study was released just as some states are rescinding mask mandates and restaurant limits. Earlier this week, Texas

became the biggest state to lift its mask rule, joining a movement by many governors to loosen COVID-19 restrictions despite pleas from health officials.

“It’s a solid piece of work that makes the case quite strongly that in-person dining is one of the more important things that needs to be handled if you’re going to control the pandemic,” said William Hanage, a Harvard University expert on disease dynamics who was not involved in the study.

The new research builds on smaller CDC studies, including one that found that people in 10 states who became infected in July were more likely to have dined at a restaurant and another that found mask mandates in 10 states were associated

with reductions in hospitalizations.

CDC officials stopped short of saying that on-premises dining needs to stop. But they said if restaurants do open, they should follow as many preventative measures as possible, like promoting outdoor dining, having adequate indoor ventilation, masking employees and calling on customers to wear masks whenever they aren’t eating or drinking.

The study had limitations. For example, the researchers tried to make calculations that accounted for other policies, such as bans on mass gatherings or bar closures, that might influence case and death rates. But the authors acknowledged that they couldn’t account for all possible influences — such as school re-openings.

Families sue Monterey base housing

By ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Two military families are suing several private housing companies because the homes that they rented at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., contained mold that sickened their children and ruined their personal belongings.

Navy Cmdr. Louis D'Antonio and his wife Amber Holland-D'Antonio and Marine Corps Maj. Ryan Keller and his wife Samantha Keller moved into homes in the Parks at Monterey Bay about one year apart. Both families discovered their houses contained mold and believe the private companies that manage the base housing did not follow proper safety precautions while remediating the homes, which exacerbated the conditions, according to a lawsuit filed Wednesday in the Superior Court of California.

The defendants listed on the lawsuit are Monterey Bay Military Housing, Clark Pinnacle Monterey Bay, Clark Realty Capital, Pinnacle Monterey and Michaels Management Services, which are the combination of private companies that manage base family housing for the Naval Postgraduate School and the Army's Presidio of Monterey.

The complaints of the two families match those listed in nearly a dozen lawsuits filed in courts across the country. Some military families have turned to the legal system to settle claims that many private companies contracted by the military to maintain and manage base housing have been negligent and force families to live in dangerous conditions.

Jim Moriarty, the attorney behind the Monterey suit and others, said the continued filing of lawsuits shows problems per-

sist despite new reforms that Congress has put into place in the last two years.

"Somebody is going to get one of these cases in front of a jury one day and [the media] will report a verdict that will shock people," he said. "People will be outraged at the conduct of these companies."

Officials at Michaels Management Services declined to comment on the lawsuit because the executive team has not seen all associated paperwork. Officials at Clark did not respond to a request for comment.

Samantha Keller said her three children, who range in age from 3 to 9 years old, still face lasting health effects from living in the Monterey housing, even two years after they moved.

"The hardest thing was to not only have my husband and I go through it, but to watch our children go through it," she said.

The first house the family moved into in May 2017 had water intrusion that led to mold and sewage issues caused by tree roots growing into pipes leading to the house.

"Rapid growth continued to reappear, and representatives of the landlord companies would attempt to remove mold laden Sheetrock and trim without proper containment and without taking care to prevent the tracking of moldy materials throughout the house," the lawsuit states.

After one year, the family was moved into another house to allow for mold remediation work, only to end up in a temporary home with mold and insect problems, according to the lawsuit. They eventually decided Ryan Keller would finish his education program in Monterey alone while his family moved in

June 2019 to their next duty station, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

All three children suffered respiratory symptoms, trouble sleeping and rashes, as well as emotional trauma. Living off base near Pendleton, Keller said her son saw plastic covering a neighbor's home that was being repainted. The boy panicked.

"My son started freaking out that the house next door had mold, so all the houses had mold, because that was our experience in Monterey. He started freaking out that he was going to lose his stuff again," she said. "For military kids, home is not the four walls that make that place, but it is what's in it for them. When you take all that away from them, it's almost like losing that sense of home ... When a toy goes from one house to another, that's when they know they are home."

The D'Antonio family and their four children, ranging in age from 6 to 20 years old, moved into their first home on base in June 2018 and shortly thereafter noticed a smell emanating from their then-7-year-old daughter's bedroom closet, according to the lawsuit. The smell was so penetrating that a teacher at school called Holland-D'Antonio concerned about the smell coming from the child's clothes.

