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Court urged to rule on transgender ban

Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Friday once again asked the Supreme Court to bypass the usual legal process to take on another controversial issue: President Donald Trump's decision to ban transgender people from military service.

Solicitor General Noel Francisco asked the justices to consolidate the challenges to the ban — which so far have been successful in lower courts — and rule on the issue in its current term.

Civil rights groups and gay rights organizations are fighting the president's order that would prohibit transgender men and women from enlisting, possibly subjecting current servicemembers to discharge and denying them certain medical care.

Trump announced in a July 2017 tweet that he was reversing an Obama administration policy allowing transgender men and women to serve openly and to receive funding for sex-reassignment surgery.

Trump's message that "the United States Government will

not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military" surprised military leaders and members of Congress. Trump said he was "doing the military a great favor" by "coming out and just saying it."

Trump issued a memorandum ordering Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis to submit "a plan for implementing" the ban. The plan was submitted earlier this year. But it has not satisfied judges in lower courts, who have issued injunctions to keep the current policy in place.

"The decisions imposing those injunctions are wrong, and they warrant this court's immediate review," Francisco wrote Friday.

Challengers have cited Trump's statements to argue that the directive is the result of discrimination, rather than a study of how allowing transgender personnel affects the military. Lower-court judges have largely agreed.

"There is absolutely no support for the claim that the ongoing service of transgender people would have any negative effect on the military at all. In

fact, there is considerable evidence that it is the discharge and banning of such individuals that would have such effects," U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly wrote last spring in a case filed in the District of Columbia.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit has heard arguments on the merits of the case but has not yet issued an opinion. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District Circuit is scheduled to hear an appeal of the ruling next month.

Normally, the Supreme Court waits to take action until regional appeals courts have ruled. But Francisco told the Supreme Court the administration cannot afford to wait for those circuits to decide and that the justices should accept the cases now so they can be heard in the current term.

"The military has been forced to maintain (its) prior policy for nearly a year," Francisco wrote. "And absent this court's prompt intervention, it is unlikely that the military will be able to implement its new policy any time soon."

Francisco added that "Secre-

tary Mattis and a panel of senior military leaders and other experts determined that the prior policy ... posed too great a risk to military effectiveness and lethality."

Lawyers for those challenging the policy change said there is no reason for the court to abandon its usual policy.

"There is no urgency here and no reason for the court to weigh in at this juncture," said Jennifer Levi, transgender rights project director for the gay rights group GLAD. "The injunctions preserve the status quo of the open service policy that was thoroughly vetted by the military itself and has been in place now for more than two years. This is simply one more attempt by a reckless Trump administration to push through a discriminatory policy."

Added Lambda Legal counsel Peter Renn: "Yet again, the Trump administration flouts established norms and procedures. There is no valid reason to jump the line now and seek U.S. Supreme Court review before the appellate courts have even ruled on the preliminary issues before them."

US servicemember killed in Afghanistan

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — A U.S. servicemember was killed in action in Afghanistan on Saturday.

The identity of the servicemember was being withheld pending next-of-kin notification, NATO's Resolute Support mission said in a statement. No other details were immediately provided.

It raises to 10 the number of U.S. troops killed in Afghanistan this year. Earlier this month, Maj. Brent Taylor, of the Army National Guard, was killed during an insider

attack in Kabul that also injured another U.S. servicemember.

Also Saturday, two Afghan soldiers died when their helicopter made an "emergency landing" in the southern Kandahar province due to a technical problem, Defense Ministry spokesman Ghafor Ahmad Jawad said.

He said two other soldiers were wounded when the helicopter caught fire after landing. The Taliban claimed to have shot the helicopter down.

In the capital, Kabul, a senior religious scholar was shot and killed, said Basir Mujahid, a spokesman for the capital's police

chief. No one immediately claimed the killing of Abdul Basir Haqqani, but police arrested a man with a pistol near the scene of the shooting, Mujahid said.

Most of the roughly 14,000 U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan assist NATO's training and advising mission, while a smaller number help with the United States' separate counterterrorism mission that targets groups like the local Islamic State affiliate.

About 2,400 American military personnel have been killed since the war in Afghanistan began in 2001.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Climate report: Disasters in US to worsen

By SETH BORENSTEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As California's catastrophic wildfires recede and people rebuild after two hurricanes, a massive new federal report warns that these types of disasters are worsening in the United States because of global warming. The White House report quietly issued Friday also frequently contradicts President Donald Trump.

The National Climate Assessment was written long before the deadly fires in California this month and before Hurricanes Florence and Michael raked the East Coast and Florida. It says warming-charged

extremes "have already become more frequent, intense, widespread or of long duration." The report notes the last few years have smashed U.S. records for damaging weather, costing nearly \$400 billion since 2015.

The recent Northern California wildfires can be attributed to climate change, but there was less of a connection to those in Southern California, said co-author William Hohenstein of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"A warm, dry climate has increased the areas burned over the last 20 years," he said at a press conference Friday.

The report is mandated by law every few years and

is based on more than 1,000 previous research studies. It details how global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas is hurting each region of the United States and how it impacts different sectors of the economy, including energy and agriculture.

