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CIA confident Saudi prince ordered killing

Washington Post

The CIA has concluded that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul last month, contradicting the Saudi government's claims that he was not involved in the killing, according to people familiar with the matter.

The CIA's assessment, in which officials have said they have high confidence, is the most definitive to date linking Mohammed to the operation and complicates the Trump administration's efforts to preserve its relationship with a close ally. A team of 15 Saudi agents flew to Istanbul on government aircraft in October and killed Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate,

where he had come to pick up documents that he needed for his planned marriage to a Turkish woman.

In reaching its conclusions, the CIA examined multiple sources of intelligence, including a phone call that the prince's brother Khalid bin Salman, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, had with Khashoggi, according to the people familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the intelligence. Khalid told Khashoggi, a contributing columnist to The Washington Post, that he should go to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul to retrieve the documents and gave him assurances that it would be safe to do so.

It is not clear if Khalid knew that Khashoggi would be killed,

but he made the call at his brother's direction, according to people familiar with the call, which was intercepted by U.S. intelligence.

Fatimah Baeshen, a spokeswoman for the Saudi embassy in Washington, said the ambassador and Khashoggi never discussed "anything related to going to Turkey." She added that the claims in the CIA's "purported assessment are false. We have and continue to hear various theories without seeing the primary basis for these speculations."

The CIA's conclusion about Mohammed's role was also based on the agency's assessment of the prince as the country's de facto ruler who oversees even minor affairs in the kingdom. "The accepted po-

sition is that there is no way this happened without him being aware or involved," said a U.S. official familiar with the CIA's conclusions.

The CIA sees Mohammed as a "good technocrat," the U.S. official said, but volatile and arrogant, someone who "goes from zero to 60, doesn't seem to understand that there are some things you can't do."

CIA analysts believe he has a firm grip on power and is not in danger of losing his status as heir to the throne despite the Khashoggi scandal. "The general agreement is that he is likely to survive," the official said, adding that Mohammed's role as the future Saudi king is "taken for granted."

A spokesperson for the CIA declined to comment.

Number of unaccounted for hard to define in Calif. fire

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — More than 1,000 people are unaccounted for after a deadly Northern California wildfire, but authorities warned Friday that the roster is fluid and contains "raw data," including the names of people who are safe.

Some of the people on the ever-evolving list compiled by the Butte County sheriff's office have been confirmed dead by family and friends on social media. Others have been found safe, but authorities have not yet marked them as such.

And some, like Tamara Conry, say they never should have been on the list.

"My husband and I are not missing and never were!" Conry wrote Thursday night on a Facebook page dedicated to finding people from the fire zone in and around the incinerated town of Paradise. "We have no family

looking for us ... I called and left a message to take our names off."

The confusion stems from the difficulty authorities face putting together a tally of the missing as they pore through hundreds of reports filed by people who could not reach loved ones in the aftermath of a blaze that spread with astonishing speed last week. It became the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century.

Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea initially said 110 people were missing, then revised the number to more than 220. He put it at 130 on Wednesday but released a list the same night with 300 names.

He dramatically raised the number to 631 late Thursday and then to 1,011 on Friday.

He said staff continues to collect information by email and phone calls and are updat-

ing the list. They're also going through a surge of calls that came in during the disaster's frantic early hours.

"It's difficult. Because we have a significant event, an unprecedented event where a massive amount of people were displaced from their homes, all over Northern California," Honea said Friday.

Jan Walcott of Oakland has been tweeting since the day after the fire started Nov. 8 that she was looking for her sister, Joyce Acheson, 78, who lives in Paradise and has disabilities.

When the list of missing emerged, her sister's name was on it, along with someone with a similar spelling, Joyce Atchison — prompting speculation they might be the same person. But that's not the case. "There were two people with similar names, and it caused confusion," she said.

Her sister has still not been located. She said she is staying in touch with the sheriff's office and checking social media for updates.

The wildfire has killed at least 71 people, with the number climbing daily.

Sheriff's office spokeswoman Miranda Bowersox said Friday that the list of people who are unaccounted for is not a real-time reflection of who is missing. She said the office is distributing the names widely in the hope anyone on it might call in and say they're OK.

Conry, whose Paradise house escaped largely unscathed, said she left a voicemail with the sheriff's office Thursday night and called again Friday morning and talked to a person.

"She was excited to hear that we were OK," said Conry, who is 55 and not 72 as the list reported.

Space Force budget might be \$5B or less

The Washington Post

The cost to create President Donald Trump's Space Force could be lower than \$5 billion and certainly will be in the single-digit billions, Deputy Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said at a briefing Thursday, pushing back against Air Force estimates that put the price tag at \$13 billion or more.

Shanahan, the lead Pentagon official working on the Space Force, expressed confidence the project would come to fruition — even though Democrats taking over the House have opposed it and the White House broadly has ordered the Pentagon to cut costs.

While Shanahan seeks to introduce better compliance and business practices at the Pentagon, the former Boeing executive is also dedicating much of his time to the creation of the Space Force, a hallmark project for the president.

Outside the legislative proposal, the Pentagon is already creating a unified combatant command for space — similar to Transportation Command or Strategic Command — and a space development agency. Shanahan said he would like to see the leader of the space development agency chosen by the end of the year and the first combatant commander

confirmed at the beginning of 2019.