"As the closet smell persisted, the family noticed that mold had begun to grow through the floors and on the tub in the bathroom. In response, the landlord companies sent contractors who were allegedly trained in remediating mold. Instead, these contractors failed to properly contain the problem and tracked mold throughout the house. At one point, they even set moldy construction debris on the family's sofa," the lawsuit

states.

The entire family suffered health conditions including persistent runny noses, itchy eyes, coughs, memory lapses and joint pain. One of the couple's daughters suffered from frequent and alarming dizzy spells, causing her to suffer falls and her gymnastics coach recommended she withdraw for her own safety.

"She's lost gymnastics. It was her passion. She wanted to do it and she was good," Holland-D'Antonio said. "She was to a point where she couldn't walk down the stairs. She had to sit down and scoot."

All of the younger kids still use inhalers, something that was not needed before moving to Monterey. They moved in May to Naval Air Station Lemoore, also in California, and live in a home that they purchased during a previous assignment there.

"We've gotten better, but we aren't there yet," Holland-D'Antonio said.

Three contractors attempted to solve the mold problems within their first year in the home, and testing revealed multiple types of mold present in the home. The D'Antonios were moved into a temporary home also found to have mold and then a third home, according to the lawsuit.

It was ultimately decided more work on the original house needed to be done to better understand what was happening, and determine what caused the smell in the closet.

For the last 10 months, the family has continued to pay about \$4,300 in monthly rent through their basic allowance for housing for their original home as they negotiate reimbursement for the damaged property still inside the house.

144 cities could lose status as metro areas

Associated Press

Bye-bye, Bismarck. So long, Sheboygan.

Those cities in North Dakota and Wisconsin, respectively, are two of 144 that the federal government is proposing to downgrade from the metropolitan statistical area designation, and it could be more than just a matter of semantics. Officials in some of the affected cities worry that the change could have adverse implications for federal funding and economic development.

Under the new proposal, a metro area would have to have at least 100,000 people in its core city to count as an MSA, double

the 50,000-person threshold that has been in place for the past 70 years. Cities formerly designated as metros with core populations between 50,000 and 100,000 people, like Bismarck and Sheboygan, would be changed to “micropolitan” statistical areas instead.

A committee of representatives from federal statistical agencies recently made the recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget, saying it’s purely for statistical purposes and not to be used for funding formulas. As a practical matter, however, that is how it’s often used.

Several housing, transportation

and Medicare reimbursement programs are tied to communities being metropolitan statistical areas, or MSAs, so the designation change concerns some city officials.

In Corvallis, Ore., the state designates funding sources to metropolitan statistical areas and any change to the city’s status could create a ripple effect, particularly when it comes to transportation funding, said Patrick Rollens, a spokesman for the city that is home to Oregon State University.

“I won’t lie. We would be dismayed to see our MSA designation go away. We aren’t a suburb of any other, larger city in the

area, so this is very much part of our community’s identity,” Rollens said.

If the proposal is approved, it could be the first step toward federal programs adjusting their population thresholds when it comes to distributing money to communities, leading to funding losses for the former metro areas, said Ben Ehreth, community development director for Bismarck.

Rural communities are concerned that more micropolitan areas would increase competition for federal funding targeting rural areas. The change would downgrade more than a third of the current 392 MSAs.

NASA’s newest Mars rover hits the dusty red road

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA’s newest Mars rover hit the dusty red road this week, putting 21 feet on the odometer in its first test drive.

The Perseverance rover ventured from its landing position Thursday, two weeks after setting down on the red planet to seek signs of past life.

The roundabout, back and forth drive lasted just 33 minutes and went so well that more

driving was on tap Friday and Saturday for the six-wheeled rover.

“This is really the start of our journey here,” said Rich Rieber, the NASA engineer who plotted the route. “This is going to be like the Odyssey, adventures along the way, hopefully no Cyclops, and I’m sure there will be stories aplenty written about it.”

In its first drive, Perseverance went forward 13 feet, took a 150-degree left turn, then

backed up 8 feet. During a news conference Friday, NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., shared photos of its tracks over and around small rocks.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been happier to see wheel tracks and I’ve seen a lot of them,” said engineer Anais Zarifian.

Flight controllers are still checking all of Perseverance’s systems. So far, everything is looking good. The rover’s 7-foot

robot arm, for instance, flexed its muscles for the first time Tuesday.

Before the car-size rover can head for an ancient river delta to collect rocks for eventual return to Earth, it must drop its so-called protective “belly pan” and release an experimental helicopter named Ingenuity.

As it turns out, Perseverance landed right on the edge of a potential helicopter landing strip — a nice, flat spot, Rieber said.

