

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

stripes.com

Trump admits pardons 'controversial'

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump acknowledged Friday that his consideration of pardons for U.S. servicemembers accused or convicted of war crimes is “a little bit controversial” and suggested he would not be making decisions before Memorial Day.

The New York Times recently reported that Trump could issue pardons in some cases around Memorial Day, a holiday meant to remember the United States’ war dead.

Speaking to reporters as he prepared to leave the White House en route to Japan, Trump said he was “looking at a lot of different pardons for a lot of different people.”

“Some of these soldiers are people that have fought hard,

long,” Trump said. “You know, we teach them how to be great fighters, and then when they fight, sometimes they get treated very unfairly.

“So we’re going to take a look at it,” he continued. “I haven’t done anything yet. I haven’t made any decisions. There’s two or three of them right now. It’s a little bit controversial.”

He added that in cases of those members who’ve yet to stand trial, “it’s very possible that I’ll let the trials go on and I’ll make my decision after the trial.”

In a tweet last year, Trump said that he would review the case of Army Maj. Mathew L. Golsteyn, who faces a murder charge in the death of a suspected Taliban bomb maker.

Trump also directed the Navy to remove Special War-

fare Operator Chief Edward Gallagher from a military brig as he faces a murder charge in the death of an Islamic State detainee. Gallagher is now restricted to his base.

The Times reported that other cases believed to be under review include that of a former Blackwater security contractor recently found guilty in the deadly 2007 shooting of dozens of unarmed Iraqis, and that of a group of Marine Corps snipers charged with urinating on the corpses of dead Taliban fighters.

Reports that Trump was considering issuing the pardons on Memorial Day has prompted considerable criticism, including a USA Today editorial that said it would be “blasphemy” to do so on “a holiday honoring all that Americans cherish

about the sacrifices of those in uniform.”

Several of the Democrats seeking to displace Trump in next year’s elections have also spoken out about his reported deliberations, including South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg.

Appearing at a Washington Post Live event on Thursday, Buttigieg, who served in Afghanistan as a Navy Reserve intelligence officer, said he thinks it is “disgusting” that Trump is considering using his executive power to issue pardons to war criminals.

Buttigieg argued that doing so would undermine the credibility of the U.S. military justice system. “If the president blows a hole in that, he is blowing a hole in the military, and he is putting troops’ lives at risk,” he said.

US sailor contacted Russians, guilty of espionage

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A U.S. sailor has pleaded guilty to two counts of espionage and sentenced to three years after admitting he took classified information about the Navy’s nuclear-powered warships and planned to give it to a journalist and then defect to Russia, officials said Friday.

U.S. Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Kellogg III wished to publish an expose on waste within the military and admitted he wanted to share the information with Russians, said Jeff Houston, of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, in an email to The Associated Press.

According to Navy court documents, Kellogg, 26, was in contact with Sevmash, Russia’s largest shipbuilding enterprise. He admitted he knew releasing the information could degrade the ability of nuclear-powered warships and, therefore, cause injury to the United States.

Neither Kellogg nor his lawyers could be immediately reached for comment.

Authorities learned of his plans after arresting Kellogg on Aug. 27 for drunken disorderly conduct at the San Diego airport where he was stopped by a Delta Airlines employee from boarding a flight to New York City because he was being belligerent, according to court documents.

He had bought a one-way ticket and planned to meet a friend from high school who is a journalist who lives in New York City and told the person he had a big story, according to investigators and court documents.

Kellogg knew if the information became public, potential adversaries would likely know the capabilities and limitations of the United States’ nuclear-powered warships, according to his pretrial agreement.

Kellogg, who joined the Navy in 2014, was a nuclear electrician’s mate with access to classified information relating to the ca-

pabilities, operations and maintenance of the Navy’s nuclear propulsion systems. He served aboard the USS Carl Vinson from 2016 to 2018.

“This sailor’s attempts to disclose classified Navy nuclear propulsion information posed a significant threat to national security and endangered the lives of American servicemembers,” FBI Special Agent in Charge Garrett Waugh said in a statement.

Authorities said Kellogg also admitted to photographing areas containing sensitive information about the Navy’s nuclear propulsion program on the ship and then sending the photos to his father and ex-girlfriend.

He told authorities he stored classified information in his berth, violating protocol, according to the FBI.

He will receive a dishonorable discharge and a reduction in rank, authorities said.

Woman found alive after missing for two weeks

Associated Press

WAILUKU, Hawaii — A Hawaii woman has been found alive in a forest on Maui island after going missing more than two weeks ago.

Amanda Eller was found injured in the Makawao Forest Reserve, the Maui News reported Friday.

Family spokeswoman Sarah Haynes confirmed she spoke with Eller's father John. Eller was being airlifted to safety.

The physical therapist from the Maui town of Haiku went missing on May 8.

Her white Toyota RAV4 was found in the forest parking lot with her phone and wallet inside. Hundreds of volunteers have searched for her since.

