

## 10 killed in Colorado shooting

*Associated Press*

BOULDER, Colo. — A gunman opened fire inside a crowded supermarket on Monday killing 10 people, including a police officer, and sent terrorized shoppers and employees scrambling for cover. The suspect was identified as a 21-year-old man who was wounded in a shootout with police.

Authorities said Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa was from the Denver suburb of Arvada and that he engaged in a shootout with police inside the Boulder store. The suspect was being treated at a hospital and was expected to be booked into the county jail later in the day.

Investigators have not established a motive, but authorities believe he was the only shooter, Boulder County District Attorney Michael Dougherty said.

A law enforcement official briefed on the shooting told The Associated Press that the gunman used an AR-15 rifle, a lightweight semi-automatic rifle. Officials were trying to trace the gun. The official was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity.

Officials also identified the nine other victims after previously naming the officer. The dead ranged in age from 20 to 65.

Hundreds of police officers from

throughout the Denver area responded to the attack, converging on a King Soopers supermarket in a busy shopping plaza in southern Boulder.

SWAT officers carrying ballistic shields slowly approached the store as others escorted frightened people away from the building, which had some of its windows shattered. Customers and employees fled through a back loading dock to safety. Others took refuge in nearby shops.

Officers had escorted a shirtless man in handcuffs with blood running down his leg from the store during the siege. Authorities would not say if he was the suspect.

"This is a tragedy and a nightmare for Boulder County," Dougherty said. "These were people going about their day, doing their shopping. I promise the victims and the people of the state of Colorado that we will secure justice."

Boulder Police Chief Maris Herold identified the slain officer as Eric Talley, 51, who had been with the force since 2010. He was the first to arrive after responding to a call about shots fired and someone carrying a rifle, she said.

"He was by all accounts one of the outstanding officers of the Boulder Police Department, and his life was cut too short,"

Dougherty said.

Dozens of police and emergency vehicles, lights flashing, escorted an ambulance carrying the slain officer from the shooting scene after nightfall. Some residents stood along the route, their arms raised in salute.

The attack in Boulder, about 25 miles northwest of Denver and home to the University of Colorado, stunned a state that has seen several mass shootings, including the 1999 Columbine High School massacre and the 2012 Aurora movie theater shooting.

Monday's attack was the seventh mass killing this year in the United States, following the March 16 shooting that left eight people dead at three Atlanta-area massage businesses, according to a database compiled by The Associated Press, USA Today and Northeastern University.

Rep. Joe Neguse, a Democrat whose district includes Boulder, said Tuesday on "CBS This Morning" that "enough is enough" when it comes to political impasses that keep gun control laws from passing Congress.

"The time for inaction is over. It does not have to be this way. There are common-sense gun legislation reform proposals that have been debated in Congress for far too long," Neguse said.

## 15th MEU leader fired after accident probe

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The commander of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit has been fired following an investigation into an assault amphibious vehicle accident in July that killed nine people, the Marine Corps announced Tuesday.

Col. Christopher J. Bronzi was relieved Tuesday of his command by Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, the commander of U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, "due to a loss of trust and confidence in his ability to command," according to a Marine Corps statement.

Bronzi took command of the unit in November 2019.

His firing comes after the completion of a

command investigation into the cause of the assault amphibious vehicle accident that occurred July 30 off the coast of San Clemente Island in California. Assault amphibious vehicles, which are used for landing on beaches, weigh about 26 tons and can carry up to 21 people. Fifteen Marines and a sailor were being transported in one of the vehicles back to their ship after training with the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group when they noticed the vehicle was taking on water, Lt. Gen. Joseph Osterman, the commander of I Marine Expeditionary Force, said at the time.

The vehicle was found four days later almost a mile from shore after it had sunk 385 feet, according to the Marine Corps. Eight

Marines and a Navy Corpsman from Bravo Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/4, were killed in the accident.

Following Bronzi's firing, Rudder appointed Col. Fridrik Fridriksson in command of the Camp Pendleton-based 15th MEU, which is deployed to the U.S. Central Command area, according to the statement. Bronzi is now assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force, said Capt. Andrew Wood, a Marine Corps spokesman.

The families of those killed in the accident are being notified this week about the results of the command's investigation, Wood said. Once the families have been given the report's findings, it will be made available to the public.

# US risks disorderly Afghan withdrawal

By J.P. LAWRENCE

*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Time is running out for Washington to choose whether to keep to a deal with the Taliban and pull out of Afghanistan by May 1, a defense official and several security analysts said.

The deadline to leave Afghanistan set out in a U.S.-Taliban agreement last year means U.S. troops must begin their withdrawal by the beginning of April, or risk a chaotic and dangerous exit from America's longest war, said Jonathan Schroden, special operations program director at the Center for Naval Analyses.

It will take at least three to six weeks to turn over or close the dozen or so bases in the country, pack and ship tons of equipment, and transport tens of thousands of troops and contractors, Schroden said. A rushed withdrawal, or retrograde, may resemble an evacuation, evoking images of U.S. helicopters hastily escaping Saigon at the end of the Vietnam War.