The undertaking comes as the White House asks the Pentagon to shrink its budget for next year in response to a federal deficit that shot skyward following last year's tax cut.

Democrats, meanwhile, have expressed skepticism over the need for an entirely new military bureaucracy to step up American power in space.

The White House has ordered the Pentagon to come up with a budget some 5 percent less than the military had planned for next year.

"What I want the president to understand going forward are what are those trade offs so he has an informed position," Shanahan said. "He needs to have an awareness of what that number really translates to in terms of performance here in the department."

Despite the rollback, the coming budget proposal will still be a "masterpiece" that shows how the Pentagon is reshaping the military for an era of great power competition with Russia and China, Shanahan said. It will retain priority areas for the strategy such as the development of greater cyber capabilities and the pursuit of hypersonic missiles, he noted.

Lawmakers aim to make VA motto gender-inclusive

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A pair of House lawmakers introduced legislation Friday to alter the Department of Veterans Affairs motto to be more inclusive of veterans' families and women who have served.

The VA motto, which has been the same for nearly 60 years, is a quote from President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address in 1865: "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

Reps. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y., and Brian Mast, R-Fla., want to change the motto to read: "To fulfill President Lincoln's promise to care for those 'who shall have borne the battle' and for their families, caregivers and survivors." A staffer for Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., said the senator intends to introduce a similar bill in the upper chamber in the coming weeks.

The lawmakers contend the current VA motto isn't representative of a growing population of women veterans. According to VA statistics, women make up nearly 12 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

"The brave women who have worn our nation's uniform and their families deserve to be equally embraced by the motto of the very agency meant to

support them," Rice said in a statement.

The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine reported in February that women veterans are sometimes dissuaded from pursuing VA treatment because they were mistaken for veterans' spouses or not believed to be combat veterans.

The new legislation would require VA Secretary Robert Wilkie to update agency websites with the new motto within 30 days. Wilkie would then have to submit a timeline to Congress for when the change would be taken systemwide.

Not all women veterans feel the same about the motto. Kayda Keleher, a Marine Corps veteran who works with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said she believes the time and resources would be better spent pushing for better access to gender-specific health care at the VA.

"While the cause is noteworthy, the actual implementation will cost money," Keleher wrote last year for the military news website Task & Purpose. "Not pennies, not quarters — but most likely millions in taxpayer dollars."

While Rice and Mast push for the motto change in Congress, a trio of veterans organizations are still appealing directly to the VA.

Argentina: Submarine missing a year found deep in Atlantic

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina — Argentina's navy announced early Saturday that searchers found the missing submarine ARA San Juan deep in the Atlantic a year after it disappeared with 44 crewmen aboard.

The vessel was detected 2,625 feet deep in waters off the Valdes Peninsula in Argentine Patagonia, the statement said.

The navy said a "positive identification" had been made by a remote-operated submersible from the American ship Ocean Infinity, which was hired for the latest search for the missing vessel.

The discovery was announced just two days after families of the missing sailors held a commemoration one year after the sub disappeared on Nov. 15, 2017.

Macri promised a full investigation after the submarine was lost. Federal police raided naval bases and other buildings last January as part of the probe, soon after the government dismissed the head of the navy.

The San Juan was returning to its base in the coastal city of Mar del Plata when contact was lost.

The navy said previously the

captain reported on Nov. 15 that water entered the snorkel and caused one of the sub's batteries to short-circuit.

Some hours later, an explosion was detected near the time and place where the San Juan was last heard from. The navy said the blast could have been caused by a "concentration of hydrogen" triggered by the battery problem reported by the captain.

Fla. begins hand count in Senate race

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Volunteers gathered around folding tables Friday to begin a painstaking hand recount in Florida's acrimonious U.S. Senate contest, with a goal of determining the intent of about 93,000 voters whose ballots for Republican Gov. Rick Scott or Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson could not be counted by machine.

The hand recount is required by state law whenever candidates are separated by 0.25 percentage points or less. Unofficial results showed Scott ahead of Nelson by 0.15 percentage points, or fewer than 13,000 votes out of more than 8 million cast.

In Broward County, officials relied on a color-coded system to tally some of the last ballots by hand.

Ballots with clear votes for Republican Gov. Rick Scott went into a bin with a red tag. Clear votes for Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson went into one with a blue tag. Blank ballots went into a bin with a yellow tag. Anything that needed further examination by the canvassing board was dropped into

one with a green tag.

Dozens of volunteers sitting behind the bins stacked on folding tables in a Broward County warehouse cheered loudly when they finished their hand recount Friday morning. Results were not immediately announced.

At the election supervisor's office in Tampa, volunteers were joined by observers from both political parties at 12 tables as the recount started.

The ballots were in a locked wire basket on a rolling cart when they were delivered to the room. An elections office employee cut the lock off the basket, and the ballots were distributed to the tables, where teams of two volunteers examined each one.

The hand recount does not review all votes. It involves ballots that were not recorded by voting machines because voters cast either two votes for one race, which is called an overvote, or appeared to choose no candidate, which is an undervote. The idea is to figure out a voter's intent.