Pair of top female aides leave Cuomo’s administration

Bloomberg News

ALBANY, N.Y. — Two more aides to Andrew Cuomo have left their jobs as the New York governor faces dual scandals over sexual harassment claims and accusations his administration covered up nursing-home COVID-19 deaths.

Press secretary Caitlin Girouard and interim policy adviser Erin Hammond have left, the administration said Friday. The two aides are the latest staffers to leave the governor’s office following the scandals,

which have prompted bipartisan calls for him to resign.

Cuomo apologized Wednesday for making women who worked for him “uncomfortable” but said he wouldn’t step down from office.

Gareth Rhodes, a senior adviser who often appeared at Cuomo’s televised virus briefings and helped lead the state’s vaccination effort, said this week he was leaving the administration to return to his previous role at the Department of Financial Services. Rhodes’ wife on Mon-

day tweeted her support for Anna Ruch, one of the women who accused the governor of sexual harassment. First deputy press secretary Will Burns also said he would leave this week. The governor’s office said both departures were planned.

Girouard had issued the statement last month denying sexual harassment allegations of Cuomo’s first accuser, former economic aide Lindsay Boylan. She said Boylan’s claims were “quite simply false” in a statement issued Feb. 24. In a De-

cember statement, she had also said “there is simply no truth to these claims.”

Girouard on Friday said she accepted a job offer in the private sector Jan. 26 and that it was the “honor of a lifetime serving Gov. Cuomo.” She said she began looking for a job outside government last year, after working in the administration for two years.

Cuomo spokesman Rich Azopardi said Hammond’s departure had been planned for several months.

Calif. OKs Major League ball, Disneyland

Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California on Friday lifted some coronavirus restrictions on outdoor sports and entertainment venues, clearing the way for fans to attend games on Major League Baseball's opening day and for theme parks like Disneyland to reopen for the first time in more than a year.

The rules take effect April 1, but they only apply to people living in California. Baseball teams, event organizers and theme parks are not allowed to sell tickets to anyone living out of state as public health officials try to limit mixing while continuing to roll out coronavirus vaccinations.

The San Diego Padres, Los Angeles Angels and Oakland A's all announced they will have fans in the stands for opening day on April 1. The Los Angeles Dodgers and San Francisco Giants both start their seasons on the road and said they would announce their plans later.

Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock did not say when the iconic theme park would reopen, but added "we can't wait to welcome guests back and look forward to sharing an opening date soon."

Dr. Mark Ghaly, California's top public health official, said the state is acting now because the rates of new coronavirus cases and hospitalizations are declining while the number of people receiving vaccines is increasing. California reported 4,659 new coronavirus cases on Thursday while just over 3 million people have been fully vaccinated, or about 10% of the population 16 and older.

New York

NEW YORK — After growing cobwebs for nearly a year, movie theaters in New York City reopen Friday, returning film titles to Manhattan marquees that had for the last 12 months instead read messages like "Wear a mask" and "We'll be

back soon."

Shortly after noon at the Angelika Film Center on Houston Street, Holly Stillman was already feeling emotional coming out of the first New York showing of Lee Isaac Chung's tender family drama "Minari." "My mask is drenched," she said.

But she was equally overwhelmed by being back in a cinema. Though Stillman feared the experience would be too restrictive because of COVID-19 protocols, she instead found it euphoric.

"It was just you and the movie screen," said Stillman. "It was wonderful to smell the popcorn as soon as I got into the theater — even though I don't eat popcorn."

South Carolina

COLUMBIA — South Carolina never had a comprehensive statewide mask mandate, but there were some specific ones in effect for government office buildings and restaurants.

That changed Friday, when Gov. Henry McMaster lifted those orders, leaving it up to state administrative officials and restaurant operators to develop their own guidelines related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The executive order essentially reversed similar guidance from the governor issued in July, when McMaster made the face coverings a requirement that anyone entering a state office building, per guidelines developed by the Department of Administration. At that time, McMaster also issued a similar edict for restaurant-goers and employees.

Arizona

PHOENIX — Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey lifted capacity restrictions at gyms, restaurants and other businesses Friday, citing lower COVID-19 cases and increased vaccination as he eases up on the pandemic restrictions that have upended life

for nearly a year.

His order does not change mask mandates imposed by cities and counties, which remain in effect across most of the state.

The decision to lift capacity restrictions applies to gyms, restaurants, theaters, water parks, bowling alleys and bars providing dine-in services.

Ducey again ignored the guidance issued by his own administration last year, which says those businesses should be closed altogether under the current "substantial" level of virus spread across most of Arizona.

