

STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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Trump intervenes in war-crimes cases

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump intervened in three cases involving war-crimes accusations Friday, issuing full pardons to two U.S. soldiers and reversing disciplinary action against a Navy SEAL despite opposition raised by military justice experts and some senior Pentagon officials.

The White House said in a statement Friday night that Trump, as commander in chief, is “ultimately responsible for ensuring that the law is enforced and when appropriate, that mercy is granted.”

“For more than two hundred years, presidents have used their authority to offer second chances to deserving individuals, including those in uniform who have served our country,” the statement said.

The service members were notified by Trump over the phone late Friday afternoon, according to lawyers for Army Maj. Mathew L. Golsteyn and former Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, the Navy SEAL. Golsteyn faced a murder trial scheduled for next year, while Gallagher recently was acquitted of murder but was convicted of posing with the corpse of an Islamic State fighter in Iraq.

The third service member, former Army 1st Lt. Clint Lorange, was expected to be released Friday night from prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. He was convicted of second-degree murder in 2013 and was sentenced to 19 years in prison for ordering his soldiers to open fire on three men in Afghanistan.

Golsteyn and Lorange received full pardons, while the president will direct the Navy to restore Gallagher to his previous rank before he retires, the White House said. His de-

motion marked the only significant penalty he received following his acquittal on the murder charge.

The news, first reported by The Washington Post ahead of the White House announcement, came at the tail end of a day dominated by impeachment hearings against Trump and efforts by some senior Pentagon officials to change his mind, according to three U.S. officials. The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said some commanders have raised concerns that Trump’s move will undermine the military justice system.

‘President’s power’

Other U.S. officials and advocates for the service members have said that carrying out the president’s order should not be difficult. The system has commanders overseeing the legal process in the military’s chain of command, with Trump serving at the top as commander in chief.

The Army said in a statement released on Friday night that it will implement the pardons of Golsteyn and Lorange, and acknowledged the president’s powers to grant pardons.

“The Army has full confidence in our system of justice,” the statement said. “The Uniform Code of Military Justice ensures good order and discipline for uniformed service members while holding accountable those who violate its provisions. The foundation of military law is the Constitution, and the Constitution establishes the President’s power to grant pardons.”

In all three cases, advocates for the service members had blasted the Pentagon for its handling of their cases, detail-

ing what they saw as questionable actions by prosecutors and investigators. Their cases have been featured on conservative media frequently, as advocates prepared cases for the president behind the scenes.

Phillip Carter, a former Army officer and Obama administration official, said that presidents have tended to support the military justice system and its verdicts to support good order and discipline.

The military, he said, has “worked for decades to lay the ghosts” of the Vietnam War and war crimes committed during it to rest, and Trump’s decision risks undermining that.

“Executive clemency like this introduces doubt into the chain of command, and creates uncertainty about accountability for breaches of military rules,” said Carter, who now studies national security for the Rand Corp.

The facts of the three cases vary.

In Golsteyn’s, the Special Forces officer went from being regarded as one of the Army’s heroes in the Afghanistan war to under investigation in the 2010 death of an unarmed man in a combat zone.

The first case

The case first emerged after Golsteyn, who had been decorated with a Silver Star on the same deployment, said during a polygraph test while applying for a job with the CIA that he had killed the man and burned his body. Golsteyn said the man was a suspected Taliban bomb-maker who had just crossed paths with a tribal elder who was helping U.S. forces in the Taliban stronghold of Marja.

Golsteyn, in an interview with The Post this year, said that the man was set free because U.S. forces in his area

weren’t authorized to keep detainees. He set an ambush for the man, whom he believed to be responsible for the recent death of two Marines, he said. He reasoned that if the man came in his direction, he was returning to activities with the Taliban.

“He had been released, and are you going to go back to what you were doing? Or are you going to go somewhere else?” Golsteyn said. “If it had been me, this guy’s a-- would have beaten feet in a completely different direction.”

Golsteyn said in a statement on Friday night that his family is “profoundly grateful” for Trump’s action, and that they have lived in “constant fear of this runaway prosecution” by the Army.

“Thanks to President Trump, we now have a chance to rebuild our family and lives,” Golsteyn said. “With time, I hope to regain my immense pride in having served in our military. In the meantime, we are so thankful for the support of family members, friends and supporters from around the nation, and our legal team.”