Javier Cantellops said he was searching for Eller from a helicopter along with Chris Berquist and Troy Helmers when they spotted her, reported the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

Cantellops said she was in the bed of a creek with waterfalls on either side.

It's unknown how or to what extent Eller was injured, as well as how she survived until she was found.

Judge blocks use of defense funds for Trump border wall

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A federal judge on Friday blocked President Donald Trump from building key sections of his border wall with money secured under his declaration of a national emergency, delivering what may prove a temporary setback on one of his highest priorities.

U.S. District Judge Haywood Gilliam Jr.'s order prevents work from beginning on two of the highest-priority, Pentagon-funded wall projects — one spanning 46 miles in New Mexico and another covering 5 miles in Yuma, Ariz.

While the order applied only to those first-in-line projects, the judge made clear that he felt the challengers were likely to prevail at trial on their argument that the president was wrongly ignoring Congress' wishes by diverting Defense Department money.

"Congress's 'absolute' control over federal expenditures — even when that control may frustrate the desires of the Executive Branch regarding initiatives it views as important — is not a bug in our constitutional system. It is a feature of

that system, and an essential one," he wrote in his 56-page opinion.

It wasn't a total defeat for the administration. Gilliam, an Oakland-based appointee of President Barack Obama, rejected a request by California and 19 other states to prevent the diversion of hundreds of millions of dollars in Treasury asset forfeiture funds to wall construction, in part because he felt they were unlikely to prevail on arguments that the administration skirted environmental impact reviews.

The delay may be temporary. The question for Gilliam was whether to allow construction with Defense and Treasury funds while the lawsuits brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and the state attorneys general were being considered. The cases still must be heard on their merits.

"This order is a win for our system of checks and balances, the rule of law, and border communities," said Dror Ladin, an attorney for the ACLU, which represented the Sierra Club and the Southern Border Communities Coalition.

The administration faces

several lawsuits over the emergency declaration but only one other seeks to block construction during the legal challenge. A judge in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, heard arguments on a challenge brought by the U.S. House of Representatives that says the money shifting violates the constitution. The judge was weighing whether the lawmakers even had the ability to sue the president instead of working through political routes to resolve the bitter dispute.

The administration has awarded 11 wall contracts for a combined \$2.76 billion — including three in the last two months that draw on Defense Department counterdrug money — and is preparing for a flurry of construction that the president is already celebrating at campaign-style rallies.

The Army Corps of Engineers recently announced several large contracts with Pentagon funding.

Gilliam's ruling gives a green light — at least for now — for the administration to tap the Treasury funds, which it has said it plans to use to extend barriers in Rio Grande Valley.

White House moves to revoke transgender health protection

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration moved Friday to revoke newly won health care discrimination protections for transgender people, the latest in a series of actions that aim to reverse gains by LGBTQ Americans in areas ranging from the military to housing and education.

The Health and Human Services Department released a proposed regulation that in effect says "gender identity"

is not protected under federal laws that prohibit sex discrimination in health care. It would reverse an Obama-era policy that the Trump administration already is not enforcing.

"The actions today are part and parcel of this administration's efforts to erase LGBTQ people from federal regulations and to undermine nondiscrimination protections across the board," said Omar Gonzalez-Pagan, a senior attorney on health care at Lambda Legal, a

civil rights organization representing LGBT people.

The administration also has moved to restrict military service by transgender men and women, proposed allowing certain homeless shelters to take gender identity into account in offering someone a bed for the night and concluded in a 2017 Justice Department memo that federal civil rights law does not protect transgender people from discrimination at work. As one of her first policy

moves, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos withdrew guidance that allowed students to use bathrooms matching their gender identity.

Pushing back against critics, the HHS official overseeing the new regulation said transgender patients would continue to be protected by other federal laws that bar discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age and disability.

Bolton: N. Korea at top of Japan visit list

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — North Korea should discuss the return of a U.S. warship it seized more than 50 years ago if it has issues with the detention of a cargo vessel accused of violating U.N. sanctions, national security adviser John Bolton said Saturday.

“Maybe now would be an appropriate time to talk about the return of the (USS) Pueblo,” he told reporters at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo hours before Air Force One touched down at the city’s Haneda International

Airport for President Donald Trump’s second state visit to Japan.

The president’s right-hand man on national security — who said North Korea will be among the first issues discussed by Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe — was responding to North Korean complaints about the seizure of one of its cargo ships for transporting coal in violation of U.N. Security Council sanctions aimed at punishing the North for its nuclear weapons program.

The *Wise Honest*, as the North Korean ship is known,

has been held since May 11 at American Samoa, a U.S. island territory in the South Pacific.

The USS *Pueblo* has been held by the North Koreans since they attacked and captured the naval intelligence ship along with 82 Navy sailors on Jan. 23, 1968.

The *Pueblo*’s crew, including one sailor killed in action, were released after 11 months of torture and starvation as prisoners of war; however, the ship remains moored beside a river in Pyongyang, where it’s used as a museum.