Oregon

PORTLAND — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said Friday she will issue an executive order mandating that all K-12 public schools provide universal access to in-person learning by the month's end for students up to fifth grade and by mid-April for older students.

The state's coronavirus case numbers have fallen sharply in recent weeks. Oregon put teachers ahead of older residents in the line for the COVID-19 vaccine — a decision that angered many people 65 and up. As teachers get vaccinated, Brown has been under tremendous pressure from parents and local elected officials in many counties to reopen schools.

Many teachers' unions nationally have balked at a return to in-person learning, putting them at odds with Democratic governors in some states.

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Supreme Court said Friday that it would hear arguments in a lawsuit by a group of legislators challenging the state's coronavirus restrictions.

Justices granted the request for oral arguments in the case but did not immediately schedule the hearing. A Pulaski County judge last year dismissed the lawsuit, and the legislators appealed to the Supreme Court.

The case is moving forward a week after Gov. Asa Hutchinson lifted most of the state's virus restrictions but left the state's mask mandate in place through at least the end of March.

It also comes after the Senate passed a measure expanding the Legislature's ability to terminate a disaster declaration during a public health emergency. The lawsuit argues that the restrictions put in place during the pandemic required legislative approval.

Texas

AUSTIN — Texas expects more than 1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses next week, state officials said Friday.

According to a Texas Department of State Health Services statement, the vaccines will be first doses, with 245,000 doses being the new single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The federal government will send more than 200,000 doses directly to pharmacies and federally qualified health centers. The state will distribute more than 930,000 first doses to providers in all but 20 of the state's counties, along with 457,000 second doses.

Alaska

ANCHORAGE — Anchorage will lift its coronavirus-related capacity restrictions on many businesses and will ease limits on other places where people gather under a new emergency order set to take effect on Monday.

City officials announced the changes Thursday, saying retailers, bars, restaurants and other businesses will have their capacity restrictions eliminated, the Anchorage Daily News reported. Requirements for wearing masks and maintaining distance will remain in effect.

The businesses must operate in ways that allow consumers to stay six feet apart from people outside of their households.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Satan tries to get a date on the subway

MA BOSTON — The Prince of Darkness is apparently looking for a date on the Boston subway system.

A woman, 20, approached transit police at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Forest Hills station at about 10:45 p.m. to complain about a frightening encounter with a man dressed all in black, including a mask covering his entire face and his hood drawn tight, police said on their website.

The woman told police the man typed something on his phone and extended his arm across to her, displaying a message that said "I am Satan," then stared at her.

The man, 22, told officers he was only flirting and trying to be funny, and said "I was going to try and get her number."

Man douses brother with kerosene, tries to set fire

VA PATRICK SPRINGS — Authorities in Virginia said that a man was arrested after dousing his brother with kerosene and trying to set him on fire.

The Martinsville Bulletin reported that Larry Darnell Tatum, 69, of Patrick Springs was charged with attempted first-degree murder.

Patrick County Sheriff Dan Smith said Tatum was arrested and jailed without bond after an altercation between him and brother Rickie Tatum, 64, at Larry Tatum's home.

Police had received a 911 call before responding to Tatum's

home. Authorities said that Larry Tatum allegedly poured kerosene on his brother "and made attempts to ignite the kerosene."

Boy, 11, brings unloaded gun to school

FL NAPLES — A Florida elementary school student was arrested after bringing an unloaded gun to school and threatening two classmates, authorities said.

A deputy stopped the boy, 11, as he got off the morning bus at Osceola Elementary School in Naples, according to a Collier County Sheriff's Office news release. The fourth-grade student faces a felony charge of carrying a concealed weapon on school grounds.

Deputies learned that the boy had threatened other students a day earlier, officials said. When they searched his backpack, they reported finding a handgun, the statement said.

School assignment on slavery sparks outrage

MS PURVIS — A school writing assignment on slavery for an 8th grade history class in Mississippi sparked outrage in the community.

A screenshot showing an assignment titled "Slave Letter Writing Activity" was shared hundreds of times, garnering reactions ranging from concern to anger. Lamar County School District Superintendent Dr. Steven Hampton confirmed to WDAM-TV the activity was assigned to students during a class at Purvis Middle School.

The purpose of the assign-

ment "was to show our students just how horrible slavery was and to gain empathy for what it was like to be a slave," Hampton said.

Purvis Middle School administrators have addressed the teacher and there will be further discussion with the teacher from administrators at the district level, Hampton said.

