

STARS AND STRIPES®

Saturday, May 26, 2018

A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Moon, Kim meet, hope to save summit

BY KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The leaders of North and South Korea met Saturday for the second time in a month amid efforts to get a potential U.S.-North Korean summit back on track.

The meeting, which was not previously announced, underscored the importance to South Korea's president of efforts to peacefully resolve the crisis over the North's nuclear weapons program.

Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had a candid exchange of opinions about their own peace efforts as well as the hoped-for meeting between Kim and President Donald Trump, according to Moon's office.

Trump abruptly pulled out of plans to meet Kim on June 12

in Singapore last week, citing hostility in recent comments from the North. But he has suggested since he could reschedule the summit after welcoming a conciliatory response by Pyongyang.

Trump tweeted that if the summit happens, it likely will take place on June 12 in Singapore as originally planned.

The inter-Korean summit followed a much-heralded first meeting between the two leaders on April 27 as the longtime adversaries engaged in a flurry of diplomacy that reversed more than a year of rising tensions.

In the first summit, the two leaders agreed to pursue the "complete denuclearization" and a permanent peace settlement to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War.

The final declaration was short on details but did set up

mechanisms of communication and measures to improve inter-Korean relations.

Saturday's meeting lacked the fanfare of the first summit, which was broadcast live on TV and included a ceremonial tree-planting and a walk in the woods.

Moon and Kim met for about two hours in a building on the North Korean side of the truce village of Panmunjom in the heavily fortified border that divides the peninsula, spokesman Yoon Young-can said.

Photos released by the presidential Blue House show the two leaders posing for photos, seated around a conference table and embracing following their meeting.

Both sides agreed that Moon would announce the results of the summit at a press conference Sunday morning, his office said. More details were not

expected to be released before then.

South Korea, which brokered the talks between Washington and Pyongyang, was caught off-guard by Trump's announcement Thursday that he was calling off the summit and expressed relief as the U.S. and North Koreans quickly adopted a warmer tone.

"We see it as fortunate that the embers of dialogue between North Korea and the United States weren't fully extinguished and are coming alive again," South Korean presidential spokesman Kim Eui-kyeom said in an earlier statement.

China, which is North Korea's economic lifeline, also urged North Korea and the United States to "meet each other halfway" and "address mutual concerns through dialogue and consultation."

USS Ford returning to Va. shipbuilder for repairs

Daily Press (Newport News, Va.)

The USS Gerald R. Ford will return to Newport News Shipbuilding in mid-July for important upgrades and fixes to problems discovered during initial periods at sea, the Navy said last week.

The yearlong stay at Newport News will put the next-generation aircraft carrier one step closer to deployment. It is expected to be combat-ready in 2022.

The first problem on the \$12.9 billion warship was discovered in January while the Ford was underway out of Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia. It was a propulsion-related issue that Newport News Shipbuilding determined was due to a manufacturing defect, according

to an email from Bill Couch, a spokesman for Naval Sea Systems Command.

The Navy and the shipyard "are evaluating the case for a claim against the manufacturer," Couch said in an email. He did not identify the company.

The defects will be corrected once the ship returns to Newport News, he added.

A separate, mechanical-related problem cropped up when the Ford left Norfolk on May 19 for another underway period to conduct "an independent steaming event," Couch said.

While at sea, the ship "experienced a propulsion system issue associated with a recent design change," Couch said.

Tests had been conducted pierside before the ship went to

sea, but the design modification could not be completely evaluated while the carrier was tied up.

The ship is now back in Norfolk, and the crew anticipates returning to sea in a matter of days once adjustments are complete.

Once the Ford arrives at Newport News, shipbuilders will install remaining combat systems, complete any deferred work and correct any remaining problems identified during at-sea trials and shakedown.

Some work involves advanced weapons elevator construction and upgrades to the ship's advanced arresting gear, which allows planes to land safely on the flight deck.

The ship is expected to re-

main at Newport News for about a year, Couch said. The original schedule had the ship arriving in April and leaving in December.

The Ford is the first of a new generation of aircraft carriers. Like other first-in-class warships the Navy has rolled out, it has experienced a laundry list of growing pains. Arleigh-Burke-class destroyers and San Antonio-class amphibious ships both experienced problems early in development, and Ford continued that trend.

Construction was started before its design was complete, and it was packed with new, untested technology. Both its advanced arresting gear and new electromagnetic catapults were singled out for criticism.

Questions loom on prospect of dual wars

The Washington Post

The seeming collapse of the North Korea summit and the U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal have led top officials in the Trump administration to once again make veiled references to military action, with President Donald Trump most recently touting American might in a speech Friday at the U.S. Naval Academy.

But beyond the saber-rattling is a sobering reality well-known by strategists and planners at the Pentagon: The unlikely, worst-case scenario of sliding into open armed conflict with both Iran and North Korea simultaneously would strain the U.S. military to a degree few Americans could fathom.

Defense Secretary Jim Mattis has repeatedly warned that an open conflict on the Korean Peninsula alone would be catastrophic, resulting in the sort of warfare the U.S. military hasn't seen in generations. The outside chance of a conflict with Iran at the same time would

present Pentagon leaders with logistical, tactical and personnel challenges unenviable for any commander.