Broward County — which experienced numerous problems throughout the election — had the most overvotes and un-

dervotes of any Florida county — almost 31,000.

Just a day earlier, the county missed the deadline to submit its machine recount results by two minutes. But it finished its manual recount in just a few hours, which Elections Supervisor Brenda Snipes attributed to the large number of volunteers assembled for the task.

The contest for governor appeared all but over Thursday, with a machine recount showing Republican DeSantis with a large enough advantage over Democrat Andrew Gillum to avoid a hand recount in that race, which had a margin of 0.41 percent.

Gillum, who conceded on election night only to retract his concession later, said in a statement that "it is not over until every legally casted vote is counted."

The overall recount has been fraught with problems. One large Democratic stronghold in South Florida could not finish its machine recount by the Thursday deadline because of machines breaking down. A federal judge rejected a request to extend the recount deadline.

Pelosi says she has votes, but speaker race is in flux

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats won the majority. Now they just need a speaker of the House.

The standoff over Nancy Pelosi's bid to regain the gavel intensified as Democrats left Washington for the Thanksgiving break.

Pelosi, speaker from 2007 to 2011 and the first woman to hold that job, was certain she will hold it again. Her foes were equally confident they have the votes to stop her ascension.

And now President Donald Trump is getting into the fray, offering Saturday to provide Republican votes for Pelosi's candidacy even though the GOP has long used the California Democrat as an election target.

For now, it's a band of disgruntled Democrats, led mostly by men, in the forefront of the opposition. With a test vote looming in late November, and at least one potential Pelosi challenger

stepping forward, Democrats are facing the uncomfortable prospect of the internal squabble that the speaker's vote Jan. 3 could drag on for weeks.

"I think chaos is good if it's productive. I think chaos is bad if it is too disruptive and it divides us too much," said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., a co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus.

"We don't have a lot of time," Jayapal said. "We need to put forward the vision of who we are as a party and what we're fighting for and so that needs to happen very, very quickly."

Pelosi was expected to work the phones from California after meeting privately Friday with newly elected Democrats who could be crucial to her bid.

Those incoming lawmakers indicated they were having good meetings with the leader, though few said the talks had changed their minds.

Abrams ends governor bid, but says she'll sue

Associated Press

ATLANTA — Democrat Stacey Abrams ended 10 days of post-election drama in Georgia's closely watched and even more closely contested race for governor Friday, acknowledging Republican Brian Kemp as the victor while defiantly refusing to concede to the man she blamed for "gross mismanagement" of a bitterly fought election.

The speech Abrams, 44, delivered at her campaign headquarters Friday evening marked the close of the attorney and former lawmaker's unsuccessful attempt to make history as America's first black woman governor. Since Election Day her campaign fought on, insisting efforts to suppress turnout had left thousands of ballots uncounted that otherwise could erode Kemp's lead and force a runoff election.

Kemp responded to Abrams

ending her campaign by calling for unity and praising his opponent's "passion, hard work, and commitment to public service."

The kind words came just days after Kemp's campaign spokesman derided Abrams' efforts to have contested ballots counted as a "disgrace to democracy."

Abrams made no such retreat from her criticisms of Kemp, saying she refused "to say nice things and accept my fate." Instead, she announced plans to file a federal lawsuit to challenge the way Georgia's elections are run. She accused Kemp of using the secretary of state's office to aggressively purge the rolls of inactive voters, enforce an "exact match" policy for checking voters' identities that left thousands of registrations in limbo and other measures to tilt the outcome in his favor.

Almost 3,000 from caravan reach Tijuana

Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico — With about 3,000 Central American migrants having reached the Mexican border across from California and thousands more anticipated the mayor of Tijuana said Friday that the city was preparing for an influx that will last at least six months and may have no end in sight.

Juan Manuel Gastelum said there were 2,750 migrants from the caravan in Tijuana and that estimates by Mexico's federal government indicate the number could approach 10,000.

U.S. border inspectors are processing only about 100 asylum claims a day at Tijuana's main crossing to San Diego, creating long waits. Asylum seekers register their names in a tattered notebook managed by migrants themselves that had more than 3,000 names even before the caravan arrived.

Along the nearly 3,000 miles from the caravan's origin in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, to this city on the Pacific Ocean, the migrants have stopped in most places for only a single night, with some exceptions.

That overwhelmed small

towns in southern Mexico in particular — but only briefly. The migrants' expected long stay in Tijuana has raised concerns about the ability of the teeming border city of more than 1.6 million to handle the influx.

A municipal gymnasium and recreational complex that has been converted to a shelter was expected to register up to 1,000 people Thursday night but ended up housing more than 2,000, including more than 400 children. The city's privately run shelters are meant to have a capacity of 700.

Migrant Ronald Calderon, who picked coffee beans back in Honduras, said he would seek asylum in the U.S. if he felt there was a 90 percent chance of success. But he figures the odds are long and doesn't want to risk being deported, so he hopes to find work and settle in Tijuana.

Gustavo Magallanes, director of Baja California's migrant attention agency, said Friday that the state is doing the best it can at a difficult time and that, nearing the end of the year, agencies at all levels of government lack funds.