50+ lose internet, phone after woman cuts wires

MN EAGAN — An Eagan woman was accused of threatening neighbors with a machete and cutting wires inside a utility box, leaving dozens without phone or internet service.

A criminal complaint filed in Dakota County charged Kathryn Joyce, 32, with threatening violence and first-degree criminal damage to property, which are felonies.

An employee of the area's internet and telephone provider told police that Joyce had damaged a utility box Feb. 25 by opening the box and cutting several wires.

The damage resulted in about 50 to 60 people being cut off from internet and telephone service. Damage was estimated at about \$10,000, WCCO-TV reported.

Joyce was also accused of approaching a neighbor's house while swinging a machete Feb. 24.

First responder answers call at her own home

ND ENDERLIN — A first responder in North Dakota was called to her own home where her son had been severely burned in a fire.

It happened in the small community of Enderlin in southeastern North Dakota. Shelby Jankowski was volunteering as a first responder when she heard the call.

Jankowski's son, Royce, 2, had suffered burns after his mattress caught fire.

Just how the mattress ignited remains under investigation.

By the time Jankowski arrived at her home with a co-worker, crews had rescued Royce and put out the fire. The boy had suffered third-degree burns over 30% of his body.

Man convicted of forging, counterfeiting postage

IA CEDAR RAPIDS — An eastern Iowa man was convicted of forging and counterfeiting postage stamps, according to federal prosecutors for Iowa.

A federal judge found Bradley Jon Matheny, 42, of Marion, guilty of seven counts of postage meter stamp forgery and counterfeiting and three counts of export violations after a one-day trial in Cedar Rapids, prosecutors said in a news release.

Matheny used forged and counterfeited postage meter stamps to ship most of the more than 28,000 packages he mailed to his eBay business customers between November 2015 and May 2017, investigators said.

One expert testified that Matheny had shorted the U.S. Postal Service more than \$250,000.

Matheny faces up to 65 years in federal prison and a \$2.5 million fine when he's sentenced at a later date.

— From The Associated Press

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Zags aren't focused on unbeaten season

Associated Press

In the aftermath of completing the first unbeaten regular season in school history last week, Mark Few likened what top-ranked Gonzaga has accomplished so far to running a long-distance race.

The Bulldogs were ranked No. 1 in the AP Top 25 when the season began. They were unflappable during a 24-0 regular season that earned the Bulldogs their ninth straight West Coast Conference regular-season title.

Two more wins next week at the WCC tournament in Las Vegas and the Bulldogs will join even more select company with the NCAA Tournament on the horizon.

But going wire-to-wire at No. 1 and being perfect in the regular season doesn't matter for a program whose aspirations are based on trying to finally claim its first national championship. It's still an accomplishment worth recognizing should Gonzaga pull it off.

"I don't know about how important it is and all that. I mean it would be a heck of an accomplishment, quite frankly," Few said. "It's hard to be the front runner and lead the mile all four laps. Everybody's gunning for you."

If the Bulldogs can finish their run through the WCC and win the conference tournament next week, they will become just the fifth team in the past 45 years to enter the NCAA Tournament unbeaten.

The Zags are already headed to Indianapolis as a No. 1 seed. The question is whether they'll be going to the Hoosier State attempting to match Indiana's perfect championship season of 1975-76.

Whether Gonzaga can win twice more to reach 26-0 will settle the question about the scope of the attention on the Zags when they arrive in Indiana. So far, they're not feeling any pressure.

"All that pressure comes from the outside, not from any-

thing inside the program with the players," WCC freshman of the year Jalen Suggs said. "We're just looking to go out every night and get a win on that night, not looking too far ahead."

Since Indiana completed the last perfect season, only four teams have entered the NCAA Tournament unbeaten. None went on to win the title.

Indiana State was 29-0 in the regular season with Larry Bird but finished 33-1 after losing to Magic Johnson and Michigan State in the 1979 title game. UNLV was a perfect 34-0 in its quest for consecutive titles before being upset by Duke in the national semifinals in 1991.

Wichita State was 34-0 entering the tournament in 2014, but a tough draw led to the Shockers being bounced in the second round by Kentucky.

A year later, it was the Wildcats whose bid for perfection was ended in the Final Four by Wisconsin. Kentucky was a wire-to-wire No. 1 in the AP

Top 25.

"It would be great to join the esteemed company ... I remember that Kentucky team. That was a phenomenal team," Few said. "But it's not going to be easy. The conference tournament just amps up several notches here as teams are playing for their lives now to survive and play in the greatest sporting event in the world."