"Climate change is transforming where and how we live and presents growing challenges to human health and quality of life, the economy, and the natural systems that support us," the report says.

That includes worsening air pollution causing heart and lung problems, more diseases from insects, the potential for a jump in deaths during heat waves, and nastier allergies.

"Annual losses in some economic sectors are projected to reach hundreds of billions of dollars by the end of the century — more than the current gross domestic product (GDP) of many U.S. states," the report says. It'll be especially costly on the nation's coasts because of rising seas and severe storm surges, which will lower property values. And in some areas, such as parts of Alaska and Louisiana, coastal flooding will likely force people to relocate.

"We are seeing the things we said would be happening, happen now in real life," said another co-author Katharine Hayhoe of Texas Tech University. "As a climate scientist, it is almost surreal."

Families split at border still detained in Texas

By ASTRID GALVAN

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Half a dozen families who were separated at the U.S.-Mexico border are still detained in Texas months after reuniting with their children.

Immigrant advocates say the government has violated a longstanding legal agreement that bars it from detaining children past 20 days in unlicensed facilities like the South Texas Family Residential Center.

The detention center in Dilley, Texas, had been holding about 40 families for four months following the court-ordered reunifications. About 30 of the families were just released last week.

Many families had spent months apart after President Donald Trump's administration launched a zero-tolerance policy requiring anyone who crossed the border illegally to face criminal charges. That meant parents had to go to court while their kids went to shelters for underage immi-

grants nationwide.

The policy ended in the spring after worldwide uproar, but families with parents who failed their first screening as they sought asylum have remained in custody with their children.

A decades-old agreement known as the Flores settlement dictates how long the government can keep children in unlicensed facilities. Generally, the rule has been they can't be kept past 20 days.

Families still detained in Texas said that they are desperate and that their children are traumatized.

One woman said she and her daughter kept getting sick during the rainy season because officials at the Texas center wouldn't let them change out of wet clothes. The dorms at Dilley are outside.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokeswoman Dani Bennett said the agency takes the health, safety and welfare of immigrants in their care very seriously.

Conservative writer says he's mulling deal in probe

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — Conservative writer Jerome Corsi, an associate of Trump confidant Roger Stone, said he is in plea talks with special counsel Robert Mueller's team.

Corsi said on Friday that he has been negotiating a potential plea but declined to comment further. He said on a YouTube show earlier this month that he expected to be charged with lying to federal investigators, though he said at the time that he was innocent.

Mueller's team questioned Corsi as part of an investigation into Stone's connections with WikiLeaks. American intelligence agencies have assessed that Russia was the source of hacked material released by WikiLeaks during the 2016 election that damaged Hillary Clinton's campaign. Mueller's office is trying to determine whether Stone and other associates of President Donald Trump had advance knowledge

of WikiLeaks' plans.

The confirmation of plea talks — first reported by The Washington Post — comes as Mueller's team has just received fresh information from Trump personally and as federal prosecutors in Virginia recently inadvertently disclosed the existence of sealed charges against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

It's unclear if the charges against Assange are related to Mueller's investigation, but WikiLeaks was singled out in an indictment last summer against a group of Russian intelligence officers accused of carrying out the wide-ranging hack of Clinton's campaign and other Democratic organizations.

It's also not known if any plea by Corsi signals a new raft of charges by the special counsel or just that investigators are aggressively pursuing cases against people they believe made false statements to investigators.

Rain helps douse fire but slows searchers

Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. — A deadly wildfire is nearly contained thanks to several days of rain in Northern California. But search crews are still completing the meticulous task of combing through ash and debris that are now damp and muddy.

Searchers planned to resume their grim task Saturday after working on and off the day before because of a downpour over Paradise, Calif. Some are now looking through destroyed neighborhoods for a second time as hundreds of people remain unaccounted for. They're searching for telltale fragments or bone or anything that looks like a pile of cremated ashes.

Search teams on Friday wore yellow rain slickers and hard hats to protect against falling branches as they quietly looked for clues that may indicate someone couldn't get out, such as a car in the driveway or a wheelchair ramp. They

looked not only for bone but for anything that could be a pile of cremated ashes.

Craig Covey, who led a team out of Southern California's Orange County, temporarily pulled his 30-member team off the search as heavy rain and wind knocked down trees and caused dangerous conditions.

The nation's deadliest wildfire in the past century has killed at least 84 people, and 475 are still unaccounted for. Despite the inclement weather, more than 800 volunteers searched for remains on Thanksgiving and again Friday, two weeks after flames swept through the Sierra Nevada foothills, authorities said.

While rain complicated the search, it also helped nearly extinguish the blaze, said Josh Bischof, operations chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Once the rain clears, state officials will be able to determine if the blaze is fully out, he said.

The Camp Fire ignited Nov. 8 and has destroyed nearly 19,000 buildings, most of them homes. That's more than the worst eight fires in California's history combined, the agency said, with thousands of people displaced.

While the rain made everybody colder and wetter, they kept the mission in mind, said Chris Stevens, who wore five layers of clothing to keep warm.

"It doesn't change the spirits of the guys working," he said. "Everyone here is super-committed to helping the folks here."

The volunteers interrupted by rain Friday found other ways to help.