"If we haven't already passed the line for responsibly closing the bases the U.S. is on, we're probably going to pass it in the next week or so," Schroden said Monday. "If we are still aiming for May 1, we're either past or very near the point where it will no longer be a methodical, orderly, by-the-book retrograde."

The deadline is the result of a deal signed in February 2020, which traded a complete troop withdrawal for concessions from the Taliban. These included a Taliban pledge to enter peace negotiations with the Kabul government and to prevent al-Qaida and other

terrorist groups from using Afghan territory as a safe haven.

President Joe Biden's administration is now reviewing whether the Taliban have held up their end of the bargain. The Taliban has threatened to respond with force if the U.S. remains in the country.

A decision on whether to leave may be coming soon, close observers of the peace process have said. Biden may keep the Taliban deal, or he could follow the suggestion of the congressionally appointed Afghan Study Group to extend or abandon the May 1 deadline.

Leaving by May 1 will be "tough" for the U.S. to achieve, Biden said in an interview last week, adding that it wouldn't take "a lot longer" if the timeline for withdrawal were extended.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin visited Kabul this week and has said the U.S. will not conduct a "hasty or disorderly withdrawal" that puts allied forces or NATO's reputation at risk.

The military has several options for a rapid withdrawal by May 1 but only if that decision is made soon, a defense official said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the matter.

"The corresponding timeline is rapidly running out for these options," the official said Monday. "Once we start talking about early April, it's a different ballgame."

Some 2,500 to 3,500 U.S. troops, alongside at least 18,000 contractors, remain in the country. About 7,000 NATO and coalition soldiers, who depend on the U.S. for logistics, may also need to exit.

Moving tons of gear out of the landlocked country may be even more challenging, said Army veteran Adam Cote.

Cote led a company of engineers who demolished bases as part of a large-scale withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014. That retrograde, perhaps the largest in modern history, cost the Pentagon about \$6 billion.

Weapons, ammunition and sensitive gear must be carefully accounted for, to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. Heavy equipment such as vehicles and generators may be given to the Afghan military or simply destroyed.

"My guess is that a lot of materiel will be destroyed," Cote said in an email. "It sounds like an enormous waste — and it is — but when you weigh the options of airlifting or ground transport, I think lots of times it is the most cost-effective and efficient way."

An extension could allow more time for an organized drawdown, said Ryan Baker, a defense analyst that studies military logistics.

"The complexity of large-scale drawdowns means that speed is expensive," Baker said. "Extending the drawdown deadline by a few months can make it less costly."

It makes sense that the Biden administration is taking its time to review its options, said Jason Campbell, a researcher with Rand Corp. in Washington.

"This isn't a matter of plus or minus a few troops, this is the final pullout," said Campbell, country director for Afghanistan at the Office of the Secretary of Defense from 2016 to 2018. "If we're moving forward with this, we need to make dang sure we're looking at every angle ... it deserves a full review."

## Key Republican supports extending May 1 deadline

By SARAH CAMMARATA

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Rep. Mike Rogers of Alabama, the top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee, said Monday that he supports keeping U.S. forces in Afghanistan beyond the May 1 withdrawal deadline to help stabilize the country as the White House weighs whether to keep troops on the ground there.

The roughly 2,500 troops in Afghanistan are "not in the fight. They're over there in train-and-assist mode. And I'm fine with them being there for an extended period of time if that

means we don't need to worry about terrorists being bred over there and trying to go attack us," Rogers said at a media briefing with George Washington University's Defense Writers Group.

Rogers also said the cost of keeping troops in Afghanistan is "nothing" compared to what the U.S. government spent on reconstruction efforts in the first few years.

"It would be different if we had 25,000 troops over there, but we're [at] 2,500. That's an expense I'm willing to pay to keep stability in that country," said Rogers.

The comments come as President Joe Biden's administration faces a May 1 deadline for their removal, which was agreed to in February 2020 as part of a peace deal with the Taliban.

On Sunday, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin led his first visit to Afghanistan as the Pentagon leader and called for a "responsible end" to the nearly two-decadelong war. Austin has been leading a government-wide review of the U.S. military posture in Afghanistan. He said Sunday that he will leave the specific end date for the withdrawal up to Biden.

# Migrant photos show Biden's border secrecy

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden's administration has tried for weeks to keep the public from seeing images like those released Monday of immigrant children in U.S. custody at the border sleeping on mats under foil blankets, separated in groups by plastic partitions.

Administration officials have steadfastly refused to call the detention of more than 15,000 children in U.S. custody, or the conditions they're living under, a crisis. But they have stymied most efforts by outsiders to decide for themselves.

Officials barred nonprofit lawyers who conduct oversight from entering a Border Patrol tent where thousands of children and teenagers are detained. And federal agencies have refused or ignored dozens of requests from the media for access to detention sites. Such access was granted several times by the administration of former President Donald Trump, whose restrictive immigration approach Biden vowed to reverse.

The new president faces growing criticism for the apparent secrecy at the border, including from fellow Democrats.

Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said Monday "the administration has a commitment to transparency to make sure that the news media gets the chance to report on every aspect of what's happening at the border."

White House press secretary Jen Psaki added that the White House was working with Homeland Security officials and the Health and Human Services Department to "finalize details" and that she hoped to have an update in the "coming days."

Axios on Monday first published a series of photos taken inside the largest Border Patrol detention center, a sprawling tent facility in the South Texas city of Donna. The photos were released by Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat from the border city of Laredo.

Cuellar said he released the photos in part because the administration has refused media access to the Donna tent. He

said he also wanted to draw attention to the extreme challenges that border agents face in watching so many children, sometimes for a week or longer despite the Border Patrol's three-day limit on detaining minors.

"We ought to take care of those kids like they're our own kids," Cuellar said.

Thomas Saenz, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said the United States should allow media access to border facilities while respecting the privacy of immigrants detained inside. He noted the risk of sharing without permission images of children who have already faced trauma.

"We ought to be aware of these conditions," Saenz said. "People have to see them so that they can assess the inhumanity and hopefully embark on more humane policies."

The White House has prided itself on its methodical rollout of policy during its first 50-plus days, but West Wing aides privately acknowledge they were caught off guard by the surge of

migrants at the border and the resulting media furor.

The Associated Press has requested access to border facilities for more than a month. Reporters first asked Health and Human Services on Feb. 4 to allow entry into a surge facility re-opened at Carrizo Springs, Texas, holding hundreds of teenagers. And they have asked Homeland Security officials for access at least seven times to Border Patrol facilities, with no response. The AP has also petitioned Psaki to open border facilities.

Border agencies under Trump allowed limited media tours of both Homeland Security and Health and Human Services facilities. Several of those visits revealed troubling conditions inside, including the detention of large numbers of children as young as 5 separated from their parents.

Under Biden, the agencies also have denied full access to nonprofit lawyers who conduct oversight of facilities where children are detained. Those oversight visits occur under a federal court settlement.

## Biden eyes \$3T package for infrastructure, schools, families

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Fresh off passage of the COVID-19 relief bill, President Joe Biden is assembling the next big White House priority — a sweeping \$3 trillion package of investments on infrastructure and domestic needs.

Biden huddled privately late Monday with Senate Democrats as Congress has already begun laying the groundwork with legislation for developing roads, hospitals and green energy systems as part of Biden's "Build Back Better" campaign promise. Much like the \$1.9 trillion virus rescue plan signed into law earlier this month, the new package would also include family-friendly policies, this time focusing on education and paid family leave.

The White House plans are still preliminary, with a combined \$3 trillion in spending proposed to boost the economy and improve quality of life, according to a per-

son familiar with the options who insisted on anonymity to discuss private conversations.

While the goal is a bipartisan package, Democrats in Congress have signaled a willingness to go it alone if they are blocked by Republicans.

"We need to get it done," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., ahead of the virtual meeting with Biden at the senators' annual retreat Monday evening.

Biden's outreach to Senate Democrats comes as the White House is under fire for its handling of the U.S.-Mexico border. Migrant crossings are skyrocketing, with images of cramped holding facilities posing a humanitarian and political dilemma for the administration and its allies in Congress. The focus on infrastructure shifts attention back toward priorities that are potentially more popular with Americans and potentially bipartisan.

An infrastructure package would include roughly \$1 trillion for roads, bridges, rail lines, electrical vehicle charging stations and the cellular network, among other items. The goal would be to facilitate the shift to cleaner energy while improving economic competitiveness.

A second component would include investments in workers with free community college, universal pre-kindergarten and paid family leave.

No part of the proposal has been finalized and the eventual details of any spending could change.

The overall price tag first reported Monday by The New York Times has been circulating on Capitol Hill for weeks, since the start of the Biden presidency. With the House and Senate under Democratic control, the proposals are expected to draw support from all corners of Congress.



# US pushes to revitalize ties with NATO

By JOHN VANDIVER

*Stars and Stripes*

STUTTGART, Germany — Germany's plan to open a new gas pipeline with Russia poses a threat to European security, America's top diplomat warned Tuesday, highlighting a key point of contention with allies even as Washington aims to revitalize ties with NATO that were strained during the Trump administration.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he expected to bring up Berlin's subsea Nord Stream 2 pipeline project with Moscow during high-level talks at NATO headquarters in Brussels, where the 30-member states are meeting for two days of discussions.

President Joe Biden "believes the pipeline is a bad idea. Bad for Europe, bad for the United States," Blinken said during brief opening remarks in Brussels. "Ultimately, it's in contradiction to the

European Union's own energy security goals. It has the potential to undermine the interests of Ukraine, Poland, a number of other close partners or allies."

Opposition to the nearly complete Nord Stream 2 project, a pipeline that runs 760 miles from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, puts the Biden administration in line with the Trump administration's previous position.

But the dispute with Germany also complicates Biden's push to establish a more unified front among NATO allies. Blinken said if the project comes to fruition, Washington would be required by U.S. law to impose sanctions on companies involved in the energy venture, which would likely affect numerous German businesses.