Former top Pentagon officials say the possibility of coinciding wars with Iran and North Korea remains extremely remote, and the United States could drift in the space between diplomatic breakthrough and all-out war for years. Still, if the dual wars were to occur, they would test decades of contingency planning that anticipates huge risks to the U.S. armed forces despite ultimate victory.

"Both fights would be costly," said David Ochmanek, a senior researcher at the Rand Corp. and a former top Pentagon strategist in the Clinton and Obama administrations. "In the end, you would expect the U.S. and its allies to prevail but at a human and material cost that would be almost incalculable, particularly in the case of the Korea example."

For decades dating back to the Cold War, planners at the

Pentagon have grappled with the question of how the U.S. military should prepare for the remote possibility of having to fight two full-scale regional wars at once. The national defense strategy issued by Mattis, however, emphasizes the need to build up military capability for a possible conflict with Russia and China and largely backs off the focus on waging two regional wars at once that once consumed the Pentagon.

But as the U.S. military pivots its focus to countering Russia and China, regional challenges from Iran and North Korea continue to consume the administration and the public.

"If you want to ensure the Pentagon can actually plan and prepare and resource for a potential conflict with China or Russia, then getting into conflict with Iran and North Korea is the exact wrong thing to do," said Mara Karlin, an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and a former

Pentagon strategist.

Whereas military planners envision a war with North Korea as primarily a land and air fight, ultimately requiring a massive ground invasion and ending in a regime change followed by stabilization, conflict with Iran would more likely be primarily a naval and air battle, focused on crippling specific missile and nuclear sites rather than dismantling the government itself.

Simultaneous warfare in the two countries would stress intelligence and reconnaissance assets such as drone overflights, which the U.S. military has come to rely on heavily, according to former Pentagon officials. Battles in two theaters also would strain Special Operations forces and possibly electronic warfare and tactical air support units, they said. Another challenge would be getting forces and equipment to both theaters in a prompt manner and sustaining them once they arrive.

Senate orders DOD to review child-on-child sex abuse

Associated Press

The Senate committee that oversees the U.S. military ordered an independent investigation of how the Defense Department handles sexual violence among children on bases as part of legislation that would overhaul how the Pentagon must respond when assaults are reported.

Military officials had quietly resisted an outside review of problems documented in an Associated Press investigation, which showed broad failures of justice when military kids sexually assault each other on bases worldwide.

As part of annual legislation that sets Pentagon policy priorities, the Senate Armed Services Committee included bipartisan proposals to fix juvenile justice on military installations and protect student victims at Pentagon-run schools.

The committee also directed the Defense Department's independent watchdog agency to investigate.

Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Jack Reed, D-R.I., the committee's top Republican and Democrat, had asked Defense

Secretary James Mattis in March to task his department's inspector general to do a "comprehensive assessment" of policies.

Instead, Mattis' office decided the Pentagon would lead the assessment itself.

Explaining that decision, Maj. Carla Gleason said Friday: "We have different investigative tools at our disposal, and we choose the appropriate tool for the situation."

But Gordon Heddell, the Pentagon inspector general from 2008 through 2011, said he could not recall an instance when a defense secretary declined to pass along a committee request.

"Smart, with-it secretaries, they cooperated," Heddell said, because it was "better to have a black eye than run the risk of being accused of obstruction."

Under the National Defense Authorization Act, which the Armed Services Committee passed Wednesday, the inspector general's report is due Dec. 1. Bruce Anderson, spokesman for the Pentagon's inspector general, said Friday the office would review the legislation and "take ap-

propriate action."

The fact that senators had to insist on an independent investigation was the latest example of the military seeking to limit congressional scrutiny. Pentagon officials who have briefed members of Congress and their staffs made clear they wanted to handle the issue without new legislation.

The inspector general's work will be the second outside investigation announced since the AP identified nearly 700 cases of child-on-child sexual assault on military bases worldwide in the last 10 years. Congress' watchdog agency, the Government Accountability Office, will review how the Pentagon's school system deals with sexual assault reports among its roughly 70,000 students, as well as how military investigators and lawyers seek justice for cases that can only be prosecuted in civilian courts.

AP found that cases of child-on-child sexual assault fell into a dead zone of justice because military law doesn't apply to civilians, and the federal authorities who are empowered to take them on most bases rarely do.

Former Navy leader, SEAL vie for House seat

BY BEN FINLEY

Associated Press

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — Political battle lines are forming in Virginia, where a woman who once led a combat-ready unit of 400 sailors wants to capture a Republican congressional seat held by a former Navy SEAL.

National Democrats are backing former Navy commander Elaine Luria in her quest to claim the 2nd District on Virginia's coast — home to the world's largest Navy base. Should she win the June primary, Luria's biggest foe is expected to be incumbent Scott Taylor, 38, in November.

The congressman, a former sniper in Iraq, won his first term by nearly 23 percentage points in 2016. Taylor said he's skeptical that anyone who "regurgitates Washington Democrat talking points" can win his district. But Luria, 42, vows to give voice to voters demanding change in Washington and help calm the "chaos."