Corey Kispert knows the ultimate goal for a team that has won 28 straight games dating to last season is winning the NCAA Tournament, not having success in Las Vegas. Still, he acknowledges it would be "cool" to be unbeaten going to Indianapolis.

"It's cool to look back and kind of had those little things fed into your ear," Kispert said. "Really proud of the team that we've put on the floor this year and proud of how we've performed. It's just a small piece of the product that we've managed to put out there this year."

No. 20 Loyola has no trouble with Southern Illinois

Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Freshman Jacob Hutson had 13 points and Lucas Williamson and Braden Norris each added 11 and No. 20 Loyola earned a 73-49 win over Southern Illinois on Friday in the quarterfinals of the Missouri Valley Conference Tournament.

Loyola (22-4) opened the game on a 10-0 run before Anthony D'Avanzo scored the Salukis' first basket 5:23 into the game.

"We always talk about wanting to set the tone early," Williamson said. "We always want to hang our hat on defense. It just sets the tone for the rest of the game."

Hutson had never scored more than four points against a Division I opponent prior to this

game.

"We have a lot of confidence in him," Loyola coach Porter Moser said. "That kid's development from the beginning of the year to this year is really, really great to see and well needed."

The Ramblers have won three straight games against Southern Illinois (12-14) after sweeping a two-game set in Chicago to close out the regular season.

The Salukis were playing without guard Lance Jones, who was injured in the first half of Thursday night's game against Bradley. Marcus Domask, the Missouri Valley Conference Freshman of the Year in 2020, also missed the final 16 games with a left foot injury.

"We kind of have a saying,

we're all we got, we're all we need," Salukis guard Trent Brown said. "It's just always the next man up. There's no quit in any person on our team."

D'Vanzo led Southern Illinois with 18 points and freshman Dalton Banks, making his first career start in place of Jones, added 12 points.

The 49 points for the Salukis were a season low.

"Give a ton of credit to Loyola, they're one of the best defensive teams in the country," Salukis coach Bryan Mullens said. "That first eight minutes of the game we had some looks, some threes, some post-ups that didn't drop, and they were able to gain some confidence offensively and defensively."

Loyola led 35-22 at halftime and held a double-figure lead

for the final 27:29 of the game.

Big picture

Southern Illinois: The Salukis are 0-16 in their past 16 games versus ranked opponents, extending the longest such losing streak in school history. Their most recent win versus a ranked foe was a 64-62 triumph at home over then-No. 23 Wichita State on Feb. 5, 2013.

Loyola: The Ramblers are the first Missouri Valley Conference team to earn a top-two seed in the conference tournament for four straight seasons since Wichita State accomplished the feat during its last eight seasons in the conference from 2010-2017. The Ramblers lost in the opening round as a No. 2 seed last year to No. 7 seed Valparaiso.

Kansas coach Miles on administrative leave

Associated Press

Kansas placed coach Les Miles on administrative leave Friday night, hours after a report released by LSU revealed school officials there considered firing him in 2013 because of his behavior with female student workers.

"Even though the allegations against him occurred at LSU, we take these matters very seriously at KU," Kansas athletic director Jeff Long said in a statement. "Now that we have access to this information, we will take the coming days to fully review the material and to see if any additional information is available. I do not want to speculate on a timeline for our review because it is imperative we do our due diligence."

Miles is entering his third year as Kansas coach, and coming off a winless 2020 season. He was coach at LSU for 11-plus years before being fired four games into the 2016 season.

The 67-year-old Miles has denied allegations he made sexual advances toward students and has said he merely sought to serve as a mentor for students who expressed an interest in pursuing careers in

sports.

Earlier in the day, LSU released a law firm's 148-page review of how the university has handled sexual misconduct complaints.

Then-athletic director Joe Alleva's 2013 recommendation to former LSU President F. King Alexander to fire Miles is detailed in the report by the Husch Blackwell law firm. The report offers a scathing view of the resources and attention LSU has dedicated to complaints of sexual misconduct and violence against women campus-wide.

LSU suspended executive deputy athletic director Verge Ausberry 30 days and senior associate athletic director Miriam Segar 21 days. Both are suspended without pay and ordered to undergo sexual violence training.

Miles was investigated after two female student workers in LSU's football program accused the coach of inappropriate behavior.

While that 2013 investigation by the Taylor Porter law firm found Miles showed poor judgment, it did not find violations of law or that he had a sexual relationship with

any students. Taylor Porter also concluded it could not confirm one student's allegation that Miles kissed her while they were in the coach's car with no one else present.