Covey and several team members took two big brown bags full of lunch to Stewart Nugent, 64, who stayed in his home and fought off flames with a garden hose, a sprinkler and a shovel. He has been

there for two weeks with his cat, Larry.

The first winter storm to hit California has dropped 2 to 4 inches of rain over the burn area since it began Wednesday, said Craig Shoemaker, with the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

The weather service issued a warning for possible flash flooding and debris flows from areas scarred by major fires in Northern California, including the areas burned in Paradise.

Shoemaker said Friday afternoon that about a quarter-inch of rain was falling per hour, not enough to cause serious problems. An inch of rain per hour would be more difficult, he said.

In Southern California, more residents were allowed to return to areas that were evacuated because of the 151-square-mile Woolsey Fire as crews worked to repair power, telephone lines and gas utilities.

Chicago defends site for Obama's library

Associated Press

CHICAGO — The city of Chicago made its first full-throated response last week to a lawsuit seeking to stop construction of the Obama Presidential Center, saying the buildings would sit on land that wasn't subject to restrictive public-trust laws.

City attorneys made those and other arguments in a federal court motion to dismiss a May lawsuit filed by an environmental group opposed to the project in Chicago's historic Jackson Park, chosen as the site for the \$500 million presidential museum and library by former President Barack Obama and former first lady Michelle Obama.

The filing asking Judge John Robert Blakey to toss the suit highlights city council and state legislative approval for the complex it said will foster economic development on the city's

South Side, upgrade the parkland and tell "the story of our Nation's first African-American President." It's slated to open in 2021.

Protect Our Parks contends that the land was once under Lake Michigan water, putting it in the public trust under court precedent and extending additional protections. The city's filing argues that's historically inaccurate, and that while nearby areas were submerged, the Obama Presidential Center site was not.

The center has widespread backing in Chicago, where Obama began his political career. But lakefront projects over the decades have always prompted fierce resistance in some quarters. A similar suit helped scuttle "Star Wars" creator George Lucas' plans for a Chicago museum in 2016.

Oklahoma city offering \$10,000 to move there

Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. — Budget-busting road salt prices are leaving municipal officials in the Snow Belt hoping for a mild winter.

Salt supplies are tight on the heels of a harsh winter last year that depleted reserves, leaving many localities in the Northeast and Great Lakes to pay prices that range from about 5 percent higher to almost double.

"Everybody's got their fingers crossed for good weather," said Rebecca Matsco, an official in western Pennsylvania's Beaver County, where one contract price came in at \$109 a ton, 95 percent higher than last year.

The increases are frustrating to local officials who are locked into tight budgets. Some highway superintendents say they could choose to make their

salt supplies last by mixing in more sand, which is cheaper. And others say it could force them to defer other road projects. But they can't stop salting slick roads.

"It doesn't mean that we're going to stop salting, it just means that it's going to be more expensive to get these materials," said Jack Cunningham, public works commissioner in the Albany, New York, suburb of Colonie, which is getting a relative bargain through a state contract of \$62 a ton, a mere 5 percent increase from last year.

Orders can cover thousands of tons, and the prices localities paying now per ton vary widely based on the supplier, volume, shipping costs and other factors. Officials in snowy Syracuse, New York, for instance, report flat costs after extending a contract from last year.

Mars has history of being tough on visitors

By MARCIA DUNN

Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Mars has a nasty habit of living up to its mythological name and besting Earth when it comes to accepting visitors.

NASA's InSight is the latest spacecraft to come calling, with every intent of landing and digging deeper into the planet than anything that's come before. The lander arrives at Mars on Monday following a six-month journey.

"We've had a number of successful landings in a row now. But you never know what Mars will throw at you," said Rob Grover, lead engineer for the landing team at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Landing on Mars is always risky, Gro-

ver and other experts stress at every opportunity.

"Our job on the landing team is to be paranoid about what could go wrong and make sure that we're doing everything we can to make sure things go right," he said,

The numbers back him up. Only about 40 percent of all missions to Mars — named after the Roman god of war — have succeeded.

"Going to Mars is really, really hard," NASA's top science mission official, Thomas Zurbuchen, told reporters last week. "As humanity, the explorers all over the world, we're batting about 50 percent — or less."

The United States is the only country to operate a spacecraft on the Martian surface. InSight represents NASA's ninth at-

tempt to put a spacecraft on Mars; only one effort failed.

The last one — NASA's Curiosity rover — is still on the move after six years, with more than 12 miles on its odometer. The space agency's older, smaller Opportunity was roaming up there until June, when a dust storm knocked it out of service.

Humanity's history of trying to get to Mars includes attempts to fly past for picture-taking without, as well as more complicated efforts to put spacecraft into orbit around the red planet and to actually land.

NASA's Mariner 4 performed the first successful flyby of the red planet in 1965, sending back 21 photos. Mariner 9 made it into orbit around Mars and beamed back more than 7,000 photos.

American killed on remote island: 'God sheltered me'

By ASHOK SHARMA

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — The young American, paddling his kayak toward a remote Indian island whose people have resisted the outside world for thousands of years, believed God was helping him dodge the authorities.