Court orders restoration of Acosta's press credential

Los Angeles Times

CNN has won the first round of its legal battle to get correspondent Jim Acosta back in the White House, delivering an embarrassing setback to President Donald Trump and escalating his long-standing feud with the news media.

U.S. District Court Judge Timothy Kelly granted the cable news network's request for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction Friday that restored Acosta's White House press credential.

Kelly ordered that Acosta be reinstated immediately. He did not rule on CNN's claim that the revocation of the journalist's pass violated his rights under the First Amendment.

"Whatever process occurred within the government is still so shrouded in mystery that the government could not tell me at oral argument who made the initial decision to revoke Mr. Acosta's press pass," Kelly said in his ruling.

The ruling followed a hearing held Wednesday in Washington at which lawyers for CNN and the White House faced off over the issue of press access. CNN had the broad support of other news organizations that

believed the White House's actions posed a challenge to press freedom.

"We are gratified with this result and we look forward to a full resolution in the coming days," a CNN representative said in a statement.

The White House said it would abide by Kelly's ruling, which he read from the bench, but indicated it would create guidelines for reporters' decorum.

"Today, the court made clear there is no absolute right to access the White House. In response to the court, we will temporarily reinstate the reporter's hard pass," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said in a statement. "We will also further develop rules and processes to ensure fair and orderly press conferences in the future. There must be decorum in the White House."

Acosta's credential was revoked by the White House on Nov. 7 after a testy exchange with Trump at a news conference. At one point, Acosta refused to relinquish the microphone to a White House aide who tried to retrieve it from him. It was the latest in a series of public confrontations between Acosta and Trump.

Trump said he answered Mueller questions 'very easily'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says he "very easily" answered written questions from special counsel Robert Mueller, though he speculated that the questions had been "tricked up" to try to catch him in a lie. He said he hadn't submitted his answers to investigators yet.

"You have to always be careful when you answer questions with people that probably have bad intentions," Trump told reporters Friday in his latest swipe at the probe into 2016 election interference and possible ties between Moscow and

the president's campaign.

During months of back-and-forth negotiations with the special counsel office, Trump's lawyers have repeatedly counseled the president against sitting down for an in-person interview.

The president continued to maintain his innocence while launching new broadsides at the probe. He denied being "agitated" despite his outbursts the day before.

After a relative lull in the run-up to the midterms, the Russia probe has returned to the forefront of Washington conversation and cable news chyrons. There has been wide-

spread media coverage of two Trump allies — Roger Stone and Jerome Corsi — who say they expect to be charged.

The president has expressed concerns behind closed doors that Mueller is closing in on his inner circle, including potentially his eldest son.

For months, Trump has told confidants he fears that Donald Trump Jr., perhaps inadvertently, broke the law by being untruthful with investigators in the aftermath of a June 2016 Trump Tower meeting with a Kremlin-connected lawyer, according to one Republican close to the White House.

Additionally, Trump has told

confidants in recent days that he is deeply frustrated by widespread criticism of his choice of Matthew Whitaker for acting attorney general, according to four officials and Republicans close to the White House who spoke on condition of anonymity. Whitaker has been a vocal opponent of the special counsel probe.

One argument against Whitaker was that he has not been confirmed by Senate. Trump, in turn, contended that the criticism was unfair since Mueller also was not confirmed for his post.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Twin manatees returned to Florida Keys waters

FL KEY LARGO — Rare twin manatees Millennium and Falcon were released back to their home in the Florida Keys.

With satellite tracking transmitters strapped to their bodies, the two marine mammals were returned to waters leading to Florida Bay on Thursday.

They were found in October 2016, after their mother was accidentally killed by a boat strike. They each weighed about 100 pounds when staff from the Keys-based Dolphin Research Center rescued them and had them transferred to the Miami Seaquarium.

They were subsequently sent to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium in Ohio for rehabilitation before returning to the Seaquarium about two months ago.

Skydivers jump after pilot reports issue

HI LIHUE — The pilot of a skydiving plane made an emergency landing on Kauai after telling the two pairs of tandem parachutists to jump out, authorities said.

The plane's operator, Skydive Kauai, issued a mayday call after the pilot reported mechanical issues at 4,000 feet above Hanapepe, the Kauai Fire Department said.

The pilot then told the two instructors and two jumpers to exit the aircraft.

One pair landed in a grassy area near Hanapepe Valley. A rescue helicopter located the pair and transported them to the Skydive Kauai office in Hanapepe, authorities said.

The other pair landed safely at Eleele Elementary School. They were driven back to the

office.

No one was injured.

Football fan blames NY Jets for his DWI

NJ WAYNE — Authorities say a pro football fan charged with drunken driving after a crash told police he drank too much because his favorite team isn't any good.

Wayne police said Christopher Greyshock, 57, of West Milford was charged after he rear-ended another vehicle about 5:15 p.m. Sunday. The crash came about an hour after his team, the New York Jets, lost 41-10 to the Buffalo Bills.

Authorities said Greyshock told responding officers: "I drank too much because the Jets suck."

Police said Greyshock had an open bottle of whiskey and suspected marijuana in his car. Besides the DWI count, he was also charged with assault by auto.