Alleva recommended Miles be fired with cause. In an email dated June 2013, Alleva wrote Miles was guilty of "insubordination, inappropriate behavior, putting the university, athletic dept (cq) and football program at great risk."

The Taylor Porter review had been kept confidential for about eight years until a redacted version of it was released this week after a lawsuit filed by USA Today.

Miles was hired by LSU in 2005 and won a national title in 2007.

The Husch Blackwell report, which revisits the Miles investigation, also describes how the former coach "tried to sexualize the staff of student workers in the football program by, for instance, allegedly demanding that he wanted blondes with big breasts, and 'pretty girls.'"

Meanwhile, LSU has not fired any current employees whose conduct was criticized in the Husch Blackwell report.

HBCUs center stage at NBA All-Star Game

Associated Press

Mo Williams played for the Eastern Conference in the 2009 NBA All-Star Game, and he fully understands the enormity of the event's platform.

His team lost that game.

His current team — and a lot of others — should be big winners this time around.

Sunday's All-Star Game in Atlanta is generating \$3 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, through donations to scholarship funds. But the actual value to those schools will far exceed that influx of cash, with almost every All-Star element set to showcase and celebrate HBCU traditions and culture.

"Everything's about exposure," said Williams, who played 13 NBA seasons and now is a first-year coach at Alabama State of the Southwestern Athletic Conference. "Being that the All-Star Game is putting an emphasis on HBCUs, it gives us

exposure, and it helps in a lot of different areas, a lot of different ways, a lot of different schools.

"It's no different from Super Bowl commercials. People spend millions of dollars to put their commercial on the Super Bowl for the exposure. And, you know, the exposure we're getting this weekend from the NBA All-Star Game, it only can help."

Those Super Bowl ads can be as short as 30 seconds.

This exposure is going to last several hours — and cover almost every aspect of the NBA's midseason showcase.

The court was designed in collaboration from artists who attended HBCU schools. The famed bands from Grambling State and Florida A&M will perform during the player introductions. Clark Atlanta University's Philharmonic Society Choir will perform "Lift Every Voice and Sing," commonly called the Black national anthem. Gladys Knight, a graduate of one of the

nation's oldest HBCUs in Shaw University, will sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." The refereeing crew of Tom Washington, Tony Brown and Courtney Kirkland all are HBCU graduates.

"We are here representing HBCUs and trying to shed light on their ability to dream and one day have the opportunity to follow in our footsteps," Brown said. "So, this game is mainly about giving people hope and allowing them an opportunity to dream."

The timing and location — Atlanta, birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King — to pay tribute to HBCUs seems right.

The NBA has just one active player who attended an HBCU: Portland's Robert Covington, who went to Tennessee State. He was invited to be part of the skills challenge, which will precede Sunday's game and typically is part of All-Star Saturday night; the events were condensed to one night this year because of

the pandemic.

Covington realized the significance of this moment. He could have been on vacation. He went to Atlanta instead.

"I just want to leave a legacy," Covington said. "I want to leave my mark and I want to let kids know that anything is possible."

This game will provide more boosts.

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund and United Negro College Fund will collect a total of \$3 million, if not more. And HBCUs everywhere will share in the investment of time on a huge platform if nothing else.

"To highlight the significance of HBCUs, it is a tremendous windfall," McClelland said. "It's not just about the money. The exposure is going to allow students to go to our member institutions, to learn about our history, to learn about our culture. What they're doing for the All-Star Game, we could not pay for and we could not duplicate."

Bruins get revenge on Wilson, Capitals

Associated Press

BOSTON — Brad Marchand had two goals and an assist and the Boston Bruins responded to a head shot from Capitals forward Tom Wilson with a three-goal second period to beat Washington 5-1 on Friday night.

Two days after Alex Ovechkin slashed Trent Frederic in the groin, the game again took an ugly turn when Wilson smashed Brandon Carlo's head into the glass with 90 seconds left in the first period. Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy said Carlo left the arena in an ambulance and went to a hospital but could not confirm that it was a concussion.

Frederic and Jarred Tinordi fought Wilson in the game, but the real revenge was the scoring.

Frederic scored Boston's second goal — the first after

Wilson's hit — and Patrice Bergeron had a goal and an assist for Boston. Nick Ritchie also scored, and Jaroslav Halak stopped 31 shots.

Nicklas Backstrom had his 700th career assist, setting up Jakub Vrana to spoil the shut-out bid with six minutes left in the game. Vitek Vanacek stopped 14 of the 18 shots he faced before he was pulled with 4:17 left in the second period and the Capitals trailing 4-0; Ilya Samsonov made six saves on seven shots the rest of the way.