"God sheltered me and camouflaged me against the coast guard and the navy," John Allen Chau wrote before he was killed recently on North Sentinel Island.

Indian ships monitor the waters around the island, trying to

ensure outsiders do not go near the Sentinelese, who have repeatedly made clear they want to be left alone.

When a young boy tried to hit him with an arrow on his first day on the island, Chau swam back to the fishing boat he had arranged to wait for him offshore. The arrow, he wrote, hit a Bible he was carrying.

"Why did a little kid have to shoot me today?" he wrote in his notes, which he left with the fishermen before swimming back the next morning. "His high-pitched voice still lingers in my head."

Police say Chau knew that the Sentinelese resist all contact by outsiders, firing arrows and spears at helicopters and killing fishermen who drift onto their shore. His notes, which were reported Thursday in Indian newspapers and confirmed by police, make clear he knew he might be killed.

"I DON'T WANT TO DIE," wrote Chau, who appeared to want to bring Christianity to the islanders. "Would it be wiser to leave and let someone else to continue? No I don't think so."

Indian authorities have been trying to figure out a way to re-

cover Chau's body after he was killed earlier this month by islanders who apparently shot him with arrows and then buried his body on the beach.

Police and officials from the forest department, tribal welfare department and coast guard on Friday launched an expedition to the island to identify where Chau died.

The officials arrested two of the seven people who helped Chau get close to the island in an effort to determine his route and circumstances of his death, according to a statement issued by police.

Thailand's child kickboxing draws criticism after death

Associated Press

BANGKOK — In the ring, the two boxers spar furiously, with blows delivered by fists, elbows, knees and feet to virtually any part of the opponent's body. Those in the crowd make wagers with each other as the battle rages.

The Muay Thai — or Thai kickboxing — competitors are as young as 8 years old.

But the tragic death of Anucha Tasako, 13, after being knocked out in a match earlier this month has brought into focus whether youngsters should be taking and giving such brutal punishment in the name of sports.

Anucha, who fought an incredible 174

bouts in a career that started at age 8, died of a brain hemorrhage two days after his Nov. 10 fight.

Hard-core Muay Thai fans say his death was a fluke. They say the referee did not stop the fight soon enough and that a doctor was not on hand, flouting the usual procedures.

But even before Anucha's death, moves were afoot to regulate the sport. Thai lawmakers recently tabled legislation to bar children under 12 from competitive boxing.

Last month, a five-year study by Dr. Witaya Sungkarat, of Bangkok's Ramathibodi Hospital, was published that com-

pared brain development between young boxers and children not involved with the sport.

He said the study clearly shows that boxing causes irreparable damage to a young child's developing brain, and the longer each young boxer had been fighting, the worse his condition became.

The sport's defenders say outsiders just don't understand that Muay Thai is an integral part of Thai culture.

Beginning to fight at a tender age puts the youngsters on the path to a successful professional career, with the opportunity to lift their poor families up the ladder of economic success, they say.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 imprisoned for selling elephant tranquilizers

IA CEDAR RAPIDS — Two Iowa men who unwittingly sold elephant tranquilizers that looked like prescription painkillers have been imprisoned.

Federal prosecutors said Cameron Lensmeyer and Evan Sage, both 20, were sentenced Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Cedar Rapids. Both live in Waverly.

Lensmeyer had pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute carfentanil and marijuana. He was sentenced to four years and four months. Sage pleaded guilty to possession for sale of carfentanil, cocaine and marijuana and to a weapons charge. He was sentenced to seven years and one month.

Prosecutors say the pair sold hundreds of pills they obtained from a darknet connection.

2 teens accused of stealing small airplane

UT VERNAL — Sheriff's deputies arrested two teenage boys they say stole a small airplane at a private airstrip in rural eastern Utah and flew about 15 miles before landing successfully at Vernal Regional Airport.

The Desert News reported the 14- and 15-year-old boys stole the single-engine Cessna on Thursday from a private airstrip in Jensen about 15 miles west of the Colorado line.

The Uintah County sheriff's office said they left a group home last week and were staying with friends in the Jensen area. They apparently gained access to a tractor and drove to the airstrip, where they took off in the plane.

They were arrested at the airport.

8 in hospital after barbecue used for heat

NV LAS VEGAS — Las Vegas authorities said eight people were overcome by carbon monoxide and taken to a hospital Friday after a barbecue was used inside an apartment for heat.

Las Vegas Fire & Rescue said in a Twitter post that the victims included adults and children and that they were already outside the apartment and lying on the ground when firefighters arrived at about 3:15 a.m.

The post did not provide additional circumstances about the incident, and neither a department spokesman nor a hospital spokeswoman immediately responded to inquiries about the conditions of the victims.

Driver blames rollover crash on toothache

KS TOPEKA — Authorities said a tractor-trailer driver who rolled his rig on the Kansas Turnpike told officers he was distracted by a toothache.

The Kansas Turnpike Authority said the driver, 49, from Olathe wasn't hurt. But The Topeka Capital-Journal reported that traffic was blocked for nearly two hours early Friday after the wreck in the west-bound lanes of Interstate 70 in Shawnee County.