The district runs from Virginia's rural Eastern Shore to Virginia Beach, the state's

largest city with about 450,000 people. It's home to government contractors and military installations, including the massive Naval Station Norfolk. More than 16 percent of the area's adults — about 87,000 people — are veterans, 2016 Census data indicate.

The race tests a national Democratic strategy of recruiting veterans eager to take back the House in one of the nation's most veteran-heavy regions. It also will gauge the strength of any blue wave against President Donald Trump, who carried the traditionally Republican district two years ago.

A U.S. Naval Academy graduate, Luria spent 20 years on active duty. Her various roles included operating nuclear reactors on an aircraft carrier and serving as second-in-command of a guided missile cruiser.

She and her Navy veteran husband now own a small business tied to the region's tourism industry: the Mermaid Factory, where customers drink wine and paint plaster casts of mermaids, a regional icon.

Luria has sounded universal Democratic themes, blasting Taylor for opposing univer-

sal background checks for gun purchases and for supporting the Republican-backed tax bill, which Democrats claim is skewed toward the rich. Another target: Taylor's support of a failed bid by Republicans to partially repeal the Affordable Care Act.

Luria and Taylor each have substantial fundraising leads against their respective primary opponents, whom they'll face June 12.

Luria's Democratic opponent is teacher Karen Mallard, a supporter of universal health care and a critic of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos. Mallard says voters are upset that the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee backed Luria this early.

Taylor's primary opponent is Mary Jones, a former chair of the James City County Board of Supervisors, who chides him for not supporting Trump more. Jones wrote in an email that Taylor has "abandoned Republican principles." She says some of her biggest issues include securing U.S. borders and cutting spending.

Trump weakens civil-service protections

BY NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is using recent changes at the Department of Veterans Affairs as a blueprint to make it easier to fire employees across the federal government.

Trump signed three executive orders Friday afternoon that aim to limit union activity, shorten the amount of time it takes to fire federal workers and encourage agencies to fire employees, instead of merely disciplining them.

"It's fulfilling a promise to empower every Cabinet secretary to remove those who undermine the public trust or fail the American people," Andrew Bremberg, director of the Domestic Policy Council and an assistant to the president, said while announcing the changes Friday.

The gist of the orders is to weed out bad workers — the same driving force behind changes made at the VA last June.

The VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 created more repercussions and a quicker firing process for poor-performing VA employees. Advocates saw it as a way to root out a perceived culture of corruption at the VA, which has been rocked by scandals in recent years.

The bill cut an advance-notice period given to employees ahead of their termination from 30 days to 10 days. It also sped up the process that employees use to appeal any disciplinary action against them. It lessened the evidentiary standards required to fire an employee, and it allows the VA secretary to recoup bonuses and relocation expenses in certain instances.

Since it was implemented in June, the number of firings increased. The VA fired 1,484 of its 370,000-person workforce last year, according to publicly posted data. In the first quarter of 2018, 714 people were fired from the VA.

During his State of the Union address in January, Trump made clear he wanted to ex-

tend the changes made at the VA throughout the federal government. He urged Congress to pass legislation giving every Cabinet secretary "the authority to reward good workers and to remove federal employees who undermine the public trust or fail the American people."

"We worked closely with the veterans department as they implemented accountability — that's the source of the president's call in the State of the Union," said a senior administration official who would not speak on the record.

The orders Trump signed Friday aren't as extensive as the changes made at the VA, but they're as much as Trump can do within his power, the administration official said. The White House will continue to call on Congress to rewrite civil-service laws.

"This is everything the executive branch can do in pursuit of this goal," the official said. "It doesn't get as far as the VA Accountability Act did for the veterans department. The key difference is that [the VA Ac-

countability Act] is a permanent law that can't be changed by an administration change."

However, the orders go further than the VA Accountability Act to address employees' union activity.

Trump directed agencies to renegotiate union contracts, with the goal of cutting time employees spend on union business by two-thirds.

One of the orders Trump signed Friday cuts the amount of work time employees can spend on union business to 25 percent. The order also requires agencies to charge rent to employees who use federal office space for union activities and to stop paying their travel expenses.

In addition, agencies must now report terminations and disciplinary actions to the Office of Personnel Management, which will publicize them. The action is an attempt to eliminate instances of employees getting fired or disciplined at one department and then hired by another federal agency that was unaware of past poor performance.

Hawaii school inundated with ash

Associated Press

HONOLULU — Aina Akamu gave final exams to his students as they sat on bleachers or the floor of the basketball court in the gym in his small town on Hawaii's Big Island.

He moved his class to the community of Pahala's gym nearby after he and his students could no longer stand the volcanic ash covering his classroom floor, chairs and desks.

"I decided today I'm not going back to my classroom for the rest of the year," he said Wednesday, a brief relocation before school ends this week.

Kau High and Pahala Elementary School is inundated with gritty, gray ash that has been spewing out of a volcano some 20 miles away. During intermittent explosions at Kilauea's summit, including one late Thursday, ash shoots high into the sky and drifts down onto the small, rural campus and nearby areas.

The ash is a new irritant for a town that's used to coping with volcanic smog from noxious fumes seeping from the summit and eruption vents. Pahala, near the southern end of the island, is downwind from subdivisions that needed to evacuate after lava started spewing from cracks in the ground three weeks ago.