In Gallagher’s case, the Navy SEAL faced a court-martial this summer after he was accused of mortally stabbing a wounded Islamic State detainee in the neck and obstruction of justice for allegedly threatening other SEALs who reported him.

The murder case against Gallagher fell apart after another SEAL who was offered immunity to testify against him said in court that it was actually him, and not Gallagher, who killed the detainee. The case also saw a Navy prosecutor removed from the case after he sent an email to defense attorneys and a Navy Times journalist in an attempt to determine whether anyone was leaking information to the media.

Diplomat says he overheard president's call with Sondland

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A State Department official told impeachment investigators Friday that he overheard President Donald Trump talking with a U.S. ambassador about “investigations” in Ukraine, according to people familiar with the testimony.

David Holmes, the political counsel at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, said Trump was talking so loudly that Ambassador Gordon Sondland had to hold the phone from his ear.

Holmes said that allowed others at a restaurant in Kyiv to overhear the call that's now part of the impeachment inquiry, according to one of the people, who were unauthorized to publicly discuss the testimony and were granted anonymity.

The conversation at the Kyiv restaurant came the day after

Trump's July 25 phone call with newly elected Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in which the U.S. president pressed his counterpart to investigate Democrats and 2020 rival Joe Biden. A whistleblower's complaint about that call sparked the impeachment inquiry.

Sondland opened the July 26 conversation by telling Trump that the Zelenskyy “loves your ass.”

Trump responded, “So, he's gonna do the investigation?”

“He's gonna do it,” Sondland replied.

The Associated Press has viewed key excerpts of Holmes' 10-page statement and a person familiar with the document confirmed its authenticity.

Holmes, a career foreign service officer, told investigators he did not seek the opportunity

to testify. Like others in the inquiry, he was issued a subpoena to appear. He spent nearly seven hours with lawmakers.

After the call with Trump, which Sondland placed from his mobile phone at the outdoor table over lunch with Holmes and two other people, he remarked the president was in a “bad mood.”

Holmes asked the ambassador if it's true that Trump doesn't care about Ukraine.

Sondland told him the president did not care about Ukraine. The president only cares about “big stuff,” Sondland said.

When the foreign service officer noted the importance of Ukraine, at war with Russia, Sondland clarified that he meant stuff that benefits the president, like the “Biden investigation.”

Calif. school shooter dies as motive is still mystery

Associated Press

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. — The death of a boy who killed two students and wounded three others at his Southern California high school has left investigators struggling to discover what prompted the deadly attack.

Friends and neighbors described Nathaniel Tennesse Berhow, 16, as bright, funny, quiet and, above all, normal before he pulled a gun from his backpack Thursday and in 16 seconds shot five students at random before saving the last bullet for himself.

Berhow died Friday afternoon from a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

His mother was present when he died, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in a statement.

Berhow had shown no signs of violence and didn't appear to be linked to any ideology or terrorist group, authorities said.

After more than 40 interviews and a search of his home, authorities still were in the dark, Capt. Kent Wegener, of the sheriff's department's homicide unit said at a press conference.

“We did not find any manifesto, any diary that spelled it out, any suicide note or any writings,” he said.

But if the teen's motivation was murky, his actions were planned and deliberate, Sheriff Alex Villanueva said. Berhow's mother dropped him off at Saugus High School in the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Clarita on Thursday morning, which was his birthday.

Security camera video showed him dropping his backpack and pulling out a .45-caliber handgun. He began firing, cleared the jammed weapon and kept shooting.

The dead were identified as Gracie Anne Muehlberger, 15, and Dominic Blackwell, 14.

Takeaways of Day 2 impeachment hearings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Day Two of public hearings in the House impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump featured a career diplomat with a soft voice and a powerful story.

Marie Yovanovitch said she felt threatened by the president as she detailed the story of being abruptly recalled from her post as U.S. ambassador to Ukraine. Then the president attacked her with a tweet, which she said was intimidating.

Some key takeaways from Yovanovitch's testimony:

■ Political is personal: This was no staid, bureaucratic tale told by a distant and removed narrator.

Yovanovitch's account was, instead, deeply personal, layered with outrage over having been “kneecapped” by lies and

her abrupt recall in a 1 a.m. phone call from a country she said was vital to U.S. interests.

■ ‘Very intimidating’: While Republicans said Yovanovitch was in effect peripheral to the impeachment inquiry, she drew direct connections to the president.