The accident report said the driver became distracted by a toothache, rested his hand on his chin and drifted off the road onto the shoulder. The driver then overcorrected, crossed the highway, saw he was going to strike the wall between the turnpike's eastbound and west-bound lanes and overcorrected again. That caused the rig to fall onto its side, blocking off all three of the highway's west-bound lanes.

Man tries to pay ICE agent to deport wife

OR PORTLAND — A Portland man pleaded guilty to a bribery charge after he tried to pay a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent to deport his estranged wife.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported that Antonio Burgos, 48, pleaded guilty Tuesday.

Burgos first followed an officer from an ICE facility in Portland to a Vancouver, Wash., parking lot, where prosecutors say Burgos offered the agent money to deport the woman, whom he was in the process of divorcing.

The officer declined but called Burgos in cooperation with ICE investigators, who recorded two conversations in which prosecutors say Burgos offered \$3,000 to remove the woman.

Prosecutors said he met the agent in person June 26, increasing his offer to \$4,000 to deport his wife and her child from a previous relationship.

Video shows customer's racist remarks at eatery

AZ PHOENIX — A video of a white customer making racist remarks to another patron at a Phoenix restaurant is grabbing attention on social media.

Lennys Bermudez stopped at Wildflower Bread Company on Tuesday and said she was shocked by a woman's rant after she sat down. That's when Bermudez took out her cellphone to record their interaction.

In the video, the unidentified woman said she would "prefer the whole freaking nation be white."

She then said to Bermudez, who is of Puerto Rican descent, that she would be "wiped out."

Bermudez posted the video on Facebook, where it has been viewed more than 41,000 times..

Firefighters spend holiday battling blazes

MD BALTIMORE — Baltimore County firefighters spent Thanksgiving extinguishing blazes.

The first fire broke out at a large three-story home in Lutherville-Timonium on Thursday afternoon. Firefighters from numerous engine companies and tankers found flames bursting from the roof of the dwelling, with heavy fire in the attic.

They said everyone got out of the 10-bedroom house without injury. Crews remained at the smoldering home into Friday.

Hours later, county firefighters were battling a two-alarm blaze on the eighth floor of a Liberty Road apartment building. They got that fire under control late Thursday.

City workers sue over camera in bathroom

IA DAVENPORT — Eight Davenport employees have sued the city, saying the city didn't properly supervise a former housing program manager who hid a camera in a restroom.

The lawsuit filed Tuesday in Scott County District Court seeks restitution for "permanent personal injuries" and "an immense amount of emotional distress."

The former manager, Roy DeWitt, was sentenced in July to 16 years in prison after pleading guilty to eight counts of invasion of privacy.

The Quad-City Times reported that city attorney Tom Warner disputes the allegations and says the city was not negligent.

From wire reports

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Sooners win slugfest with Mountaineers

Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — No. 6 Oklahoma has been scoffed at for handing points and yards to opponents like presents, and it wasn't any different against No. 12 West Virginia. Yet a couple of defensive gems have the Sooners playing for their fourth straight Big 12 championship.

Oklahoma scored two defensive touchdowns to support another brilliant performance by Kyler Murray and the Sooners beat No. 12 West Virginia 59-56 Friday night to earn a spot in next week's title game.

Oklahoma (11-1, 8-1, No. 6 CFP) survived a wild and mostly defenseless affair that featured 1,372 yards of offense to earn a rematch Dec. 1 in Arlington, Texas, against No. 11 Texas, which beat Kansas earlier Friday.

"We'll certainly be excited to play those guys," Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley said. "But, more than anything, one huge goal we set out was we want to be the only team ever to win four of these in a row."

Oklahoma also kept its College Football Playoff chances alive. The Sooners remain the only Big 12 team that West Virginia (8-3, 6-3, No. 13 CFP) hasn't beaten since the Mountaineers joined the league in 2012.

Oklahoma players sang West Virginia's anthem, John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" on the way to the locker room after the game.

"It was fun," Murray said. "There's no other way to describe it."

Murray finished 20-for-27 for 364 yards and three touchdown passes and converted a late fourth down to seal a matchup of Heisman Trophy hopefuls. West Virginia's Will Grier threw for four touchdowns and a career-high 539 yards on 32-for-49 passing. But Grier lost two fumbles, both of which were returned for touchdowns.

"When you score two touchdowns defensively, you like your chances," Riley said.

Oklahoma linebacker Caleb Kelly had a 12-yard TD return in the second quarter.

With the Mountaineers trying to regain momentum early in the fourth, Grier was spun around by defensive end Kenneth Mann during a scramble and lost the ball. Oklahoma linebacker Curtis Bolton picked it up and ran 48 yards for a touchdown to put the Sooners ahead 59-49.

"I'm disappointed for our seniors. We fought hard and came up a little bit short," West Virginia coach Dana Holgorsen said. "As well as we played offensively, giving them 14 points is inexcusable."

The takeaway

Oklahoma: The Sooners were unremarkable on defense yet again, but those two stellar plays were the difference. On offense the Sooners surpassed 290 rushing yards for the sixth straight game, coinciding with their six-game winning streak. They also improved their national-best road winning streak to 20 games dating to the 2014 season.