The National Weather Service said it expected trade winds to slow this weekend, creating hazardous air quality. Volcanic gases, pollution and ash could increase, along with sulfur dioxide levels downwind of lava fissures.

Volcanic ash is the reason the area has such rich soil for crops, such as coffee, Akamu said.

"We're not complaining about the ash. We're not complaining about Pele," he said, referring to the Hawaiian volcano goddess.

But he's hoping his school could get some help cleaning the campus. Some wonder why it hasn't closed.

President's legal team wants a briefing on classified info

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's legal team wants a briefing on the classified information shared with lawmakers about the origins of the FBI investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election and may take it to the Justice Department as part of an effort to scuttle the ongoing special counsel probe.

Rudy Giuliani, one of Trump's attorneys, told The Associated Press on Friday that the White House hopes to get a readout of the information this week, particularly about the use of a longtime government informant who approached members of Trump's campaign in a possible bid to glean intelligence on Russian efforts to sway the election. Trump has made unproven claims of FBI misconduct and political bias and has denounced the asset as "a spy."

"If the spying was inappropriate, that means we may have an entirely illegitimate investigation," Giuliani said of special counsel Robert Mueller's probe. He then invoked the material

compiled by former FBI Director James Comey before he was fired.

"Coupled with Comey's illegally leaked memos, this means the whole thing was a mistake and should never have happened," Giuliani said. "We'd urge the Justice Department to re-evaluate, to acknowledge they made a mistake. It's a waste of \$20 million of the taxpayers' money. The whole thing is already a waste of money."

Comey has said he had the authority as a private citizen to ask a friend to share details from one of his memos with the news media and has said he did nothing wrong. The Justice Department official who would be the one to receive any complaints from Giuliani would presumably be Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller last year in the wake of Comey's firing and was present for Thursday's briefings.

Suggesting that the probe was launched on the backs of inappropriately obtained information was Giuliani's latest effort to discredit the investigation by painting it as a purely political

event.

The FBI began a counterintelligence investigation in July 2016 to determine if Trump campaign associates were coordinating with Russia to tip the election. The investigation was opened after the hacking of Democratic emails that intelligence officials later formally attributed to Russia.

So far, 19 people, including Trump's former campaign chairman and former national security adviser, have been charged in Mueller's investigation. Three former Trump aides have pleaded guilty and are cooperating with the investigation.

Democrats emerged from the meetings saying they saw no evidence to support Republican allegations that the FBI acted inappropriately. Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, was not in the meetings but in a radio interview Friday broke with the president to say a "confidential informant is not a spy," though he cautioned about investigations into campaigns.

Police: Suspect spoke of demon possession

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The man suspected of shooting three people in an Oklahoma City restaurant before being fatally shot by bystanders had no connection to the victims or the restaurant, and was authorized to carry a firearm, authorities said.

Investigators are trying to determine a motive behind the Thursday attack that wounded four, according to Oklahoma City Police Capt. Bo Mathews.

Mathews said Thursday's shooting appeared to be random but noted that Alexander Tilghman, 28, drove to the restaurant and wore protective gear for his ears and eyes.

On a Facebook page police said

belonged to Tilghman, the man posts a video in which he claims his TV is possessed by the devil. The page uses the same profile photo as a YouTube channel where a man that appears to be Tilghman also describes demons possessing his TV and being surrounded by computers.

The director of the LGBT rights group Freedom Oklahoma, Troy Stevenson, said Tilghman is the same man who distributed flyers across Oklahoma City earlier this year warning of demons taking over people's bodies. And a reporter with the LGBT publication The Gayly conducted an interview in January with Tilghman, who warned of "demons in cloned transsexual (sic) bodies."

Flyers with similar messages

were plastered all over a vehicle Tilghman drove, said Ryan Beaulac, who said he frequently saw Tilghman at his apartment complex in northwest Oklahoma City.

Tilghman was licensed as an armed security guard, which authorized him to carry a firearm, said Gerald Konkler, general counsel for the Oklahoma Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training.

Police said Tilghman was armed with a pistol when he opened fire inside Louie's On The Lake around 6:30 p.m. on Thursday. A 39-year-old woman and two girls were shot and wounded.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police probe how gun ended up in bumper

WA LAKEWOOD — Talk about gunning the engine.

Authorities said a driver near Tacoma saw an object strike the front of his car during his evening commute Wednesday. When he stopped for gas 18 miles later, he discovered it was a handgun.

The weapon was embedded in his bumper, barrel-end first, with the trigger sticking out just below the driver's-side headlight.

Washington State Patrol Trooper Guy Gill said the driver notified troopers, who recovered the gun, which was missing its magazine. Gill calls it a "completely bizarre way to recover a weapon."

Lakewood Police Lt. Chris Lawler said the department is investigating whether it was linked to a nearby fight where shots were fired.

Rain brings out snakes looking for dry ground

FL ORLANDO — While rain falls on Florida, snakes are slithering for drier ground.

Snake expert Bob Cross told the Orlando Sentinel that he caught a venomous cottonmouth Monday on a sidewalk in his community near Orlando. He said it's the third such snake he's captured in the past two weeks.

Lots of nonvenomous snakes, including black racers, also are moving around, looking for dry conditions. Cross said you can blame it on the rain. He said rain over several days has pushed the snakes out of the holes where they live and from other places they tend to hide.