Oregon man tries to trade cannabis for car

OR ALBANY — Marijuana is legal in Oregon, but you can't barter it for a car.

Police in Albany said Tuesday a car dealer posted a Mazda SUV for sale on an online marketplace on Friday. A man contacted the dealer and offered to trade cannabis for the car.

Matthew Franks, 38, of Independence showed up at a parking-lot rendezvous site that evening, expecting to meet the car seller.

Instead, police were waiting for him.

Police spokesman Brad Liles said Franks was arrested and put into the Linn County Jail. Liles said police seized 5.4 pounds of marijuana, less than the agreed-upon amount.

Though marijuana is legal

in Oregon, sales are regulated and those in the business must be licensed.

2 teens suffer burns from tree fort fire

MI SPRING LAKE TOWNSHIP — Two western Michigan teens suffered second- and third-degree burns after a tree fort they were sleeping in caught fire.

Authorities said five teens originally were in the wooden structure which was about two feet off the ground. A fire pit was built inside with cinder blocks.

Three of the teens went home. Ottawa County sheriff's Sgt. Matt Wildfong said the remaining two boys fell asleep on a mattress which caught fire. The fire then spread to the rest of the tree fort.

The two teens escaped the flames and later told officers they fell asleep after drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana.

Crews remove highway 'I Love NY' signs

NY ALBANY — Crews have started removing hundreds of New York interstate highway tourism signs that the federal government said the Cuomo administration installed illegally.

The state Department of Transportation says Thursday that the agency and Thruway Authority have begun removing the "I Love NY" signs located along the Thruway and other state highways.

The state began installing the 500-plus signs in groups of five several years ago, despite being told by federal officials that they didn't comply with U.S. regulations regarding highway signage.

DOT officials say under an agreement with the Federal

Highway Administration, the first sign in each group will remain with modifications, while the next four in each group will be relocated to service areas, welcome centers and state-owned facilities.

Researchers see huge drop in butterflies

FL GAINESVILLE — New research shows the number of butterflies and caterpillars in North Florida has been declining substantially over the last decade or so.

The University of Florida study said the number has declined by 80 percent since 2005.

The Tampa Bay Times said researchers believe two major factors could be responsible. Milkweed is the favorite food of young monarchs, and its availability has been sharply reduced by development and by glyphosate, an herbicide widely used in agriculture to kill weeds.

Officials: Mountain lion was fed bratwurst

CO WALSENBURG — Wildlife officials who seized a mountain lion kitten from a home said the feline fell ill after the residents fed it bratwurst.

Travis Sauder with Colorado Parks and Wildlife said the kitten appeared to be in good health otherwise and was sent to a wildlife rehabilitation center Tuesday.

The Walsenburg residents posted photos on social media Monday showing the kitten in a cage and describing how they found it in a snowbank after a snowplow passed by. Sauder said residents should leave wildlife alone and that mountain lions can handle cold weather.

From wire reports

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Rams get respite while preparing for KC

Associated Press

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — This was a respite for the Los Angeles Rams but certainly no vacation.

The team kept its plans to train at the Air Force Academy and stay at the posh Broadmoor Hotel in the Rocky Mountain foothills even after the NFL moved their Monday night showdown with the Kansas City Chiefs to the Los Angeles Coliseum because of a frayed football field at Mexico City's Azteca Stadium.

The primary benefit shifted from altitude acclimation to getting away from the wildfires back home and doing some midseason team bonding.

"It's been a little bit wild for sure, but with that being said, there's a lot more people dealing with a lot worse than what we're dealing with right now," quarterback Jared Goff said. "We're the lucky ones and we're having a good time out here in Colorado."

The deadly wildfires that are surrounding the Rams' train-

ing complex back home affected some players and coaches directly and some indirectly.

"I personally wasn't affected, but I look at my teammates as family," Ndamukong Suh said. "So, we all have to deal with it in some form or fashion."

The trip to Colorado also allowed the Rams (9-1) to do some midseason bonding, something tight end Rob Gronkowski said helped the Patriots refocus down the stretch last season after they spent a week at the academy ahead of their game against the Raiders in Mexico City.

Rams coach Sean McVay said he reached out to Patriots coach Bill Belichick for some tips about how they handled the week away in the Rocky Mountains.

"Anybody like a Bill Belichick, if they're able to give you a perspective, it'd be silly not to listen and try to apply it," McVay said.

The Rams flew home Saturday after what was actually a business trip.

"The Broadmoor's great. I haven't played any golf," defensive coordinator Wade Phillips said. "I've got a lot of friends here, but I haven't really seen anybody because we've been working. It's a work trip ... we're getting ready to play a game."

McVay said training in Colorado won't be a waste even though the game now will be played at sea level.

"With all the things going on right now, I think there's some guys that, at the time, wouldn't have been able to get back into their houses," McVay said. "There's a lot of things that we were doing here. One of them was, obviously, to get ready for playing in the elevation and different things like that. It does still serve you well to train in these environments."

"So, it'll help us out. Then, really, we looked at it as another chance to kind of get away before the bye week, continue to connect as a team where there's not any real distractions."

That bonding may be the ultimate benefit of their brief trip.