West Virginia: The Mountaineers matched the Sooners

punch for punch offensively but made a few more mistakes than Oklahoma and finished the regular season with two straight losses, a huge disappointment for a team that believed it had the right mix to win its first league championship. The Mountaineers will also likely miss out on a New Year's Six bowl for the seventh straight season.

"We didn't make our goal," Holgorsen said. "It's a damn shame."

Big performances

Oklahoma leading receiver Marquise Brown was Murray's favorite target again. Brown had 11 grabs for 243 yards and two scores. West Virginia's Gary Jennings finished with seven catches for a career-high 225 yards. He and David Sills caught two TDs apiece.

The Sooners' Kennedy Brooks ran for a season-high 182 yards while Murray had 115 yards on the ground, including a 55-yard TD. He averaged 12.7 yards per rush.

College football roundup

Washington wins 6th straight over Washington State

Associated Press

PULLMAN, Wash. — Chris Petersen walked away from the party happening in the end zone where the Apple Cup was being passed around by his players for the sixth straight year. He reached down and grabbed a chunk of the snow that blanketed the turf of Martin Stadium and fired back at the snowballs being flung his way from his two sons.

There was plenty of celebrating by Washington's coach and his players — snow angels, snowball fights — after the Huskies continued their dominance over Washington State in an Apple Cup the purple and gold won't soon forget.

"I've heard it sucks to lose to

the Cougs. I'm glad I don't have to experience it," Washington quarterback Jake Browning said.

Myles Gaskin broke free for an 80-yard touchdown run early in the fourth quarter, and No. 16 Washington won its second Pac-12 North Division title in three years, beating No. 7 Washington State 28-15 on Friday night.

No. 8 UCF 38, South Florida 10: The Golden Knights lost quarterback McKenzie Milton to injury but still trounced the visiting Bulls to extend the nation's longest winning streak to 24 games and complete a second consecutive undefeated regular season.

Milton hurt his right knee

when he was tackled at the end of a 5-yard run in the second quarter. Darriel Mack Jr. replaced him and may make his second start of the year when UCF (11-0, 8-0, No. 9 CFP) faces Memphis next week in the American Athletic Conference title game.

Greg McCrae McCrae scored on runs of 40, 39 and 31 yards, with the second of the three TDs re-establishing a 14-point after South Florida briefly pulled to 17-10 on Johnny Ford's 34-yard catch-and-run. McCrae finished with 181 yards rushing on 16 carries for the Knights, who amassed 558 yards total offense and have scored at least 30 points in 24 consecutive games.

No. 11 Texas 24, Kansas 17: Sam Ehlinger threw for two touchdowns and ran for a score and the visiting Longhorns held off the Jayhawks to reach the Big 12 title game.

The Longhorns opened a 24-7 lead on Cameron Dicker's 34-yard field goal in the fourth quarter, but the lowly Jayhawks responded with Peyton Bender's 31-yard touchdown pass to Daylon Charlot and recovered the ensuing onside kick.

After Gabriel Rui made it a one-score game with a 45-yard field goal with 1:37 remaining, Kansas was unable to recover another onside kick and Texas (9-3, 7-2, No. 15 CFP) closed out its third consecutive victory.

Mickelson birdies 22nd hole, beats Tiger

Associated Press

Phil Mickelson beat Tiger Woods in overtime Friday in their \$9 million pay-per-view match in Las Vegas that ended up free for many viewers because of technical problems.

Mickelson won on the 22nd hole, making a 4-foot birdie putt on a specially set up 93-yard, par 3. The match at Shadow Creek Golf Club finished under floodlights.

Mickelson said to Woods after the match: "Just know I will never let you live that down. It's not the Masters or the U.S. Open, but it is nice to have a little something on you."

Woods said he enjoyed the match, even if he was on the losing end.

"You couldn't have made this event any better than it was," he said. "It was back and forth

and very competitive on a golf course that was playing on the tricky side."

The match made for some compelling golf at times, if only most people would have been able to see it. Technical difficulties marred the event, which was billed as golf's first pay-per-view broadcast.

Some viewers were unable to view it on their televisions after paying \$19.95. Turner and Bleacher Report representatives sent out links on social media allowing people to view it for free on their computers and mobile devices.

There were over 500 people on hold online waiting for assistance during one point.

"We experienced some technical issues on B/R Live that temporarily impacted user access to The Match. We've taken

a number of steps to resolve the matter, with our main priority being the delivery of content to those that have purchased the PPV event," Turner spokeswoman Tareia Williams said in an emailed statement.

Only 700 invited guests were allowed to watch the event at Shadow Creek. The match was billed as a chance for viewers to watch an untraditional golf broadcast as both golfers and their caddies were mic'd up. It also featured live odds from MGM resorts and a drone was used for live shots.

There was some banter between Woods and Mickelson early on but not much as the stakes increased.

Mickelson said on the 15th hole to Woods that "I'm trying to be more talkative but I'm not on this back nine."

Woods understood and responded that they were going back to their old mode of "trying to beat each other's brains in."

The most revealing moment on the front nine happened after Woods missed a 4-foot, short par putt on the second hole to give Mickelson an early advantage.

"I was half a second from giving him that putt because he always makes those," Mickelson said to his brother, Tim, who was his caddie.