It’s the only commissioned Navy vessel held captive

by a foreign nation, according to Britain’s *Daily Mail* newspaper.

North Korea’s ambassador to the U.N., Kim Song, has called the *Wise Honest*’s seizure a manifestation of the “extreme hostile policy of the United States” against the North.

Bolton said the ship was taken out of North Korean custody 13 to 14 months ago and that the United States is simply following through with normal civil forfeiture procedures.

He also said missile launches by the North on May 4 and May 9 also violate U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Rise in number of cancer deaths among veterans

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON—On Memorial Day 2013, Coleen Bowman was a new widow. Her husband had died four months earlier and she wanted support to face that first military holiday of remembrance. So she registered for TAPS, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, and spent the weekend with hundreds of other grieving military families.

“There was a lot of KIAs,” Coleen said, referring to those killed in action.

But that was not how Coleen’s husband had died, and it made her feel more alone.

“It was like, ‘Oh, your husband died of an illness.’”

She’s no longer alone. TAPS’ membership rolls are growing, but not because of combat deaths. In the last five years, it has reported a 51% increase in the numbers of families grieving a servicemember who died due to illness or cancer.

The spike led the organization to make a tragic projection: By 2020, the top killer driving military families to join TAPS won’t be suicide. It will be cancers or other illnesses.

TAPS has reported more than 10,000 servicemember deaths due to illness since

2007, based on the families who are on its membership rolls. In total, 85,000 families of fallen service members have joined the organization since it launched in 1994.

“The trend just really started to escalate,” TAPS President Bonnie Carroll said. “Then we actually started seeing entire units who were affected.”

Coleen’s husband, Army Sgt. Maj. Robert Bowman, 44, was an Army Ranger who deployed to Iraq in 2004 with Recon platoon of the Fort Lewis, Washington-based 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment. His armored Stryker was hit by enemy fire at least 13 times

during his 12 months overseas. Each time, depleted uranium in the Stryker’s armor would absorb the attack.

In retrospect, Coleen wonders what harmful particles shook loose in those blasts, what her husband breathed in. Bowman went back to Iraq in 2007 for another 15 months.

Once home, he started to feel ill. Visits to doctors suggested he had the flu. Finally, in 2011 Bowman got the diagnosis: cholangiocarcinoma, or bile duct cancer. It is a rare cancer in the general population, and very rare for someone as young as Rob.

Death toll rises from storms in parts of Midwest to 9

Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — The bodies of a man and a woman were discovered Friday in a submerged vehicle near the Mississippi River in Missouri, bringing the death toll to nine from storms that have ravaged the central U.S. this week and threaten major flooding through the holiday weekend.

John Reinhardt, 20, and Caitlin Frangel, 19, both of Ha-

zelwood, Mo., were reported missing May 15. Their bodies were found around 4 a.m. on a flooded rural road that runs along the river at Portage Des Sioux, about 40 miles north of St. Louis.

Missouri State Highway Patrol Trooper Dallas Thompson said an autopsy determined they both drowned.

“We believe they went into it in the dark, not knowing the

roadway was flooded, and they were unable to get out,” Thompson said.

Heavy rain in recent weeks has spurred major flooding in several states. Flooding along the Arkansas River will threaten communities from Tulsa into western Arkansas through at least the holiday weekend, officials said Friday, as water released from an Oklahoma dam combines with additional rain in the forecast.

To control flooding in Tulsa, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Friday began increasing the amount of water being released into the river from the Keystone Dam northwest of the city of about 400,000 people.

“The dam is doing what it is supposed to do. It has maintained the flood to a manageable level,” said Oklahoma U.S. Sen. James Lankford, following an aerial tour of the region.

Afghan forces mistakenly kill 6 civilians

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan security forces raid against Taliban fighters in eastern Nangarhar province mistakenly killed at least six civilians, including a woman and two children, provincial officials said Saturday.

Attahullah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman, said 10 insurgents were also killed in the Friday night attack in Sherzad district.

The civilians' vehicle was exiting the area right after the raid and security forces thought that Taliban fighters were trying to escape, so they opened fire and mistakenly killed the civilians, Khogyani said.

Ajmal Omer, a provincial councilman,

said villagers carrying the victims' bodies in a procession in the provincial capital of Jalalabad demanded justice for the victims' families.

Both Taliban and Islamic State group fighters are active in eastern Afghanistan, especially in Nangarhar.

The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said Saturday it was concerned about the heavy toll on civilians in the conflict during the holy month of Ramadan and urged parties to do more to prevent casualties.

It condemned the insurgents for incidents in which civilians have been deliberately targeted and said that during the first week of Ramadan, the Taliban killed six civilians and wounded 28 others in a

premeditated attack against a non-governmental organization in Kabul.

The statement said the U.N. mission is looking into the attack inside a mosque in the capital of Kabul during Friday prayers.

Two people, including the prayer leader, were killed and 16 others were wounded.

"Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians can never be justified and amount to war crimes," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's special representative for Afghanistan. "An attack in a mosque, especially at a time of prayer during Ramadan, is particularly heinous," Yamamoto was quoted as saying in the statement.

Police hunt for suspect in Lyon bomb blast

Associated Press

LYON, France — French police Saturday were hunting a suspect believed to have deposited a paper bag containing an explosive device that went off, wounding 13 people in a busy pedestrian street in the city of Lyon the previous day.

France's counter-terrorism prosecutor, Remy Heitz, said an investigation has been opened for "attempted murder in relation with a terrorist undertaking" and "criminal terrorist association."

He said no group has claimed responsibility for the explosion yet.

Regional authorities said 13 people suf-

fered mostly minor injuries, including 11 who were still in the hospital Saturday morning.

French President Emmanuel Macron called the explosion an "attack" during a live interview Friday about the European Parliament elections that run through Sunday.

Heitz described video surveillance that shows the suspect heading toward Lyon city center on a bike Friday afternoon.

The man is seen arriving on foot, pushing his bike, in the pedestrian Victor Hugo street. He was seen leaving a paper bag on a concrete block in the middle of the street near a bakery, Heitz said.

The suspect immediately returned to his bike and left by the same path. One minute later, the explosion shattered the glass of a cooler in the bakery, Heitz said.

Investigators on the scene have found screws, metallic balls, a triggering device that can be used remotely and plastic pieces that may come from the explosive device.

Police issued an appeal for witnesses Saturday with a photo of the suspect, described as "dangerous", caught on video surveillance.

Heitz said police will release more photos soon. The man was wearing a cap and sunglasses partially hiding his face.

UN court: Russia must release Ukraine ships, sailors

Associated Press

BERLIN — A U.N. maritime tribunal ruled Saturday that Russia must immediately release three Ukrainian naval vessels captured by Russia in November and free 24 detained sailors.

The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea issued its order at its Hamburg headquarters following a hearing earlier this month. Russia stayed away from both the hearing and Saturday's session.

The confrontation in the Kerch Strait, which links the Sea of Azov with the Black Sea, marked a flashpoint in the simmering conflict over Russia's 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Russia seized Crimea in a move that Ukraine and most of the world view as illegal.

The Kerch Strait separates Crimea from mainland Russia.

Russia, which did submit a memorandum to the tribunal, has argued that the rights Ukraine claims in the case don't apply because they are covered by an exception for military activity.

Kiev's lawyers contest this claim, saying Russia itself has previously described the arrest as a law enforcement operation. The tribunal sided with Ukraine's argument on that point.

However, President Jin-Hyun Paik said that "the tribunal considers it appropriate to order both parties to refrain from taking any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute."

He said that Russia must return the

ships to Ukrainian custody and allow the servicemen to go home.

But the tribunal "does not consider it necessary to require (Russia) to suspend criminal proceedings against the 24 detained Ukrainian servicemen and refrain from initiating new proceedings," he added. Kiev had called for legal proceedings to be ended.

The tribunal's decisions are legally binding, but it has no power to enforce them. It called for both sides to report back on their compliance by June 25.

Paik said Russia "was given ample opportunity to present its observations" in the case.

The tribunal made its decision by a 19-1 vote, with a Russian judge dissenting.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Suspicious package contains toilet paper

MO ST. LOUIS — A mysterious package addressed to a former senator caused a brief scare when it arrived at a St. Louis TV station, but it only contained a letter and novelty toilet paper.

The package found in the mailroom of KSDK-TV, an NBC affiliate, was addressed to former Democratic Sen. Claire McCaskill. Fire Capt. Garon Mosby told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch it was deemed suspicious in part because it had heavy tape, no return address and perhaps an odor.

Police evacuated KSDK and cordoned off a block before determining that the package contained only President Donald Trump novelty toilet paper and a letter to McCaskill.

Wild chase of stolen RV ends with injuries

CA LOS ANGELES — A woman in a stolen recreational vehicle led authorities on a wild chase in Los Angeles, smashing into cars and a palm tree before finally coming to a halt with a large dog hanging out of the shattered windshield.

The half-hour chase began in Santa Clarita, just north of Los Angeles, when the RV failed to yield for the California Highway Patrol, KABC-TV reported.

The RV hit several cars and then a palm tree in a shopping mall parking lot that tore off the passenger-side door and wrecked the front end, leaving the windshield dangling on the hood.

At one point, a large dog in the driver's lap scrambled halfway out of the shattered windshield area and tumbled or jumped from the moving ve-

hicle, landing in the street. The RV stopped but the dog got up and appeared unharmed as it ran to the curb.

Woman sprays bear repellent inside school

PA PITTSBURGH — Authorities said a woman sprayed bear repellent inside a college building, sickening at least six people and forcing evacuations.

Mary Siegert faces six counts of simple assault and one count each of having an offensive weapon and risking a catastrophe, officials said she told police the canister must have accidentally discharged.