Still, allies in Brussels this week are talking up how the arrival of Biden bodes well for

NATO, which former President Donald Trump often complained was more beneficial to Europe than to the U.S.

"There is no way to hide over the last few years we have had difficult discussions in our alliance," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday.

With Biden in the White House, "we have now a unique opportunity to start a new chapter in the trans-Atlantic relationship," Stoltenberg said. "And I strongly welcome the Biden administration's message on rebuilding alliances and strengthening NATO."

In Brussels this week, allies are expected to develop plans to adapt NATO over the next decade, with a focus on dealing with a rising China and an assertive Russia. The aim is to ready the new strategy for heads of state to approve dur-

ing a summit later this year.

NATO is also working on plans to better factor the effects of climate change into allied military planning, Stoltenberg said.

Allies on Tuesday and Wednesday were expected to endorse a report that would have members look for ways to reduce emissions during military operations, while also assessing the effects of climate change on military infrastructure.

"Climate change is a crisis multiplier," Stoltenberg said. "Climate change is making the world a more dangerous place. And therefore it matters for NATO."

The mission in Afghanistan and the feasibility of pulling allied forces out of that country by May 1 was also on the agenda. No final decisions on the way forward were expected to materialize during the conference in Brussels.

## Evanston, Ill., 1st in US to give Black residents reparations

*Associated Press*

EVANSTON, Ill. — Evanston on Monday became the first U.S. city to make reparations available to its Black residents for past discrimination and the lingering effects of slavery.

The Chicago suburb's City Council voted 8-1 to distribute \$400,000 to eligible Black households. Each qualifying household would receive \$25,000 for home repairs or down payments on property.

The program is being funded through donations and revenue from a 3% tax on the sale of recreational marijuana. The city has pledged to distribute \$10 million over 10 years.

Qualifying residents must either have lived in or been a direct descendant of a Black person who lived in Evanston be-

tween 1919 to 1969 and who suffered discrimination in housing because of city ordinances, policies or practices.

Alderman Rue Simmons, who proposed the program that was adopted in 2019, said pro-reparations groups have offered pro-bono legal assistance if the program is challenged in court.

Alderman Cicely Fleming, the lone vote against the plan, said she supports reparations, but what the City Council was debating is a housing plan that is being called reparations. She said the people should dictate the terms of how their grievances are repaired. Fleming described the program as paternalistic, and it assumes Black people can't manage their own money.

## Report: Extremist groups still thrive on Facebook

*Associated Press*

A new outside report found that Facebook has allowed groups — many tied to QAnon, boogaloo and militia movements — to glorify violence during the 2020 election and in the weeks leading up to the deadly riots at the U.S. Capitol in January.

Avaaz, a nonprofit advocacy group that says it seeks to protect democracies from misinformation, identified 267 pages and groups on Facebook that it says spread violence-glorifying material in the heat of the 2020 election to a combined following of 32 million users.

More than two-thirds of the groups and pages had names that aligned with several domestic extremist movements,

the report found. The first, boogaloo, promotes a second U.S. civil war and the breakdown of modern society. The second is the QAnon conspiracy, which claims that Donald Trump is waging a secret battle against the "deep state" and a sect of powerful Satan-worshipping pedophiles who dominate Hollywood, big business, the media and government. The rest are various anti-government militias. All have been largely banned from Facebook since 2020.

But despite what Avaaz called "clear violations" of Facebook's policies, it found that 119 of these pages and groups were still active on the platform as of March 18 and had just under 27 million followers.

## AMERICAN ROUNDUP

**Man hurt after falling off horse while fleeing cops**

**VA** LYNCHBURG — A wanted man who fled from police on a horse was seriously injured when he fell off the horse and was hit by a police vehicle, Virginia authorities said.

Officials said police responded to an intersection in downtown Lynchburg regarding a report of a wanted individual who was riding a horse.

Officers told the man he had a warrant for violating a protective order, but he would not comply with their order and fled on his horse, riding into oncoming traffic.

The man fell off his horse while officers were still attempting to stop him.

As officers approached him, one of them accidentally struck the man with a vehicle as he was lying in the road.

**'Dating scammer' faces more time after escape**

**NJ** CAMDEN — A New Jersey man who has twice served prison terms for using dating services to defraud women is facing more time after a recent escape from custody.

Patrick Giblin made an initial court appearance by videoconference in federal court in Camden. The 56-year-old had been a fugitive since last July until his capture in Atlantic City.

According to a criminal complaint, Giblin had been approved to travel from federal prison in Lewisburg, Pa., to a halfway house in Newark where he would finish serving his latest prison term. According to the complaint, prison personnel accompanied Giblin to the Harrisburg airport and watched him

get on the plane. He never showed up in Newark, however, and was declared a fugitive.

**School suspends cheer team over hazing claims**

**OK** EDMOND — The University of Central Oklahoma has suspended its cheer team for the rest of the school year amid reports of hazing on the squad, the school said.

In addition to the suspension, the team won't be allowed to participate in any national competition for two years, University President Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar said in a statement.