Mickelson was 1 up through the front nine before Woods seized the lead with birdies on the par-4 11th and 12th holes. Mickelson then squared it with a birdie on the par-3 13th and retook the lead when Woods bogeyed the par-4 15th.

College basketball roundup

Virginia tops Wisconsin in Battle 4 Atlantis title game

Associated Press

PARADISE ISLAND, Bahamas — De'Andre Hunter had 20 points and nine rebounds to help No. 4 Virginia beat No. 25 Wisconsin 53-46 in the Battle 4 Atlantis championship game.

Ty Jerome added 11 points for the Cavaliers (6-0), who led 33-18 after a strong first half, and then sputtered offensively as the Badgers kept pushing back. Virginia made just 2 of 16 shots out of halftime and shot 26 percent for the second half.

But the Cavs' usual tough defense was good enough to keep the Badgers and preseason Associated Press All-American Ethan Happ at arm's distance.

Happ finished with 22 points, 15 rebounds and six assists for Wisconsin (5-1).

No. 2 Kansas 87, No. 5 Tennessee 81 (OT): At New York, Dedric Lawson had 24 points, 13 rebounds and five assists, and the Jayhawks rallied to beat the Volunteers in overtime in the NIT Season Tip-Off title game.

Lagerald Vick scored 15 points, with eight straight during a crucial stretch for the Jayhawks' comeback, and assisted on an alley-oop to Lawson that made it 78-73 with 2:39 left in overtime. Lawson was named the tournament MVP.

No. 6 Nevada 110, Massachusetts 87: Caleb Martin scored 29 points, Tre'Shawn Thurman added 22 points and eight rebounds, and the Wolf Pack beat the Minutemen in the Las Vegas Invitational's second championship game.

Martin, who was named the tournament MVP, finished 9-for-15 from the field and 6-for-10 from three-point range.

No. 7 North Carolina 94, No. 17 UCLA 78: Coby White had 19 points and eight assists, Luke Maye added 16 points and eight rebounds and the Tar Heels won the consolation game of the Las Vegas Invitational.

Kenny Williams scored 15 points as five Tar Heels reached double figures and North Carolina (6-1) settled for a split in its Las Vegas trip.

Kris Wilkes led UCLA (4-2) with 22 points.

No. 9 Michigan 83, Chattanooga 55: Iggy Brazdeikis scored 20 points and Jordan Poole added 14 to lead the host Wolverines to an easy victory.

Isaiah Livers added 12 points for the Wolverines, all in the first half. Michigan (6-0) has won each of its games by at least 19 points.

No. 10 Kentucky 77, Tennessee State 62: Keldon Johnson scored a career-high 27 points to lead the Wildcats past the visiting Tigers.

Kentucky (5-1) finished 4-0 in the Ohio Valley Hardwood Showcase and won its fifth straight since a season-opening blowout loss to Duke.

No. 11 Michigan State 78, Texas 68: Joshua Langford scored 29 points, Cassius Winston had 20 points and 10 assists, and the Spartans won the Las Vegas Invitational title.

Winston, who was named the tournament MVP, also had five rebounds for the Spartans (5-1).

No. 14 Florida State 79, No. 19 LSU 76 (OT): At Lake Buena Vista, Fla., Mfiondu Kabengele hit a three-pointer with a half-second left in overtime, and the Seminoles advanced to the championship game of the AdvoCare Invitational.

Florida State (5-0) plays defending national champion Villanova on Sunday.

No. 23 Ohio State 89, Cleveland State 62: Kaleb Wesson had 19 points and three teammates also scored in double figures as the host Buckeyes pulled away in the second half.

No. 24 Purdue 84, Robert Morris 46: Carsen Edwards scored 19 points as the Boilermakers routed the visiting Colonials.

Purdue (5-1) bounced back nicely from its first loss of the season Sunday against No. 13 Virginia Tech. Edwards was 5-for-17 from the field against Robert Morris, but also contributed five assists, four steals and a blocked shot.

NHL roundup

Skinner leads Sabres past Canadiens in OT

Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Jeff Skinner scored 3:06 into overtime after getting the tying goal late in regulation, and the Buffalo Sabres beat the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Friday for their eighth straight victory.

Buffalo's winning streak is the longest in the NHL and the team's best stretch since winning 10 in a row to start the 2006-07 season. Casey Mittelstadt also scored for the Sabres, and Carter Hutton made 31 saves.

Brendan Gallagher and Andrew Shaw scored for Montreal, which has lost three straight. Phillip Danault had two assists, and Antti Niemi stopped 37 shots.

Flyers 4, Rangers 0: Sean Couturier scored a pair of goals, Calvin Pickard made 31 saves in his 12th career shutout and host Philadelphia snapped a four-game losing streak by scoring three goals in the final five minutes, 21 seconds.

New York lost for the third time in 12 games. The Rangers entered with three wins a row.

Wild 4, Jets 2: Eric Staal scored with 2:31 remaining and Minnesota topped visiting Winnipeg in an emotional, penalty-filled matchup.

Patrik Laine scored for the sixth time in three games for Winnipeg, which has lost back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Ducks 2, Oilers 1 (OT): Rickard Rakell scored 14 seconds into overtime as host Anaheim rallied to beat Edmonton.