Authorities responded to the University of Pittsburgh's Eureka Building after some people inside had trouble breathing, coupled with irritated eyes and coughing.

Teen charged with school threat to Santa

FL WESLEY CHAPEL — Authorities said a Florida teen was charged with threatening a school shooting in a postcard to Santa and signing a classmate's name last fall.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that the 15-year-old boy was charged with making written threats to kill or do bodily harm.

The Pasco County Sheriff's Office said the holiday postcard was dropped off in November at a Wesley Chapel Macy's. The note threatened a shooting at nearby Wiregrass Ranch High School.

Angler's family upset after record voided

SD SIOUX FALLS — The family of an angler whose catfish held a South Da-

kota record for nearly 70 years is upset that state wildlife officials voided the record.

Roy Groves caught the 55-pound fish in 1949. The fish originally was identified as a channel catfish, but South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks voided the record Friday, saying Groves actually caught a blue catfish, not a channel catfish.

Groves' great-grandson, James Labesky, said in a Facebook post that South Dakota wildlife officials are taking away the record because they don't think it's a channel catfish by looking at a picture. He said in the post that his great-grandfather "would know the difference."

Woman accused of fighting 3 and officer

DE REHOBOTH BEACH — A Delaware woman is accused of assaulting three people outside a Rehoboth Beach bar and then fighting a police officer who tried to stop her.

The News Journal of Wilmington reported Michelle Villa, 21, was arrested on charges including assault.

Rehoboth Beach spokeswoman Lt. Jaime B. Riddle said police responded that night to the fight and one of the officers struggled with Villa before she was handcuffed.

She said the officer was arresting someone else in the fight when he noticed Villa had freed one of her hands and was attempting to escape.

22 racing horses sick with a blood parasite

TN NASHVILLE — Tennessee's state veterinarian's office is investigating an outbreak of a blood parasite in a group of racing quarter

horses.

The office said 22 horses have tested positive for equine piroplasmiasis in five locations within Bedford, Rutherford and Williamson counties.

It can take up to 30 days for an infected horse to test positive after exposure. Horses that do test positive are quarantined and may be euthanized. Those that survive will continue to carry the parasite for an extended period.

'Cannabis cafes' gets state's approval

MA BOSTON — Massachusetts marijuana regulators approved a plan to roll out "cannabis cafes" where adults could use pot in a social setting.

The 3-2 vote by the Cannabis Control Commission calls for an initial test program in as many as a dozen communities where licenses would be granted for social consumption establishments. Marijuana use might also be allowed at certain outdoor public events.

Inmate charged with running prostitutes

MN MORA — An inmate at the Kanabec County Jail was charged with running a prostitution ring from his cell.

Daniel Ellington, 38, was charged in Washington County District Court with two counts of sex trafficking and two counts of promotion of prostitution.

Prosecutors said Ellington communicated with a prostitute by text and "promoted and profited" from her activities in Woodbury last month.

The task force began investigating after a Woodbury detective found an online ad entitled "Blonde Bombshell."

From wire reports

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Interest slowly returning to Indy 500

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis 500 was once considered one of the top sporting events of the year, an iconic, milk-drenched staple of Memorial Day weekend filled with patriotism and nostalgia, triumph and disappointment.

It is nearly impossible to maintain reverential status for 103 years, and the Indy 500, like almost everything in sports, has had its declines. Huge crowds no longer jam the grandstands to watch qualifying or Carb Day, and the economics of racing and sponsorship has pared down the entry list.

But IndyCar is experiencing a renaissance of sorts, and interest in a series largely supported by “The Greatest Spectacle in Racing” is slowly returning. The hype has certainly been high at Indianapolis Motor Speedway this year, where a strong infield crowd attended practice days and large groups of teens roamed the grounds as part of school field trips.

The race itself, which will be broadcast for the first time by NBC, could be a good one.

Qualifying for Sunday’s race produced the tightest Indy 500 field in history with only 1.8 mph separating pole sitter Simon Pagenaud at 229.992 mph from Pippa Mann, the slowest qualifier at 227.224.

There were 36 entrants, which meant three drivers would not make the field, and once-proud McLaren was humiliated to miss the race with superstar Fernando Alonso. The two-time Formula One champion nearly salvaged McLaren’s mortifying return to Indianapolis when he gallantly held it wide open for four desperate laps in an overhauled car worked on until the very last moment. The car did not have the right gear ratio on a run that should have gotten Alonso into the 33-car field, and mighty McLaren was bumped by tiny Juncos Racing and young American driver Kyle Kaiser.

The result is Kaiser, winner of nothing of national note, and Mann, driving for the Clauson-Marshall team that races sprint cars the rest of the year, are in the race. Alonso, needing the Indy 500 to complete his quest for the Triple Crown, and an

actual Formula One team went back to Europe.

“It’s a big missed opportunity. It clearly says, ‘This isn’t something you show up and can easily do,’” said Mark Miles, CEO of Hulman & Co., which owns IndyCar, the Indy 500 and the speedway. “So it says: This is complicated. This is hard.”