Carlo went down late in the first period after Wilson went hands-high to his head in the corner behind the Boston net. Carlo absorbed a cross-check from Vrana on his way to the ice and remained there for several minutes. No penalty was called.

Golden Knights 5, Sharks 4 (OT): Max Pacioretty scored

his second goal of the game in overtime and visiting Vegas recovered to win after allowing a tying goal late in the third period.

Pacioretty converted off a pass from Alex Pietrangelo to beat Devan Dubnyk 1:25 into overtime to end a wild game that gave Vegas a five-game winning streak.

Blackhawks 4, Lightning 3 (SO): Philipp Kurashev scored the only goal in a shootout in host Chicago's victory over Tampa Bay.

Alex DeBrincat scored twice and Dominik Kubalik added a goal in regulation, and Malcolm Subban made 39 saves.

Avalanche 3, Ducks 2 (OT): Valeri Nichushkin scored his second goal of the game 2:45 into overtime, Philipp Grubauer made 26 saves and host Colorado overcame a two-goal deficit to beat Anaheim.

Nichushkin circled around a defender and then slid a shot past goalie John Gibson.

Blues 3, Kings 2 (OT): Mike Hoffman scored 1:30 into overtime to lift visiting St. Louis past Los Angeles.

Hoffman ripped a slap shot from the right faceoff circle past Cal Petersen to give the Blues their third straight victory. David Perron scored twice for St. Louis, tying it with 44 seconds left in regulation.

Wild 5, Coyotes 1: Mats Zuccarello had a goal and an assist, Kaapo Kahkonen stopped 24 shots and visiting Minnesota jumped on Arizona early.

Zuccarello scored on Minnesota's second shot of the game, and Brad Hunt and Nick Bjugstad also had goals in the first period. Jordan Greenway scored early in the second period and had an assist for the Wild. Kevin Fiala also scored.

Affidavit: Man found Woods unconscious after crash

Associated Press

ROLLING HILLS ESTATES, Calif. — Tiger Woods was unconscious in a mangled SUV after he crashed the vehicle in Southern California last week, according to a court document that also revealed a nearby resident and not a sheriff's deputy was first on the scene.

The witness, who lives near the accident scene in Rolling Hills Estates just outside Los Angeles, heard the crash and walked to the SUV, Los Angeles County sheriff's Deputy Johann Schloegl wrote in the affidavit. The man told deputies that Woods had lost consciousness and did not respond to his questions.

The first deputy, Carlos Gonzalez, arrived minutes later the morning of Feb. 23 and has said Woods appeared to be in shock but was conscious and able to answer basic questions. Woods suffered severe injuries to his

right leg and cuts to his face.

Woods told deputies — both at the wreckage and later at the hospital — that he did not know how the crash occurred and didn't remember driving, according to the affidavit.

'Miracle' star Pavelich dies at treatment home

MINNEAPOLIS — Mark Pavelich, the speedy center from the Iron Range who played on the "Miracle on Ice" Olympic hockey team, has died at a treatment center for mental illness. He was 63.

Officials in Anoka County, Minn., confirmed Friday that Pavelich died at the Eagle's Healing Nest in Sauk Centre, Minn., on Thursday morning. The cause and manner of death are still pending.

"We are saddened to hear about the passing of 1980 Olympic gold medalist Mark Pavel-

ich," USA Hockey said in a statement. "We extend our deepest condolences to Mark's family & friends. (He is) forever a part of hockey history."

Prosecutors won't charge Broncos' Miller

DENVER — Prosecutors said Friday that Broncos star linebacker Von Miller won't face criminal charges following an investigation by police in a Denver suburb.

In a statement, the District Attorney's Office of the 18th Judicial District said it decided not to file charges after reviewing the findings of a criminal case submitted by police in Parker.

Miller, who turns 32 in three weeks, is heading into the final season of the six-year, \$114.5 million deal he signed in 2016.

The Broncos have until March 16 to exercise his 2021

option, which would guarantee \$7 million of his \$17.5 million base salary.

Dyson suspended for domestic violence

NEW YORK — Pitcher Sam Dyson was suspended for the 2021 season by Major League Baseball on Friday under the domestic violence policy of the league and the players' association.

The 32-year-old free agent last played in 2019 for San Francisco and Minnesota.

MLB began investigating Dyson in 2019 after a woman wrote two lengthy social media posts alleging domestic violence by an unnamed individual. The woman later told The Athletic that Dyson physically abused her.

The Athletic reported she provided photos showing bruises on her arms.