Yovanovitch left no doubt that she interpreted some of the Trump's cryptic comments about her — “she's going to go through some things,” among them — in the most chilling way.

■ Stefanik's star rises: As members of the House questioned Yovanovitch, Republicans were working to highlight another woman in the room: GOP Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York.

Conservative outlets seized on a moment in which Schiff refused to allow Republican Rep.

Devin Nunes, the top Republican on the House intelligence committee, to yield his time to Stefanik early in the hearing.

When Stefanik's allotted time did come up, she used it in part to criticize Schiff and read news clips recounting his promise that the whistleblower would be allowed to testify before the committee.

■ Trump smears the witness: He would be too busy to watch, said the White House.

He'd tune into an opening statement delivered by Nunes but spend the rest of the day “working hard for the American people,” press secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

Instead, Trump responded to the hearing in real time, castigating Yovanovitch by tweet as she testified about her poor treatment by the president and his administration.

Chicago teachers approve contract deal

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Chicago teachers on Friday approved the contract deal that ended an 11-day strike and includes pay raises, \$35 million to enforce limits on class sizes and a pledge to supply each school with a nurse and a social worker.

The Chicago Teachers Union's 25,000 members went on strike Oct. 17 following months of unsuccessful negotiations with the school district and Mayor Lori Lightfoot's administration.

Teachers held marches and rallies across the city; the district kept school buildings open but canceled two weeks of classes. More than 300,000 students and their families were affected.

Teachers said they were striking for

"social justice," with the aim of increasing resources such as nurses and social workers for students and reducing class sizes, which teachers said exceed 30 or 40 students in some schools.

Union leaders said the strike forced city officials to negotiate on issues they initially deemed out of bounds, including support for homeless students.

Lightfoot, who took office this year, said the strike was unnecessary and dubbed the city's offer of a 16% raise for teachers over a five-year contract and other commitments on educators' priorities "historic."

Once the strike ended, Lightfoot said the entire city would benefit from the negotiated deal.

The district also committed \$35 million

to enforce class size limits and agreed to put nurses and social workers in every school by 2023.

"Our contract fight was about the larger movement to shift values and priorities in Chicago," CTU Vice President Stacy Davis Gates said in a union news release. "Working-class taxpayers in Chicago have paid for skyscrapers that most will never visit — but a school nurse is someone their child in need can see on any day. In a city with immense wealth, corporations have the ability to pay to support the common good."

Teachers suspended the strike on Oct. 31 after more than half of the union's elected delegates tentatively approved the agreement.

Texas appeals court blocks inmate's execution

Associated Press

HOUSTON — Texas' top criminal appeals court on Friday halted the scheduled execution of inmate Rodney Reed, whose conviction is being questioned by new evidence that his supporters say raises serious doubt about his guilt.

The stay of execution by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals came just hours after the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles had recommended delaying the lethal injection.

Reed, 51, had been set for lethal injection Wednesday evening for the 1996 killing of 19-year-old Stacey Stites. Prosecutors say Reed raped and strangled Stites as she made her way to work at a supermarket in

Bastrop, a rural community about 30 miles southeast of Austin.

Reed's efforts to stop his execution have received support from such celebrities as Beyonce, Kim Kardashian and Oprah Winfrey. Lawmakers from both parties, including Texas GOP Sen. Ted Cruz, have also asked that officials take a closer look at the evidence in the case.

In its four-page order, the appeals court said Reed's case should be returned to the trial court in Bastrop County so it could examine his claims that he is innocent and that prosecutors suppressed evidence and presented false testimony.

Bryce Benjet, an attorney with the Innocence Project, which is representing Reed, said defense attorneys were "extremely re-

lieved and thankful" to the appeals court.

"This opportunity will allow for proper consideration of the powerful and mounting new evidence of Mr. Reed's innocence," Benjet said in a statement.

The Texas Attorney General's Office declined to comment Friday on whether it would appeal the order staying Reed's execution.

Earlier Friday, the parole board had unanimously recommended a 120-day reprieve for Reed. The board rejected Reed's request to commute his sentence to life in prison.

The parole board's decision was to go next to Gov. Greg Abbott, who hasn't said whether he would accept or reject it or do nothing.

Former Buffalo Soldier, Olympic champion dies at 96

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Harrison Dillard, the former Buffalo Soldier and only Olympic runner to win gold medals in both the sprints and high hurdles, has died. He was 96.