Neuhold-Ravikumar said she couldn't go into detail about the hazing because of student privacy laws, but that hazing has no place at the university and won't be tolerated.

Individual team members who participated in the hazing may face removal from the squad and suspension from the university, she said. Those cleared would undergo a membership review and may be allowed to try out for next year's team.

**Man charged with assaulting 2 on flight**

**SC** CHARLESTON — A man has been arrested and charged with assaulting two passengers on a flight from New Jersey to Florida.

Authorities said United Flight 728 took off from Newark Liberty International Airport bound for Miami. About 50 minutes into the flight, one passenger said, John Yurkovich went to the rear of the aircraft and acted erratically upon return, yelling and demanding water before taking a pill, authorities said.

According to the criminal complaint filed by FBI Special

Agent Joseph Hamski of Charleston, to which city the flight was diverted, the passenger said Yurkovich backed into him, and when he tried to keep Yurkovich from falling onto him, the other man became enraged.

The passenger said the defendant removed his mask and began spittle-laced screaming into his face, then punched him several times, Hamski said.

Several passengers intervened and restrained Yurkovich, one sustaining a broken nose, Hamski said.

**Pet mayor helps raise money for dog park**

**VT** FAIR HAVEN — The re-elected pet mayor of Fair Haven has met his goal of money raised for a new dog park.

Murfee, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, gained \$5,000 in donations, and a Castleton couple matched that amount, WCAX-TV reported. The \$10,000 will go toward the Fur Haven Dog Park.

Murfee was re-elected to a second term in March, in a tight race with a chicken named "Colonel Kernel."

**Old Glory to get new flagpole over bridge**

**MS** VICKSBURG — A new pole will be installed so a large American flag can continue flying above a bridge that spans the Mississippi River.

The Vicksburg Post reported that the flagpole replacement will happen March 30 or 31 on the railroad bridge that connects Vicksburg, Miss., to Delta, La. The railroad bridge runs parallel to a newer bridge.

The superintendent of the old bridge, Herman Smith, said that the flagpole has been in place

since at least 1994.

**Suspected drug dealer delivered drugs by drone**

**CA** SIMI VALLEY — Police in Southern California are investigating whether a suspected drug dealer used a drone to deliver heroin to customers.

John Piani was arrested in Simi Valley as narcotics detectives were investigating possible heroin and methamphetamine sales in the city northwest of Los Angeles.

At the time of the arrest, Piani was operating a drone, police said. When detectives recovered the remote-controlled aerial device, they found suspected heroin attached to it, the Ventura County Star reported.

**Hiker rescued after pinned between rocks**

**ME** THE FORKS — An injured hiker had to be rescued after falling and becoming pinned between some large rocks in The Forks, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife said.

Clayford Cabilas, 30, of Bangor, and a friend had just finished a hike on Mosquito Mountain Trail when they climbed up some large rocks to take a photo, the department said in a statement. Cabilas lost his balance and fell between the rocks and a rock had shifted and pinned his arm and leg, officials said.

Crews used the jaws of life and airbags to move and secure the rock and to free Cabilas, who suffered a fractured arm and leg, a head injury and was becoming hypothermic.

— From wire reports

STARS  STRIPES®

Single source convenience, reliably independent. Visit [www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com).

Reporting  
World, National  
and Military News

# NCAA Tournament has lived up to hype

Associated Press

Considering how everything else has gone this past year, March was bound to be mad. So far, it hasn't disappointed.

The last perfect NCAA Tournament bracket was busted before the first round was over. The second round just wrapped with an even dozen upsets already in the books — a record for the opening 48 games and just one shy of the mark for the entire tournament — with all kinds of possibilities still out there.

"You gotta bring that fire,"

said Gonzaga big man Drew Timme, whose team is the tournament's overall top seed. "Because all it takes is one good game and you can be out."

Oklahoma, in fact, played a very good game against Timme's Bulldogs and still got crushed, 87-71. So did No. 10 Maryland, bounced by No. 2 Alabama 96-77, and fifth-seeded Colorado, sent packing 71-53 by No. 4 Florida State.

Ditto for the five other teams that lost Monday — by the lopsided average of 18 points.

Sixth-seeded USC beat No. 3 Kansas by 34, but failed to meet the NCAA definition of an upset: "defined as a win by a team seeded five spots lower than their opponent." No. 7 Oregon's win over second-seeded Iowa qualified, even though it was by "only" 15. No. 1 seed Michigan finally wriggled free of LSU, 86-78, in the day's only really close game.

Seedings can seem off in any year, but never moreso than in this one. The pandemic wreaked havoc on nearly every team, but hit some harder than

others, and at different times.

Kansas, for example, had one star, David McCormack, who cleared the COVID-19 protocol just hours before its first-round game, and another, Jalen Wilson, just a day before he came off the bench against USC. Widely considered the toughest league this past season, the Big Ten Conference got nine invites and is down to Michigan. West Coast teams, often overlooked and rarely overrated, may have finally benefited from being underrated this time around.