Man accused of pulling gun while driving drunk

MA WOBURN — A Massachusetts man suspected of being intoxicated and pulling a gun on another driver was arrested.

Massachusetts State Police said a trooper responded to a call about road rage on I-95 in Woburn shortly after 2:30 a.m. Tuesday to find an SUV had been hit by a black Jeep Cherokee.

Jason Root, 30, was detained when police found a gun visible on his seat. Root was accused of pulling a gun on the unidentified driver of the SUV after smashing into his car and running him off the road.

Root was charged with operating under the influence of liquor, assault with a dangerous weapon, resisting arrest, and reckless operation of a car.

Wolf-like animal shot; DNA tests ongoing

MT DENTON — A central Montana rancher shot a wolf-like animal after it was spotted in a pasture with livestock, but a closer look prompted state wildlife officials to take DNA samples to determine what type of animal it was.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks regional spokesman Bruce Auchly said the animal's front claws and canine teeth are too short and its ears are too tall in proportion to its skull for it to be a purebred wolf.

FWP wolf management specialist Ty Smucker said the animal could be a wolf-dog hybrid. The DNA tests haven't been returned.

Warden Zach Norris said the rancher was within his rights to kill the animal because it was seen near livestock, domestic dogs and children.

Farmer pleads not guilty to cruelty in pig deaths

ME SWANVILLE — A Maine farmer who police said killed and buried a dozen malnourished pigs before agents inspected them has pleaded not guilty to animal cruelty charges.

The Bangor Daily News reported Jerry Ireland's attorney entered the plea on his client's behalf last week. Ireland faces 13 counts of cruelty to animals.

Authorities said Maine Animal Welfare Program agents who responded to Ireland's Swanville farm in March found a live pig locked in a barn without food or water along with a cow that had bedding "full of manure."

A further search uncovered a dozen dead Mangalitsa pig carcasses in two different stalls. Agents said the pigs were all thin.

The lone live pig was taken to a rescue center.

County: Wrong man's voting rights canceled

IA SPENCER — An auditor said her office mistakenly cancelled the voting rights of a northwest Iowa rancher who has a name similar to that of a felon.

Clay County Auditor Marge Pitts said Friday her office made Christopher E. Wood ineligible to vote last fall. She said that was an "unfortunate error" because he'd done nothing wrong. Her office had intended to cancel the voting rights of repeat criminal offender Christopher R. Wood.

Pitts said she worked with the state to correct the mistake and to restore Wood's voting rights after he complained. She noted that there were no elections when he was disqualified.

Two wrestle AR-15 from angry bar patron

CA REDLANDS — Authorities said a man who got in a fight at a Southern California bar and later returned with a rifle was disarmed by an employee and an off-duty sheriff's deputy.

Police said the suspect had been drinking May 19 when he got into an altercation at the establishment in downtown Redlands.

Officials said the man left and went home to retrieve an AR-15 and a loaded 30-round magazine. Police said he threatened three people in the parking lot and then tried to re-enter the bar wielding the gun. That's when, officials said, a bar worker and an off-duty deputy wrestled the rifle away and held him for officers.

Teen accused of doling out pot-laced cookies

CT HAMDEN — A teen girl was arrested after five Connecticut students were sent to an emergency room for consuming tainted cookies.

The New Haven Register reported the girl, 15, was detained Monday after students from Hamden High School were taken to the hospital for eating what police are calling, "marijuana cookies."

Police said the students appeared to be under the influence of drugs and were sent to the school nurse earlier.

The students were sent to Yale New Haven Hospital as a precaution and have since been released. The girl, who has not been identified, is charged with five counts of risk of injury to a minor, and is scheduled to appear in juvenile court in New Haven.

From wire reports

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Danica Patrick takes last shot at Indy 500

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Danica Patrick strolled into Indianapolis Motor Speedway with a sunburn, a surprise gift from an afternoon spent in Green Bay, reading books while lying in the grass with boyfriend Aaron Rodgers.

As retirement comes racing toward her, she's never been more at ease — except for one thing.

Patrick was looking relaxed at the final media day of her racing career, wearing white cutoff shorts and \$500 Golden Goose sneakers — with just a touch of gray hair at her temples — as she admitted she has never been as nervous as she is heading into her final Indianapolis 500.

She recalled sharing breakfast with her father, the man who led her into racing and helped her become one of the most recognizable female athletes in the world.

Now, 36, she asked him about Sunday's show on the stage where Patrick has always em-

braced the spotlight.

"I was like, 'Dad, what do you think the chances are? Do you think I got a shot? I obviously know I have a shot, but let's talk real, like father-daughter. What have you seen out there?'" Patrick said.

"I'm asking him because I know there's a chance. I've been saying the last few days there's a difference between the beginning, when I signed up for it — I was hopeful it would go well — there's a difference between where it is now. Now it's not just a hope, it's more of a reality that I've really got a shot at it."

It, of course, is a win, and it would be a remarkable feat should it come to pass — icing on the cake for a driver for years criticized as not good enough for a résumé light on wins.