"If anything, the last week has really made you appreciate the perspective that this gives you," McVay said. "What's so special about football is the brotherhood that you share with the teammates, the coaches, the rapport and just the camaraderie. There's nothing like it."

"To be able to go through some of these things, to also know that when you're going through real life adversity outside of football, that you have a support system, you have people that care about you unconditionally — that's what's real."

McVay said he took in the picturesque mountains, the fresh air and the amenities of the Broadmoor, but "I really haven't had a chance to get out and explore. We're in the midst of game planning and things like that, but I know our players have enjoyed it."

"They got a chance to go to the Nuggets-Rockets game the other night. I think it's been a great getaway for the team to be together and kind of bond."

Former NASCAR champs Busch, Kenseth set to move on

Associated Press

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — NASCAR's driver carousel will spin long after the season finale.

Former Cup champions Kurt Busch and Matt Kenseth, and Daniel Suarez, AJ Allmendinger, Regan Smith and Jamie McMurray are among the drivers certain to start next season with new teams or new roles.

Busch, the 2004 champion, is seemingly on his way out at Stewart-Haas Racing and his No. 41 Ford could be the landing spot for Suarez. Suarez, the 2016 Xfinity Series champion, was rushed to Cup to fill Carl Edwards' seat when he suddenly walked away from Joe Gibbs Racing. After two seasons and no wins, JGR cut ties with the 26-year-old Suarez. Suarez became expendable when Furniture Row Racing folded and 2017 champion Martin Truex

Jr. suddenly became available.

"It's time to go somewhere else and try to win more races and championships," Suarez said.

Suarez, NASCAR's first Mexican champion in the Xfinity Series, declined to discuss his 2019 plans.

"I don't know if it's going to be NASCAR," he said, chuckling.

Busch also played coy with his plans, though many believe he's a lock to take his Monster Energy sponsorship to Chip Ganassi Racing. Busch, knocked out of championship contention last week at Phoenix, would not say that Sunday's race at Homestead-Miami Speedway would be his last at SHR.

"I don't know. We'll see how things play out," Busch said. "There are still things that have to be sorted through on the team side, manufacturer side, sponsorship side."

Busch won six times since he joined SHR in 2014 — including the 2017 Daytona 500 — and signed a one-year extension with the team last December. He was wrecked late by Denny Hamlin last week at Phoenix to deny him a shot at racing Sunday for the title.

Busch and Suarez will at least have rides in 2019. McMurray has lost his ride in the No. 1 Chevrolet and has been offered a leadership position with the team. McMurray has seven career victories in the Cup Series, including the 2010 Daytona 500. He has been with Ganassi since 2010. Ganassi also offered the 42-year-old McMurray a contract for the 2019 Daytona 500.

McMurray has leaned on Kenseth, his closest friend in the garage, for advice on what retirement and open weekends would feel like. Kenseth was

nudged out of NASCAR last season by Joe Gibbs Racing to make room for Erik Jones. He returned on a part-time basis this season with owner Jack Roush at Roush Fenway Racing in the No. 6 Ford. He's had just one top-10 finish in 14 starts — 2011 Daytona 500 champion Trevor Bayne made the other 21 starts — and Kenseth is set to head into retirement without much fanfare. Kenseth has 39 wins and was a two-time Daytona 500 champion (2009, 2012).

There's plenty of movement among the drivers who are usually in the rear of the fields.

Ryan Newman was released from Richard Childress Racing and will replace Kenseth/Bayne at Roush. Daniel Hemric, who is racing for the Xfinity Series championship, will replace Newman in the No. 31 Chevrolet.

Top 25 basketball roundup

Vick shines in Jayhawks' win

Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Lagerald Vick hit seven three-pointers and had a career-high 33 points, and No. 2 Kansas beat pesky Louisiana-Lafayette 89-76 on Friday night.

Vick also had nine rebounds while topping his 32-point outburst earlier in the week against Vermont. Dedric Lawson added 19 points for the Jayhawks (3-0), and Udoka Azubuike had 17 points and eight rebounds.

Justin Miller scored all 22 of his points in the first half for Louisiana-Lafayette (1-2). JaKeenan Grant finished with 18 points, Malik Marquetti had 14 and Cedric Russell had 10 points and five assists.

No. 4 Virginia 97, Coppin State 40: De'Andre Hunter scored 20 points, and the host Cavaliers routed the Eagles.

Hunter was outscoring the Eagles for most of the first half after hitting two early three-pointers for the Cavaliers (3-0). A three-pointer by Ibn Williams with 6:10 left finally gave Coppin State more points than the sophomore forward, but the Eagles trailed 26-13.

No. 6 Nevada 87, Little Rock 59: Caleb Martin scored 19 points and Jordan Caroline had 17 points and 12 rebounds, helping the visiting Wolf Pack cruise to the victory.

Nevada never trailed, carrying a 20-point advantage into halftime. The Wolf Pack (3-0) shot 53 percent from the field and outrebounded the Trojans 43-36.

No. 7 North Carolina 108, Tennessee Tech 58: Luke Maye had 15 points to help the host Tar Heels to the runaway win.

Sterling Manley added 13 points for the Tar Heels (4-0), who shot 55 percent against an overmatched opponent. Seventh Woods had seven points and a career-best eight assists off the bench, including a behind-

the-back pass to set up a corner three-pointer from Cameron Johnson after halftime.