## Gonzaga rolls past Oklahoma, remains unbeaten

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Gonzaga continued to roll behind a career-high 30 points and 13 rebounds from Drew Timme as the top-seeded Bulldogs beat No. 8 seed Oklahoma 87-71 on Monday in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

Gonzaga (28-0) won its 32nd straight game dating to last season, passing its first real test of the NAAs in the Bulldogs' quest to be the first undefeated champion since Indiana 45 years ago.

The Bulldogs easily dispatched Norfolk State in the first round, but the Sooners were the first power conference opponent for Gonzaga since it embarrassed Virginia in late December.

It didn't matter all that much. Oklahoma became the 25th straight team the Bulldogs beat by double digits — although the Sooners fought valiantly to keep it from becoming a blowout.

The Zags advanced to their sixth straight Sweet 16 and will next face Creighton in the West Region.

Austin Reaves scored 27 points for Oklahoma (16-11).

Timme, sporting a handlebar mustache, was 9-for-12 shooting and 12-for-14 at the free-

throw line. Corey Kispert and Jalen Suggs added 16 points each for Gonzaga.

**Creighton 72, Ohio 58:** Marcus Zegarowski scored 20 points to help the Bluejays beat the Bobcats, securing the program's first trip to the round of 16 in 47 years.

Damien Jefferson added 15 points for fifth-seeded Creighton (22-8). The Bluejays had a cold opening few minutes before the offense — and Zegarowski in particular — got rolling with a strong performance that built a double-digit lead by halftime against an upstart trying to spring a second straight tournament upset.

Dwight Wilson III scored 12 points to lead Ohio (17-8), the Mid-American Conference champion. The 13th-seeded Bobcats opened the tournament by bouncing 2019 champion Virginia on Saturday night.

**Oregon 95, Iowa 80:** Chris Duarte scored 23 points and the Ducks showed no signs of rust after a long layoff, beating the No. 2-seeded Hawkeyes to reach the Sweet 16 for the fourth time in the past five NCAA Tournaments.

Seventh-seeded Oregon (21-6) was put in an unprecedented spot, advancing to the

West Region's second round without playing a game. Virginia Commonwealth's multiple positive COVID-19 tests took care of that, leaving the Ducks with a nine-day break since losing in the Pac-12 Tournament title game.

Iowa (22-9) fell one game short of the Sweet 16 for the fourth time under Fran McCaffrey. Luka Garza played like a two-time All-American, capping his stellar college career with 36 points and nine rebounds. Joe Wieskamp added 17 points.

### East Regional

**Florida State 71, Colorado 53:** Anthony Polite scored a career-high 22 points and the fourth-seeded Seminoles pulled away in the second half to beat the Buffaloes and advance to the Sweet 16 for the third straight NCAA Tournament.

Polite had never scored more than 15 points in a game, but the junior made 8 of 12 shots, including 4 of 7 three-pointers. Florida State (18-6) will next face Michigan, which knocked out the Seminoles in the 2018 Elite Eight.

D'Shawn Schwartz scored 13 points for fifth-seeded Colorado (23-9), which shot 36% overall.

**UCLA 67, Abilene Christian 47:** Johnny Juzang scored 17 points and the 11th-seeded Bruins carefully brushed off the pesky Wildcats to become the fifth team to go from the First Four to the Sweet 16.

UCLA (20-9) will meet high-scoring Alabama in its first regional semifinal appearance since 2017 — and its first with second-year coach Mick Cronin.

Reserve Mahki Morris led the Wildcats (24-5) with 22 points.

**Alabama 96, Maryland 77:** Jaden Shackelford and the Crimson Tide stuck with what got them to the NAAs, torching the Terrapins with three-point shooting in a second-round rout.

Shackelford scored 21 points and made five of Alabama's 16 three-pointers as second-seeded Alabama advanced to its first Sweet 16 since 2004. Nate Oats, the second-year coach who made Buffalo a must-watch team before moving up the Southeastern Conference, will bring his high-energy style to a regional semifinal for the first time.

Aaron Wiggins scored 27 points and Eric Ayala had 13 for the Terrapins (17-14).



# Rangers deal Sabres 14th straight loss

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Chris Kreider scored twice, including the tie-breaking goal in the third period, and the New York Rangers beat Buffalo 5-3 on Monday night for the Sabres' franchise record-tying 14th straight loss.

Kaapo Kakko also scored twice and Adam Fox had a goal and two assists as the Rangers won for the fourth time in six games (4-1-1) by beating the Sabres for the 10th time in the last 13 meetings. Artemi Panarin had three assists and Ryan Strome added two.

Keith Kinkaid, starting a second consecutive game, stopped 16 shots to improve to 3-1-1 this season.

**Senators 2, Flames 1:** Chris Tierney scored the tiebreaking goal late in the third period and Filip Gustavsson stopped 35 shots in his first NHL start, leading host Ottawa past Calgary.

**Sharks 2, Kings 1:** Ryan Donato scored the tiebreaking goal early in the third period, Martin Jones delivered one of his best performances in net all season and host San Jose beat Los Angeles.

geles.