Her farewell tour ends at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. She led laps and finished fourth as a rookie in 2005, was a career-best third in 2009 and the only time she finished out-

side the top 10 in seven starts was when she was involved in a crash on pit road.

She moved to NASCAR full-time after the 2011 season, in part because that's where sponsor GoDaddy wanted her to be, and because it was time for the only female driver to win an IndyCar race to try something new. NASCAR started out OK, and Patrick won the pole for the Daytona 500, and to this day she's the only woman to lead laps in both the Indy 500 and Daytona 500.

But she never got comfortable in stock cars. She never won a race, never scored a top-five finish.

And just like that, after six full seasons, she was done. Her sponsorship had dried up and Patrick had to figure out her next move. The girl from Illinois, who left home at 16 to move to Europe and chase her dreams of being a professional race car driver, had no more racing ahead of her.

Patrick is not a quitter, though. She lives her life with-

out looking back. So she was determined to go out her own way, which was through a "Danica Double," the 500-mile showcase races at Daytona and Indianapolis.

Daytona was merely OK. She was in a one-off ride that brought her NASCAR career full circle, and it ended with the kind of crash that happens to everyone at least once in a restrictor-plate race. But Indy? Well, this is where she sparkles, and landing a ride capable of winning the race was important.

She got a fast Chevrolet from Ed Carpenter Racing and qualified seventh, next to teammate Spencer Pigot. Carpenter is on the pole, and three of his entries are a real threat to challenge the quartet of Chevys from Roger Penske.

Patrick has a very real opportunity to put the past six seasons of disappointment behind her, and just maybe have one last 500-mile run for fun.

Dixon returns to Brickyard after spectacular crash

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Scott Dixon has no trouble watching replays of last year's Indianapolis 500, when a car driven by Jay Howard slid across the track and sent him catapulting into the catch fence.

Dixon understands that crashes happen in auto racing. They happen at unpredictable times and unbelievable speeds, especially at Indy. Everything is magnified at the hallowed racetrack, success measured in hundredths of seconds and the failures leading to devastating wrecks.

"It's part of racing. It wasn't my first crash. It won't be my last," said Dixon, who will start outside in Row 3 in Sunday's race. "You just hope you're lucky enough, and we've been very lucky to be in modern-day racing where safety standards

are so much higher."

Indeed, there have not been any fatalities in IndyCar at the track since 1996, when Scott Brayton was killed testing a backup car in practice. But the way Dixon went airborne after driving up on Howard, and the way his car disintegrated in flames when it hit the fencing, undoubtedly left thousands of race fans wondering whether the popular New Zealand driver had become the next.

Remarkably, Dixon not only walked away from the wreck but did so with a smile and shrug, finishing second the following week in Detroit and winning a few weeks later at Road America in Wisconsin.

Tagging along for the entire ride was a film crew from Universal Pictures.

Dixon had granted unfettered access to his pursuit of

a fifth IndyCar Series title, beginning with his preparations for the season and ending long after his third-place finish in the standings. The result, "Born Racer," is scheduled to be released later this year.

"Obviously we're at a point in my career where we've achieved a lot. The team has, too," said Dixon, who has had the pole three times for the Indy 500 and won from there in 2008. "It was just really trying to find the right fit, making sure the essence of what they were capturing was good."

The film, directed by Bryn Evans and produced by Matthew Metcalfe and Fraser Brown, provides viewers with an inside look at an IndyCar team. It wades into some controversy, the pressure and the euphoric highs that drivers experience on a week-to-week

basis.

It also provides an intimate look at Dixon away from the track, where his wife Emma and their two daughters, Poppy and Tilly, are firmly planted at the center of his universe.

"I think I can speak for all the wives, fiancées, girlfriends, other halves, but when I speak of Scott's wins, I always say 'we.' It's really bad. I catch myself saying it sometimes," Emma said. "The team, Chip, Scott, Mike, everybody behind the team has done very hard work."

"I don't know," she said, "when he's up on the top of the podium, I'm feeling that win, too. Not just because I love my husband and I'm proud of him, but it really does feel like a win for us."

Of course, that also means the family had to endure his startling wreck last season.

LeBron nets 46, Cavaliers force Game 7

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — LeBron James chose Boston as the place he'll play next.

Game 7 is on. And any talk about James' future is on hold.

Delivering another performance for the ages, James scored 46 points and preserved his reign atop the Eastern Conference for at least one more game as the Cleveland Cavaliers shook off losing All-Star Kevin Love with a head injury and beat the Celtics 109-99 on Friday night to force a decisive climax to this back-and-forth series.

James, playing in perhaps his final game for the Cavs in Cleveland, added 11 rebounds and nine assists while playing all but two minutes — to avoid elimination and delay any decisions about where he'll continue his remarkable career next season.

"Greatness," Cavs coach Tyronn Lue said. "Championship pedigree. Giving it his all. We needed that, especially when Kevin went down. We had to play 'Bron as many minutes as he had to. He delivered. He was

up for the challenge. He carried us home, as usual."

The king is not dead, and he still has a chance to make his eighth straight NBA Finals.

This series, in which home court has meant everything, will have a fitting conclusion Sunday at TD Garden, where the Celtics are 10-0 this postseason.