The Indy 500 will still draw at least 250,000 people — more if Sunday’s forecast didn’t call for rain — and those who show will be treated to a true spectacle in the push to drink the victory lane milk. IndyCar, slow in rebuilding, is on the up, and drivers argue the on-track product is better than anything else out there.

“It’s the most competitive racing series in the world. It’s the tightest,” said Alexander Rossi, the 2016 Indy 500 champion as a rookie after he flamed out in Formula One. “On any weekend, you have no idea who is going to win the race.”

IndyCar has had five different winners through its first five races this year, but Pagenaud might be the first repeat winner. He’s the favorite to repeat his win from two weeks

ago on Indy’s road course. His job with Roger Penske is on the line — Pagenaud knows it — but he is on the pole Sunday and Penske could not be more pleased.

The venerable owner, celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first Indy 500, is going for his 18th win in the showcase race. He is Pagenaud’s biggest fan, even as Team Penske goes into the race with a quartet of cars capable of winning. Along with Pagenaud the team has defending winner Will Power, three-time winner Helio Castroneves and former series champion Josef Newgarden.

Castroneves will again go for a record-tying fourth victory, a mark he’s desperately chasing in the final years of his career. Penske moved him to sports cars but keeps bringing him back to Indy, where he is trying to join A.J. Foyt, Rick Mears and Al Unser Sr. as four-time winners.

“Only a few guys have done that. I dream big,” Castroneves said. “I definitely want to make it happen and I won’t give up that easy.”

Byron hopes qualifying run will give him first victory

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.C. — William Byron knows how to qualify. Now, he is looking to prove he can win at NASCAR’s highest level.

The Charlotte native would love nothing more than to win his first Cup Series race at his home track of Charlotte Motor Speedway on Sunday in the Coca-Cola 600.

He has put himself in a good position: The 21-year-old Byron has his No. 24 Liberty Patriot Camaro ZL1 out front for NASCAR’s longest race, becoming the youngest driver ever to capture the pole for the crown jewel event.

“This is a dream come true,” said Byron, who attended the race every year while growing

up.

Qualifying first and finishing first are two different things, as Byron has learned repeatedly this year.

He started on the pole at the Daytona 500 but finished 21st. He also started on the front row at Texas, Bristol and Dover but failed to register a top-five finish. He has two top 10s this year, but his finishes haven’t matched his strong showing in qualifying.

“There are a lot of things we’ve got to do right to get to that point,” Byron said of winning the 600. “But, I think the speed has been really good and the execution of our race last weekend was nearly flawless from a team’s perspective and then from my perspective. So,

I think we’re getting there, for sure. We’re close.”

Byron’s first attempt at the 600 a year ago did not go well. He crashed and called it a “miserable” day, something he plans to use as motivation on Sunday.

“I really had that thought in my head going into this week is to just make it better than what last year,” Byron said. “I learned from that and the mistakes I made. ... And, it helps when the guys bring a really fast car and that just makes your job easier. I think it’s going to be added motivation going into the weekend.”

It will help to have Chad Knaus in his corner, too.

The crew chief extraordinaire knows a thing or two

about how to get around Charlotte Motor Speedway, pairing with Jimmie Johnson to win the Coca-Cola 600 four times. Only Darrell Waltrip (five) has more.

“We had a really good conversation today about a 600-mile race,” Byron said of Knaus. “Just the balance characteristics and the changes the track goes through, but the cool thing about him is that there are certain tracks where he really lights up and likes to talk about. ... It’s really cool to listen to him about what he’s got to say about this place. He’s got a good idea of what we need to do to be successful here. Hopefully we can get the balance right on Saturday and have a really good Sunday.”

Warriors enjoy 5th straight trip to Finals

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Stephen Curry hears the dynasty discussion about his Golden State Warriors during another postseason run.

Draymond Green realizes special teams only stay together for so long before something breaks them apart.

That's why the Warriors decided from Day 1 of training camp to cherish this season.

Golden State is a franchise in its prime — five straight trips to the NBA Finals and seeking a third consecutive title. But the clock is ticking and the Warriors are well aware of the possible ramifications of free agency and how things could change in a hurry this summer.

"Basketball careers aren't that long. If you can get 10 out of it, you're lucky," Green explained. "To be to five straight

Finals, I don't even know what to say about it. This is what you play for."

The Warriors started this run with three All-Stars in Curry, Green and Klay Thompson. They added two more in Kevin Durant and DeMarcus Cousins. How many they'll have after free agency is any and everyone's guess.

Curry — with nearly 11-month-old son Canon regularly in his arms for the ride — is certainly relishing this stretch of his decorated career, appreciating how far the Warriors have come during his 10 years in the league.

A third straight title is suddenly within reach, which would be Golden State's fourth championship in five years.