**Hurricanes 3, Blue Jackets 0:** Martin Necas scored in his 100th NHL game, Alex Nedeljkovic earned his second career shutout and Carolina won at Columbus to snap a three-game losing streak.

**Islanders 2, Flyers 1 (OT):** Anthony Beauvillier scored on a wraparound 3:41 into overtime to give the Islanders to a victory at Philadelphia.

**Wild 2, Ducks 1:** Ryan Suter and Nick Bjugstad scored, Cam Talbot made 24 saves and Minnesota beat Anaheim for a franchise

record ninth straight home win.

**Avalanche 5, Coyotes 1:** Mikko Rantanen scored his 18th goal of the season and Colorado won its seventh game in a row by winning at Arizona.

**Golden Knights 5, Blues 1:** Keegan Kolesar scored his first NHL goal, Robin Lehner made 15 saves and host Vegas beat St. Louis.

**Jets 4, Canucks 0:** Adam Lowry had two goals, Connor Hellebuyck stopped 22 shots for his first shutout of the season and Winnipeg won at Vancouver.

## Patriots, Bucs making biggest waves in NFL free agency

Associated Press

Bill Belichick never was one to spend wildly in free agency. Watching Tom Brady win another Super Bowl in another city sure changed that.

The New England Patriots doled out \$175 million in guarantees in the first 48 hours of free agency following a 7-9 stumble in 2020 that ended their two-decade dominance of the AFC.

The jaw-dropping spending spree netted tight ends Jonnu Smith and Hunter Henry and receivers Nelson Agholor and Kendrick Bourne for an offense that went from proficient to pitiful without Brady under center.

The Pats also traded for a left tackle and got Kyle Van Noy back in what amounted to a stunning about-face for a franchise whose fans relished poking fun at the big spenders trying, usually in vain, to catch up as the Patriots piled on the points and parades.

After watching Brady, at 43, throw TD passes like he was 23 again, then nonchalantly toss his seventh Lombardi Trophy over the Hillsborough River waters during the Buccaneers' celebration of their dismantling of Patrick Mahomes and the

Chiefs, Belichick — and his boss, Robert Kraft — had seen enough.

Following the signing, re-signing or acquisition of nearly two dozen players last week, Belichick issued the following statement:

"We are excited about the additions to our roster so far this year. Whether by trade, free agency or re-signings, the group brings a good mix of offense, defense and special teams. It was great to see them in the building, including some familiar faces, and we are all looking forward to continue building toward the upcoming season."

### Brady's bunch

The Buccaneers, who won the Super Bowl with every one of their 31 points coming from players who hadn't been on the team in 2019, are big winners this offseason, too.

First, Brady signed an extension, freeing up \$19 million in salary cap space that allowed the Buccaneers to re-sign linebacker Lavonte David, tight end Rob Gronkowski and linebacker Shaq Barrett (four years, \$72 million).

The Bucs also franchised wide receiver Chris Godwin, and keeping all these stars in the

fold might very well keep Brady & Co. atop the NFL in 2021 no matter how much his former team spends to play catch-up.

### Paton's place

While the old-timers in New England restocked their roster, newcomer GM George Paton got off to a fast start in his quest to rebuild the Denver Broncos, which will go a long way in showing his worthiness as John Elway's front office successor.

After serving a lifetime as Vikings executive Rick Spielman's right-hand man, Paton has quickly made his mark as the main man in Denver.

In addition to keeping Von Miller, Justin Simmons and Shelby Harris, Paton filled his biggest defensive pothole by signing free agent cornerbacks Ronald Darby and Kyle Fuller.

"Well, George became my best friend this week," Harris cracked after signing a three-year, \$27 million contract a year after he had to settle for a one-year, \$2.5 million deal.

The haul helped fans start to get over Paton's decision to let hometown hero Phillip Lindsay leave.

Some other teams that made an early splash are the New York Giants, Washington and

Cleveland, which grabbed two of the Los Angeles Rams' secondary stalwarts in safety John Johnson and cornerback Troy Hill.

### Spendthrifts

While the Patriots and Broncos had plenty of cap room available, most teams had their belts squeezing them pretty tight with the \$182.5 million salary cap, an 8% reduction from 2020 because of the pandemic.

And some teams just didn't make the splash their fanbases expected in free agency.

■ Panthers general manager Scott Fitterer got off to an underwhelming start by signing guard Pat Elflein and tackle Cam Erving before luring wide receiver David Moore from Seattle and reuniting coach Matt Rhule with former Temple linebacker Haason Reddick.

■ The Bears had hoped to solve their decadeslong quarterback quandary by persuading the Seahawks to part with disgruntled star Russell Wilson. When that didn't happen, the Bears had to part ways with Fuller, who landed in Denver, to clear cap room for new QB Andy Dalton.

# Elgin Baylor, Lakers great, dies at 86

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Elgin Baylor changed the very direction of basketball when he joined the NBA and brought his vertical feats of athletic brilliance to a largely horizontal game.

He filled scoresheets and sparked young imaginations with his trailblazing aerial style, and every high-flying player of the past 60 years has followed his path.