"It's a Game 7," James said. "It's something that you wish you had when you're done playing, but more than that, it's just basketball for me. I know what I'm capable of doing, and I'm going to trust everything I put into it."

George Hill added 20 points, and Jeff Green 14 for the Cavs, who lost Love in the first quarter after he banged heads with Boston rookie Jayson Tatum.

Terry Rozier paced the Celtics — now 1-6 on the road — with 28 points, and Jaylen Brown had 27.

The Celtics were still within seven in the final three minutes before James made consecutive three-pointers, punctuating the second by pounding his chest with both fists and screaming

along with 20,562 others.

"The love of the game," James said, explaining his reaction. "It's a feeling you can't explain."

Just for good measure, he added a three-point play and then was taken out of the game to a rousing ovation and chants of "Cavs in seven!"

Boston's improbable run through the postseason without injured stars Kyrie Irving and Gordon Hayward will now take the Celtics back home, where they play with more intensity, togetherness and before fans hungry to see an 18th title banner raised to their arena's rafters.

"It's not going to be pretty," Celtics guard Marcus Smart said. "We've got to come out ready to get our nose bloody and our mouth bloody. We've got to come out ready to fight. You've got to find a way, whatever it takes."

Love went out with a head injury in the first quarter, forcing Lue to juggle his rotations and keep James on the floor longer than he wanted to. The three-time champion played the first

35 minutes without a break and then endured the final eight while nursing a right leg.

James didn't know until after the game that teammate Larry Nance Jr. had banged into him.

"I felt some pain throughout my entire right side of my ankle into my leg," he said. "I was just hoping for the best, obviously, because I've seen so many different injuries, and watching basketball with that type of injury, someone fall into one's leg standing straight up. Luckily, I was able to finish the game."

Hill, who came over in a deadline trade, has been awed by what James has done in this postseason.

"I've been in the league for some years and ran across him on the other side and really hated his guts," said Hill, who was on Indiana teams eliminated by James. "But to have him on our side, it kind of lets me take a deep breath of fresh air. It's just something that you really can't explain what he's doing night in, night out. It's just something special."

With or without contract, Trotz leads Caps to Final

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — One of the lasting images from the Capitals' playoff run came the morning of Game 7 in the Eastern Conference final.

Usually Alex Ovechkin hustles around the rink in a hot lap prior to the morning skate. Only this time it was 55-year-old coach Barry Trotz, who answered the call from his players to do the lap.

"I was worried about the turns," Trotz said. "The rudders haven't been sharpened all year. ... I almost bit it at the end there trying to imitate Ovi."

The Capitals beat the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-0 that night to punch their ticket to the Stanley Cup Final, but they might've won Game 7 at that moment. Rarely in previous postseasons

had Trotz been that relaxed, the result of an unusual situation.

Trotz went into the season without — and still doesn't have — a contract for next season, a circumstance that almost never happens to an experienced coach of a team with legitimate postseason hopes. But in a strange way, being a lame-duck coach might've helped Trotz not feel the pressure of past early exits and played a positive role in getting this far.

"I think it could be the same effect on a player, too, that's becoming a free agent," general manager Brian MacLellan said Friday. "He's basically becoming a free agent as a coach, and what effect does that have? Do you have your best year when you're a free agent?"

Trotz has. Even with the fifth-most victories of any

coach in NHL history, until this spring he hadn't made it past the second round in 18 previous seasons with the Nashville Predators and Capitals. He called it "luck of the draw," running into championship-bound teams from Detroit, Chicago and Pittsburgh.

This improbable Capitals run that continues with Game 1 of the Cup Final on Monday in Las Vegas is not luck. It's parts Ovechkin and goaltender Braden Holtby, and also the right moves by Trotz. He called on Philipp Grubauer to start the first round in goal before switching to Holtby in Game 2 against Columbus and watching him get on a roll. He put Jakub Vrana on the top line not long before the rookie scored the winner in Game 5 against the Penguins and pushed all

the right buttons on rest and preparation.

Teams tend to read cues from a head coach, and those have been positive.

"I think his demeanor has changed a little bit," MacLellan said. "He seems a little lighter, a little looser, a little less pressure, maybe a little more freedom in terms of how he goes about things."

Despite back-to-back Presidents' Trophies, MacLellan and Capitals management didn't offer Trotz an extension.

Before the playoffs, Trotz said he hadn't lost any sleep over his status and referred questions to MacLellan and owner Ted Leonsis. In March, Leonsis said he doesn't talk about contracts, and MacLellan has repeatedly stated that any talks would wait until after the playoffs.

Paxton dominant as Mariners top Twins

Associated Press

SEATTLE — James Paxton made one mistake, missing on his location with the only pitch he wanted back from another dominant performance.

It made the big Seattle lefty angry — well, at least as angry as Paxton can get.

“I think I got a little upset there and started letting it rip a little more,” Paxton said.

Paxton continued his overpowering month by allowing one run in seven innings and striking out 11, and Mitch Haniger’s two-out RBI single in the sixth inning helped give the Mariners a 2-1 win over the Minnesota Twins on Friday night.

Seattle won its league-best 14th one-run game, thanks largely to another strong performance by Paxton. He allowed just three hits — two to

Max Kepler — and didn’t walk a batter, adding to a magnificent May that has been the finest month of his career.