"We know what's at stake and what we're chasing this year, this series, this game, and that's the only way that you can really put your best foot forward

in terms of trying to get back to the mountaintop," Curry said. "We'll have plenty of time when we hang the sneakers up to really go back and think about all the different experiences and highs and lows, but right now, we're two games away from another Finals appearance. It's pretty special."

The Warriors are the first team to reach five straight Finals since the Celtics advanced to 10 in a row from 1957-1966.

Another championship would cement this run of titles among the best ever.

The Los Angeles Lakers of 2000-02 — led by Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal — are the last team to capture three straight titles.

Golden State advanced without Durant, the reigning two-time finals MVP, and Cousins. Both were sidelined with injuries for the entire Western Conference finals. The Warriors

finished off Portland without Andre Iguodala, another finals MVP who sat out Game 4 with an injury.

While the Bucks and Raptors are slugging it out in the East, the Warriors are rehabbing.

"I hope it doesn't go unnoticed or underrated. Five straight Finals hasn't been done since the 60s, since Bill Russell's Celtics," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "Hasn't been done for a reason: It's really, really difficult."

The Warriors are aware of the dynasty talk, but aren't labeling themselves.

"I don't think in those terms. It's just every opportunity we have to play, these are big moments, big games," Curry said, "and the context of what this five-year run has been and all that stuff doesn't really dominate my mind when we're out there competing."

Bruins lean on leadership of veteran quintet of players

Associated Press

BOSTON — When the Boston Bruins take the ice against the St. Louis Blues, they will do it with a core group of veterans who know what it's like to hoist the Stanley Cup — and have it slip from their fingers.

Patrice Bergeron can still remember the instant euphoria and accompanying adoration from across New England that came after the Bruins outlasted the Vancouver Canucks in seven games to win the Cup in 2011.

He just as easily recalls the emptiness in 2013 when the Bruins lost the Final in six games to the Chicago Blackhawks.

"I think it makes you appreciate and makes you understand how hard it is to get to this point," Bergeron said.

He is one of five current Bruins that were on both of those teams, along with Brad Marchand, Tuukka Rask, David Krejci and Zdeno Chara. Apart from Chara, who was 34 in

2011, Bergeron, Krejci, Marchand and Rask were all in their 20s during both runs. Defenseman Torey Krug was a member of the '13 team that came up short, arriving the season after Boston won it in 2011.

Eight years later Chara is now 42 and the 20-somethings are now grizzled NHL veterans as they prepare to take on the Blues.

It's cast them all in the leadership role for another youthful and hungry Bruins team, built with many players about to experience this stage for the first time with Game 1 coming up Monday.

It's a position they have all willingly accepted.

Chara said this season has been a great teaching tool for them.

"It takes a lot to just get into the playoffs," Chara said. "We saw a lot of our games went to Game 7. First round. Second round. You have to realize how special it is to be in the Final and what it takes. At the same

time, you haven't accomplished anything. You haven't won anything."

St. Louis coach Craig Berube knows the Bruins are deep and the veteran players are a key part of the team.

"Chara is still a good player, he's a force out there, a big guy and he's difficult to play against," Berube said. "Overall, their team's a skilled and fast team and their goalie has played extremely well so far in the playoffs."

Boston coach Bruce Cassidy, who is in his second season leading the B's. He struggled in his first go-around as a head coach in Washington, going 47-47-9 over two seasons from 2002 to 2004.

says that over the past two seasons in Boston he has gone from being apprehensive about speaking up around his best players to setting an agenda and then leaning on his veterans in the locker room to help implement it.

"I think this leadership

group is second to none," Cassidy said. "I don't know if I'll ever have — wherever this career takes me — a group like this to work with. I said that since probably the second week of our job here. These guys are fantastic, and they sure make a coach's job a lot easier."

Though he has a reputation of letting his anger get the best of him at times, Marchand said he's going into his third Cup final with Boston as even-keeled as ever.

"I think when you're part of a team like that you expect it to last a long time," he said. "You don't realize how one change in a team can really drastically affect how things play out. One player change. One injury. One call. You don't realize what it takes to get back to the finals and how fortunate you are to get there."

"And so this time around I think I'm more appreciative of being here and at the same time more calm, I guess, in a way."

Marisnick's bat, glove help Astros win

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Thrust into an everyday role because of injuries, Jake Marisnick is making the most of his opportunity with the Houston Astros.

Marisnick homered early off Chris Sale, then made two dazzling defensive plays in center field to help the Astros beat the mistake-prone Boston Red Sox 4-3 on Friday night.

"There's not much not to like (about him) in a game like that," manager AJ Hinch said. "When you're a bench player ... you just want an opportunity. You just want a chance to show it. And he's doing great things on the field. It's pretty impressive."

It looks like Marisnick could get more chances for consistent playing time after George Springer injured his left hamstring sliding to try to catch a foul ball in the eighth inning in his first game back after missing four games with a stiff back. Hinch said they'd know

more on Saturday, but it looks as if he'll be headed to the injured list.

"I'm not looking forward to the diagnosis, it doesn't look good," Hinch said. "He never pulls himself out of the game like that. He was limping from the very beginning."