No. 12 Kansas State 95, Eastern Kentucky 68: At St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Xavier Sneed scored 16 points to lead five Wildcats players in double figures.

Dean Wade and Cartier Diarra each had 14 points, helping the Wildcats (3-0) advance to the semifinals of the Paradise Jam tournament. Kamau Stokes and Barry Brown Jr. had 10 points apiece.

No. 13 Oregon 80, No. 15 Syracuse 65: Bol Bol had 26 points and nine rebounds, and the Ducks beat the Orange in the consolation game of the 2K Classic in New York.

Payton Pritchard added 18 points for the Ducks (3-1). Kenny Wooten had 12 in the first-ever meeting between the ACC and Pac-12 programs.

No. 16 Virginia Tech 88, Northeastern 60: At Charleston, S.C., Nickeil Alexander-Walker scored 20 points, helping the Hokies advance to the championship of the Charleston Classic.

The Hokies (3-0) grabbed control in the first half, going from trailing 24-23 to leading 46-26 at the break.

No. 17 Mississippi State 79, Long Beach State 51: Quindary Weatherspoon scored 21 points, Tyson Carter added 17 and the Bulldogs beat the visiting 49ers.

No. 20 UCLA 95, Saint Francis (Pa.) 58: Moses Brown had 23 points, 14 rebounds and eight blocks, and the Bruins pulled away for the home win.

No. 22 LSU 74, Louisiana Tech 67: Ja'vonte Smart made a late three-pointer and finished with 16 points, leading the host Tigers to the victory.

No. 23 Purdue 79, Davidson 58: Carsen Edwards had 29 points, and the Boilermakers beat the Wildcats to reach the Charleston Classic final.

No. 23 Boise State wallops New Mexico

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Any talk of a trap game did not get much attention from No. 23 Boise State in practice this week.

The Broncos went out and played against a struggling New Mexico team as if a huge game was not looming on their schedule next week against No. 14 Utah State.

"This week, it was all about New Mexico," Broncos coach Bryan Harsin said. "We can control how we play the game and we did."

Sean Modster caught a career-best three touchdowns passes to lead Boise State to a 45-14 victory over New Mexico on Friday night.

"It felt good to come out here and do what needed to get done," Modster said. "Our whole mentality was to get in and get out."

The Broncos (9-2, 6-1 Mountain West) took advantage of three turnovers by the Lobos (3-8, 1-6) that they turned into 24 points.

Modster finished with a career-high nine catches for 129 yards. Broncos quarterback Brett Rypien was an efficient 17-for-27 for 222 yards and the three scores, while running back Alexander Mattison added 145 yards and a touchdown.

The Broncos came into the game looking to break Modster open, Rypien said

"He got some looks but at other times, it depended on what they were giving us," he said. "He just did a good job of winning the one-on-ones. I think our other guys are going to be hungry now that Sean had three touchdowns. I'm sure there are some other guys in that room who are going to want some red zone action as well."

Boise State limited the Lobos to 262 total yards and one touchdown, with the other touchdown coming on a punt return.

Poll implications: The win leaves Boise State well-positioned to continue its climb in the poll, especially after No. 22 Boston College and No. 20 Kentucky took big falls last week.

College football roundup

Memphis downs SMU

Associated Press

DALLAS — Patrick Taylor Jr., ran for 111 yards and two touchdowns and Memphis beat SMU 28-18 on Friday night.

Brady White's 16-yard touchdown pass to Joey Magnifico with 9:26 before halftime gave Memphis a 7-3 lead it never surrendered. Taylor's 9-yard run after intermission extended the lead to 14-5.

Bowl-eligible Memphis (7-4, 4-3 American Athletic Conference) now holds an 8-3 advantage in its series with the Mustangs (5-6, 4-3) and has won five straight against SMU since 2014.

Eastern Washington 74, Portland State 23: Eric Barriere threw a career-high five touchdown passes and ran for another score as the visiting Eagles beat the Vikings to clinch the 13th playoff berth in program history and at least a share of their 10th Big Sky Conference title.

Barriere, who has started the last six games after Gage Gubrud — a two-time finalist for the Walter Payton Award — sustained a foot injury against Montana State on Sept. 29, scored on a 66-yard run on the third play from scrimmage and EWU never trailed.

Roundup

Celtics top Raptors behind Irving's 43

Associated Press

BOSTON — Kyrie Irving had a season-high 43 points, scoring 17 points in the last 8:06 of the fourth quarter to force overtime and then making or recording an assist on every basket in the extra period in the Boston Celtics' 123-116 victory over the Toronto Raptors on Friday night.

Irving had 11 assists, and Jayson Tatum added 21 points and seven rebounds. Boston evened the season series at one game apiece against the only team to finish above it in the Eastern Conference last season. The home team has won nine straight matchups.

Kawhi Leonard scored 31 with a season-high 15 rebounds for Toronto. The Raptors have lost three straight since opening 12-1.

Pelicans 129, Knicks 124: Anthony Davis scored a season-high 43 points and grabbed 17 rebounds and New Orleans overcame an 11-point, fourth-quarter deficit to beat visiting New York.