In four of his five starts this month, Paxton (4-1) has pitched at least seven innings. He has a pair of complete games, including the first no-hitter of his career, and has allowed a combined five earned runs in 38 innings with 46 strikeouts.

“We couldn’t solve Paxton. I don’t know how many strikeouts he had, but yeah, (he’s) as advertised,” Minnesota manager Paul Molitor said.

The pitch that made Paxton mad happened in the fifth when he left a slider in the middle of the plate and Kepler hit it out for his seventh homer of the season. Paxton had retired the previous 12 batters. He finished the inning by striking out the side — the second time he did that to the Twins — and com-

pleted his night after throwing 103 pitches.

Nick Vincent bridged the eighth and Edwin Diaz pitched the ninth for his AL-leading 18th save.

“The majority of those late wins, it’s dictated by the quality of your bullpen and our guys have done a great job keeping them right there or locking down leads, or if we’re behind or tied keeping the score right in check,” Seattle manager Scott Servais said. “It’s really tied to bullpen for me. But there is a feeling that when you’re tight late in the ballgame, good things are going to happen for us.”

Minnesota starter Fernando Romero (2-1) was nearly the equal of Paxton. Making just his fifth career start, the 23-year-old right-hander allowed just five hits in seven innings and struck out seven. The tim-

ing of those hits was the issue.

Jean Segura led off the bottom of the first with a single, stole second and scored on Nelson Cruz’s two-out single. Romero retired 10 straight following Cruz’s hit, but ran into trouble in the sixth. He walked Guillermo Heredia on a 3-2 pitch with two outs and a wild pitch advanced Heredia to second base. In his previous at-bat, Haniger hit into the shift grounding out to Brian Dozier playing on the shortstop side of second base. This time, Haniger hit behind the shift, grounding a single into center field and scoring Heredia with the go-ahead run.

“It doesn’t hurt. Manager’s decision. If second base was there, take that and it was supposed to happen in the game,” Romero said. “(Haniger) gets all the credit. It just happened.”

Roundup

Torres homers again to leads Yankees past Angels

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Gleyber Torres became the youngest American League player to homer in four straight games, Aaron Judge threw out a pair of runners from right field and the New York Yankees beat the Los Angeles Angels 2-1 on Friday night.

Shohei Ohtani, the two-way Japanese rookie sensation, came up with the potential tying run on base and two outs in the eighth. New York brought in closer Aroldis Chapman to face Ohtani with Justin Upton at first. Chapman threw a wild pitch that advanced the runner, Ohtani sent a 100 mph pitch just foul of the left-field pole, then grounded out on a 101 mph offering.

Mike Trout tied the score in the fifth for Los Angeles with his 16th homer.

Red Sox 6, Braves 2: Mookie Betts hit his major league-

leading 17th home run, J.D. Martinez slugged his 16th and host Boston beat Atlanta hours after a roster shakeup.

Brewers 4, Mets 3 (10): A.J. Ramos walked consecutive batters to force in the winning run with two outs in the 10th inning, handing host Milwaukee the victory over New York.

Orioles 2, Rays 0: David Hess (2-1) pitched four-hit ball into the seventh inning, helping visiting Baltimore overcome a strong effort from Tampa Bay’s bullpen.

Astros 11, Indians 2: Jose Altuve tied it in the eighth inning with a two-run double off Andrew Miller and then scored the go-ahead run on Marwin Gonzalez’s squeeze bunt, and visiting Houston scored 11 times in the final two innings to rout Cleveland.

Diamondbacks 7, Athletics 1: Patrick Corbin (5-1) allowed four hits in seven innings and

Nick Ahmed homered to help visiting Arizona snap a seven-game losing streak with the victory over Oakland.

Dodgers 4, Padres 1: Matt Kemp slugged a three-run homer in the first inning, Enrique Hernandez added a solo shot in the third and host Los Angeles beat San Diego in a matchup of the two worst teams in the NL West.

Blue Jays 6, Phillies 5: Justin Smoak homered, Sam Gaviglio (2-0) struck out six over six innings and Ryan Tepera escaped a ninth-inning jam for his first save to lead visiting Toronto past Philadelphia.

Pirates 8, Cardinals 1: Joe Musgrove (1-0) came off the disabled list to win his Pittsburgh debut with seven scoreless innings, and scored the winning run against visiting St. Louis.

Cubs 6, Giants 2: Kyle Hendricks (4-3) limited visiting San

Francisco to one run and two hits over seven innings, and Ben Zobrist lined a tiebreaking two-run double in the seventh for Chicago.

Rockies 5, Reds 4: Pinch-hitter Noel Cuevas hit a tiebreaking triple in the sixth inning, Jon Gray (5-6) settled down after a shaky start and host Colorado beat Cincinnati.

Rangers 8, Royals 4: Ronald Guzman homered in his fourth straight start and drove in three runs, leading host Texas past Kansas City.

Nationals 9, Marlins 5: Max Scherzer (8-1) was twice unable to hold a two-run lead and won anyway when visiting Washington’s bullpen locked down Miami.

White Sox 5, Tigers 4: Jeimer Candelario had a go-ahead RBI bloop single during a three-run eighth inning and host Detroit rallied past Chicago.