Although the Lakers' first superstar in Los Angeles never won a championship ring, Baylor still looms high above the franchise and the game he loved.

The Hall of Fame forward died Monday of natural causes in Los Angeles with wife Elaine and daughter Krystal by his side, the team said. He was 86.

An 11-time All-Star who soared through the 1960s with a high-scoring artistry that became the model for the modern basketball player, Baylor played a major role in revolutionizing basketball from a ground-bound sport into an aerial show.

"Elgin was THE superstar of his era — his many accolades speak to that," Lakers owner Jeanie Buss said in a statement.

With a silky-smooth jumper and fluid athleticism, Baylor spent parts of 14 seasons with the Lakers in Minneapolis and Los Angeles, teaming with Jerry West in one of the most potent tandems in basketball history.

Baylor's second career as a personnel executive for 22 ½ years with the woebegone Los Angeles Clippers was far less successful, but he remained a beloved figure in Los Angeles and beyond. Baylor strengthened his ties again to the Lakers over the past decade, and the team honored him with a statue outside Staples Center in 2018.

"Elgin Baylor set the course for the modern NBA as one of the league's first superstar players," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "In addition to his legendary playing career, Elgin was a man of principle. He was a leading activist during the height of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s and an influential voice among his fellow players."

The 6-foot-5 Baylor played in an era before significant television coverage of basketball, and confoundingly little of his play was ever captured on film. His athletic brilliance is best remembered by those who saw it in person. No one had a better view than West, who once called him "one of the most spectacular shooters the world has ever seen."

Baylor had an uncanny ability to hang in mid-air indefinitely, inventing shots and improvising deception along his flight path. Years before Julius Erving and Michael Jordan became international heroes with their similarly acrobatic games, Baylor cre-

ated the blueprint for the modern superstar.

Baylor was the first NBA player to score 70 points in a game, and he still holds the single-game NBA Finals scoring record with 61 against Boston in 1962. He averaged 27.4 points and 13.5 rebounds over his career, and he even averaged a career-best 38 points during a season in which he only played on weekend passes while on active duty as an Army reservist.

"I spent a lot of time with him over the years," Charles Barkley said during CBS' coverage of the NCAA Tournament. "To me, he's probably the most underrated great basketball player of all time. He always carried himself with great dignity and respect."

Baylor played high above most of his contemporaries, but never won a championship or led the NBA in scoring largely because he played at the same time as centers Bill Russell, who won all the rings, and Wilt Chamberlain, who claimed all the scoring titles. Knee injuries hampered the second half of Baylor's career, although he remained a regular All-Star.

Baylor's Lakers lost six times in the NBA Finals to the Boston Celtics and another time to the New York Knicks. Los Angeles won the 1971-72 title, but only after Baylor retired nine games into the season.

## Wall's triple-double helps Rockets end skid at 20

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Stephen Silas walked off the court at halftime believing he'd seen a sign.

Danuel House Jr. swished a 51-footer at the buzzer, sending the Houston Rockets to the locker room on a high after 20 straight games of nothing but lows.

"I was like, 'Whoa, maybe this is the night,'" the Rockets coach said. "It felt like something special had happened. For us, something special happening is a win after so many losses in a row."

Houston went on to snap its 20-game losing streak Monday night, as John Wall had his first triple-double in five years in a 117-99 victory over the Toronto

Raptors.

The skid was tied for the ninth-worst in NBA history and the longest since Philadelphia's record-setting, 28-game losing streak across the 2014-15 and 2015-16 seasons.

Wall had 19 points, 10 assists and 11 rebounds, his first triple-double since March 17, 2016.

"It's like indescribable for a win in March of this crazy season, but I'm just so proud of the guys," Silas said. "When you're going through it and fighting so hard and seeing the disappointment in the players' faces after loss after loss after loss, and to go into the locker room after today's game and everybody is so happy and joyous is just super cool and great."

The Rockets also handed the Raptors their ninth straight loss, which now represents the NBA's longest active losing streak.

**Clippers 119, Hawks 110:** Kawhi Leonard scored 25 points, and host Los Angeles rallied from a 22-point deficit in the second half to snap Atlanta's eight-game winning streak.

**Bucks 140, Pacers 113:** Jrue Holiday had 28 points and 14 assists, and host Milwaukee posted its seventh straight win despite playing without Giannis Antetokounmpo because of a sprained left knee.

**Hornets 100, Spurs 97:** Gordon Hayward scored 27 points, Terry Rozier added 24 and Charlotte got a win at San Anto-

nio in its first game since losing LaMelo Ball to injury.

**Grizzlies 132, Celtics 126 (OT):** Ja Morant had 29 points and nine assists, and host Memphis won for the third time in four games.

**Jazz 120, Bulls 95:** Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points, sending Utah to the road win.

**Thunder 112, Timberwolves 103:** Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 31 points, and Oklahoma City relied on strong three-point shooting in the road win.

**Kings 119, Cavaliers 105:** De'Aaron Fox scored 30 points, Tyrese Haliburton had a career-high 28 and Sacramento completed its longest road trip of the season with a victory at Cleveland.