Julius Randle had 19 points and 11 rebounds. Holiday finished with 24 points and 10 assists, and Nikola Mirotic had 12 points and 10 rebounds for New Orleans.

76ers 113, Jazz 107: Jimmy Butler scored 28 points in his home debut, Joel Embiid had 23 and Philadelphia beat Utah.

Acquired Monday from Minnesota in a five-player trade, Butler got a loud ovation during introductions and quickly made an impression as the Sixers built a 16-point lead in the first quarter.

Nets 115, Wizards 104: Spencer Dinwiddie scored a season-best 25 points, D'Angelo Russell had 23 and visiting Brooklyn beat host Washington for its first victory since Caris LeVert's gruesome foot injury.

LeVert sustained what was originally feared to be a season-ending injury Monday. Doctors found no fractures, though, and he's expected to avoid surgery and return this season from a dislocated foot.

Timberwolves 112, Trail Blazers 96: Andrew Wiggins scored 23 points, Derrick Rose had 17 and host Minnesota kept cruising without Jimmy Butler.

Robert Covington and Karl-Anthony Towns each had 14 points. The Timberwolves are 7-1 at home and 3-0 since trading the disgruntled Butler to Philadelphia

on Monday.

Bucks 123, Bulls 104: Eric Bledsoe scored 25 points, Khristian Middleton and Giannis Antetokounmpo each added 23 points and Milwaukee overcame a 22-point deficit to beat visiting Chicago.

Down 63-45 at the half, the Bucks outscored the Bulls 46-17 in the third quarter.

Grizzlies 112, Kings 104: Rookie Jaren Jackson Jr. scored a season-high 27 points, and Marc Gasol added 19 points and 15 rebounds to become host Memphis' career rebounding leader.

Gasol has 5,613 career rebounds, passing the franchise record of 5,612 set by Zach Randolph.

De'Aaron Fox led the Kings with 23 points and 10 assists.

Pacers 99, Heat 91: Tyreke Evans hit five three-pointers and scored a season-high 23 points, leading Indiana past visiting Miami.

Bojan Bogdanovic had 16 points and six rebounds, and Domantas Sabonis added 15 points and 12 rebounds. Josh Richardson scored 28 points for Miami, going 7-for-10 from three-point range.

NHL roundup

Dickinson scores in OT to lift Stars over Bruins

Associated Press

DALLAS — Ben Bishop was as much a cheerleader as a goalie for Dallas in a scoreless overtime game.

"It's like, 'C'mon, let's score, guys,'" he said.

Jason Dickinson obliged, burying a rebound 1:34 into overtime to preserve Bishop's 23-save shutout and lift the Stars over the Boston Bruins 1-0 on Friday night.

Dickinson and Mattias Janmark led a 2-on-1 against goalie Tuukka Rask. Janmark shot from the left side, and the rebound slid to Dickinson right in front. He lifted the puck in for his fourth of the season.

"I recognized that it was a 2-on-1 and I went to open up for (Janmark)," Dickinson said. "I noticed that he was shooting, and I figured I'd go to the side

that he was shooting on because there might be a rebound.

"To be able to cap that off with an overtime winner from me, it feels really good."

Rask made 36 saves in his return from a week-long leave of absence for a personal matter. The Bruins have not elaborated on the reason for Rask's leave.

Bruins coach Bruce Cassidy wasn't blaming Rask.

"Overtime hasn't been our friend," Cassidy said. "We don't manage the puck. We give up odd-man rushes. We don't deserve to win. Listen, you've got to defend when you don't have the puck."

Dallas won 1-0 in overtime or a shootout for the first time in franchise history. The Stars hadn't been in a scoreless overtime game since a 1-0 shootout loss to Los Angeles on March 26, 2009.

Sabres 2, Jets 1 (OT): Conor Sheary scored in the seventh round of a shootout to lift visiting Buffalo past Winnipeg for its fourth straight victory.

Carter Hutton stopped 25 shots to help Buffalo improve to 11-6-2.

Capitals 3, Avalanche 2 (OT): Nicklas Backstrom scored a power-play goal 22 seconds into overtime to lift visiting Washington past Colorado.

The Capitals ended it on a 4-on-3 power play. Backstrom was left uncovered for a clean shot in the high slot that beat former Capitals goalie Philipp Grubauer on his stick side.

Kings 2, Blackhawks 1 (SO): Cal Petersen made 34 saves in his first NHL start and stopped Jonathan Toews and Patrick Kane in a shootout, leading visiting Los Angeles past Chicago.

Ilya Kovalchuk and Anze Kopitar converted the Kings' first two attempts in the tiebreaker against Corey Crawford to help Los Angeles end a three-game losing streak.

Blues 4, Golden Knights 1: Ryan O'Reilly scored twice as visiting St. Louis remained unbeaten against the Golden Knights at 3-0-2 since the start of last season.

Brayden Schenn and Oskar Sundqvist also scored for St. Louis.

Maple Leafs 2, Ducks 1 (OT): Morgan Reilly scored on a breakaway with 1:43 remaining in overtime and Toronto swept the California portion of its road trip.

The Maple Leafs have won six of seven and are unbeaten in three overtime games this season.