In a matchup of the last two World Series winners, the Red Sox committed three errors, not looking nearly as sharp as they did in their last visit to Minute Maid Park when they captured the pennant with a 4-1 win in Game 5 of the AL Championship Series in October. The Astros took two of three last weekend at Fenway Park.

The Red Sox did end Ryan Pressly's MLB-record streak of 40 straight scoreless appearances when Jackie Bradley Jr. launched the first pitch from the Houston reliever for a home run in the eighth inning.

Wade Miley (5-2) yielded four hits and two runs in six innings, striking out a season-high eight to win his fourth

straight decision.

All of Boston's errors came in the first four innings to help the Astros build a 4-0 lead.

"You've got to play clean against them," manager Alex Cora said. "They do more than hitting. They run the bases well, they're very athletic. It was a weird one. It was one of those that, if we played better defense, we'd have a chance."

Xander Bogaerts hit a solo homer in the sixth and Bradley made it 4-2.

Christian Vazquez homered off Roberto Osuna with two outs in the ninth, but the Houston closer struck out Bradley for his 13th save. It was his 25th consecutive converted save, a franchise record.

Sale (1-6) gave up three hits and four runs, but only two of them were earned, in six innings. He struck out five after fanning 10 or more in each of his last four starts — he struck out 10 against the Astros in his previous outing, getting a no-decision in a game Boston

eventually won.

Sale was asked about having just one win this season.

"I don't really care whether I'm 6-1, 1-6 or 0-0 for the whole year, I just want to win the games that I pitch in," he said. "Obviously, you want to be on the other end of it and I'm not the biggest fan of coming in here to a quiet clubhouse. It's on me. It's on my shoulders and I've got to find a way to win."

Marisnick robbed Andrew Benintendi of a hit with a diving catch in the fifth. Marisnick got him again for the first out of the ninth when he sprinted to make a nifty, over-the-shoulder catch at the wall.

"Anytime you get a chance to get in there and get consistent reps and see pitching consistently it makes it a little bit easier to make adjustments," Marisnick said. "When you're not playing every day and you're trying to make adjustments and make things work, it's hard. So it's been nice to play every day."

MLB roundup

Suarez's ninth-inning home run lifts Reds over Cubs

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Eugenio Suarez hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning off Cubs reliever Steve Cishek, rallying the Cincinnati Reds past Chicago 6-5 on Friday.

Joey Votto drew a leadoff walk from Cishek (1-2) and Suarez hit the next pitch for his 14th home run.

Yasiel Puig hit a two-run homer and an RBI single for the Reds after missing two games with a sprained right shoulder.

Padres 6, Blue Jays 3: Hunter Renfroe hit a tiebreaking, three-run home run in the eighth inning, Greg Garcia and Austin Hedges also went deep, and visiting San Diego got its fourth straight win.

Tigers 9, Mets 8: JaCoby

Jones homered and drove in four runs, including a go-ahead double in the seventh inning, and Miguel Cabrera also connected as visiting Detroit snapped a nine-game losing streak.

Dodgers 10, Pirates 2: David Freese hit a grand slam off opener Michael Feliz and Cody Bellinger added his 18th homer, helping Los Angeles beat host Pittsburgh.

Twins 11, White Sox 4: Eddie Rosario homered among his four hits, driving in three runs, as host Minnesota went deep three times in another power-packed romp for its ninth win in 10 games.

Indians 3, Rays 1: At Tampa Bay, Roberto Perez's crawling infield single scored Francisco Lindor with the go-ahead run with two outs in the eighth in-

ning as Cleveland snapped a season-high, four-game losing streak.

Nationals 12, Marlins 10: Juan Soto and Matt Adams hit back-to-back home runs in the eighth inning and host Washington snapped a five-game losing streak.

Braves 5, Cardinals 2: Dansby Swanson homered twice and Freddie Freeman also connected, helping Mike Foltynewicz and visiting Atlanta beat St. Louis.

Phillies 6, Brewers 4: Andrew McCutchen hit a tiebreaking double in the sixth inning and visiting Philadelphia used stellar relief work to overcome Christian Yelich's major league-leading 20th home run in a win over Milwaukee.

Rockies 8, Orioles 6: Trevor Story hit a game-ending drive

for his second two-run homer of the night, helping Colorado win in Baltimore's first visit to Coors Field since 2004.

Rangers 4, Angels 3: At Anaheim, Calif., Hunter Pence had a two-run single in the seventh inning, Shin Soo-Choo homered and Drew Smyly got his first win in almost three years as Texas rallied to beat Los Angeles.

Athletics 6, Mariners 2: Matt Olson and Mark Canha hit back-to-back home runs in the fourth inning, and host Oakland beat slumping Seattle for its seventh straight win.

Diamondbacks 18, Giants 2: Ildemaro Vargas homered among his five hits, Adam Jones homered among his four hits, and visiting Arizona broke out of a slump in a big way.