The Ducks earned their second straight win after a pair of overtime losses to Toronto and Colorado.

Capitals 3, Red Wings 1: Michal Kempny and Alex Ovechkin scored in a 1:56 span of the third period and host Washington recorded its season-high fourth consecutive victory.

Andreas Athanasiou scored his 10th goal of the season in the first period for the Red

Wings, who were 9-2 in their last 11 games before the trip to Washington.

Sharks 4, Canucks 0: Erik Karlsson had a goal and two assists and Joe Thornton surpassed a big milestone for the second time this month for host San Jose.

Thornton had two assists, moving him past Mario Lemieux for 11th place on the NHL list. The 39-year-old center scored his 400th goal on Nov. 13.

Islanders 4, Devils 3 (OT): Mathew Barzal scored on his own rebound after being stopped on a breakaway at 3:40 of overtime to lead visiting New York.

Golden Knights 2, Flames 0: Alex Tuch had a goal and an assist in his 100th career game to lead host Las Vegas.

Hurricanes 4, Panthers 1: Jordan Martinook recorded his first career hat trick and Carolina defeated visiting Florida.

Lightning 4, Blackhawks 2: Tyler Johnson scored twice and Nikita Kucherov had three assists for host Tampa Bay.

Blue Jackets 4, Maple Leafs 2: Cam Atkinson scored for the sixth straight game, and host Columbus remained atop the Metropolitan Division with the win.

Bruins 2, Penguins 1 (OT): Joakim Nordstrom scored 1:57 into overtime to lift Boston past visiting Pittsburgh.

Avalanche 5, Coyotes 1: J.T. Compher scored a pair of short-handed goals in his return after missing 16 games due to injury for visiting Colorado.

Blues 6, Predators 2: Ryan O'Reilly, Brayden Schenn and Alex Pietrangelo finished with a goal and an assist, and host St. Louis snapped a three-game losing streak.

Stars 6, Senators 4: Miro Heiskanen scored two goals, and Dallas rallied to beat visiting Ottawa.

NBA roundup

Warriors halt skid, top Trail Blazers

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Kevin Durant knew the Warriors would have to earn it and play well in every way to end a frustrating funk that lasted more than a week.

Durant scored 32 points, Klay Thompson had 31 and Golden State snapped its worst losing streak since early 2013 at four games, beating the Portland Trail Blazers 125-97 on Friday night.

Durant was 13-for-21 from the field, dished out eight assists, had seven rebounds and three of his team's 11 blocks. Thompson hit five of his first seven shots and grabbed a season-high eight boards for the undermanned two-time defending champions.

Two-time MVP Stephen Curry, in a car accident earlier in the day that left him uninjured, sat out again with a strained left groin and fellow All-Star Draymond Green also remained sidelined because of a sprained right toe.

Cavaliers 121, 76ers 112: Jordan Clarkson scored 14 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter, Rodney Hood had 25 point and Cleveland stunned Philadelphia on Friday, snapping the 76ers' perfect home record.

Philadelphia entered as the NBA's lone undefeated team at home at 10-0, while the Cavaliers were 0-8 on the road with the worst overall record in the league at 2-14.

Lakers 90, Jazz 83: LeBron James had 22 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, and he seized control of an ugly game with nine points in the fourth quarter of host Los Angeles' seventh win in eight games.

Raptors 125, Wizards 107: Kawhi Leonard had 27 points and 10 rebounds, Kyle Lowry scored 15 points and Toronto

won its fourth straight game, beating visiting Washington.

Thunder 109, Hornets 104: Russell Westbrook had 30 points, 12 rebounds and eight assists and host Oklahoma City held off Charlotte.

Suns 116, Bucks 114: Jamal Crawford made a jumper with 0.8 seconds left to lift Phoenix past host Milwaukee.

Pistons 116, Rockets 111 (OT): Reggie Jackson scored 19 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and overtime to help Detroit beat visiting Houston.

Celtics 114, Hawks 96: Aron Baynes scored a season-high 16 points, Jayson Tatum added 14 and Boston beat host Atlanta to snap a three-game skid.

Clippers 112, Grizzlies 107: Danilo Gallinari hit three free throws with 3 seconds left to tie it in regulation and finished with 20 points, Montrezl Harrell had 22 points and Los Angeles ended visiting Memphis' five-game winning streak.

Timberwolves 112, Nets 102: Derrick Rose scored 25 points, Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 points and nine rebounds, and Minnesota beat host Brooklyn.

Knicks 114, Pelicans 109: Emmanuel Mudiay scored a season-high 27 points, rookie Alonzo Trier had a career-high 25, and New York rallied to beat visiting New Orleans.

Nuggets 112, Magic 87: Trey Lyles scored a season-high 22 points, Mason Plumlee had 15 points and 11 rebounds, and host Denver beat Orlando.

Heat 103, Bulls 96: Josh Richardson scored 12 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and Hassan Whiteside had 18 points and 10 rebounds to help visiting Miami beat Chicago.

Spurs 111, Pacers 100: LaMarcus Aldridge had 33 points and 14 rebounds to lead San Antonio past host Indiana.