Longtime friend Ted Theodore said Dillard died Friday at the Cleveland Clinic after a fight with stomach cancer. The 1955 Sullivan Award winner as the nation's outstanding amateur athlete, Dillard was the oldest living U.S. Olympic champion.

"It is a loss for humanity," Theodore said on Cleveland.com. "He was an example for all of us, how to live our lives, with never an unkind word for anyone. He was a cham-

pion, a true champion."

Dillard was a sharpshooter in the last racially segregated unit in the U.S. Army in World War II, serving as a Buffalo Soldier in the 92nd Infantry Division. He returned to Europe a few years later for the Olympics.

In the 1948 London Games, Dillard won the 100 meters in 10.3 seconds and earned another gold medal on the United States' 400 relay team. At the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, Dillard won his specialty, the 110 high hurdles, in 13.91, and again ran on the winning relay team. Overall, Dillard won more than 400 races — 82 in a row at one point.

Dillard won 11 indoor and outdoor national championships, including the indoor

60-yard hurdles a record eight consecutive years. Dillard won that event at the Millrose Games nine years in a row. He held world hurdles records at 60 yards indoors, and 110 yards and 220 yards outdoors.

A native of Cleveland, Dillard grew up idolizing another Cleveland native, Jesse Owens. Dillard and Owens, who won four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics, graduated from Cleveland East Technical High School and starred at Baldwin Wallace College.

In 1974, Dillard was inducted into the Track and Field Hall of Fame, and in 1983 he became a charter inductee into the U.S. Olympic Committee Hall of Fame.

Car bomb kills at least 18 in Syrian town

Associated Press

BEIRUT — A car bomb exploded Saturday in a northern Syrian town controlled by Turkey-backed opposition fighters, killing at least 18 people and wounding several others, Syrian opposition activists and Turkey's Defense Ministry said.

Northern Syria has been hit by several explosions that have killed and wounded scores of people over the past month. That's since Turkey began a military operation against Kurdish fighters in the wake

of President Donald Trump's decision to pull the bulk of American troops out of northern Syria.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported that 19 people, including 13 civilians, were killed Saturday in the town of al-Bab in Aleppo province. The Aleppo Media Center, an activist collective, said 15 people were killed in the blast in a busy part of town near a bus station.

Turkey's Defense Ministry said the blast killed 18 people

and blamed the main Kurdish militia, known as the People's Protection Units.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack.

A video posted online by Albab City, an activist collective, showed several vehicles on fire with black smoke billowing from a wide street with shops on both sides. Inside the bus station, several white minibuses appear damaged.

"It looks like doomsday. May God help us," a man could be heard saying as five young

men carried a wounded person away. At least two bloodied and wounded men could be seen rushed away on motorcycles.

Turkey-backed opposition fighters took control of parts of Aleppo province, including the towns of al-Bab and Afrin, in previous military offensives in 2016 and 2018, respectively.

The past month's attacks have come amid an expanding Turkish invasion of into northeast Syria against Kurdish-held towns and villages along a stretch of the border.

Israeli forces strike multiple Hamas targets in Gaza

The Washington Post

JERUSALEM — Israeli forces struck multiple targets controlled by the ruling Hamas faction in the Gaza Strip on Saturday after rockets were fired from the territory, potentially jeopardizing a shaky cease-fire following two days of intense exchanges.

The flare-up occurred as Israel's military said it was investigating one of the deadliest attacks of the recent fighting, a

strike on a family house Thursday that may have been a case of mistaken targeting.

Saturday's strikes marked the first time Israel had hit Hamas sites during the recent clashes, having limited its previous attacks to assets of a rival Islamic Jihad faction in Gaza. Hamas, in a departure from previous episodes of violence, had largely stayed out of the fray.

But the army said that changed in the early hours Sat-

urday when at least two rockets soared toward the Negev Desert city of Beersheba, sparking air raid sirens shortly after 1 a.m. Both projectiles were shot down by Israel's Iron Dome air defense system.

Hamas did not claim responsibility for the launch. But the Israeli military said the rockets came from Hamas launchers and retaliated with air attacks on a Hamas military camp, a naval facility and "an underground terror infrastructure,"

according to a statement.

"Hamas fired tonight, aiming to kill Israeli civilians, and therefore we fired back at their military targets," Lt. Col Jonathan Conricus, a spokesman for the Israel Defense Forces, said in an interview.

Israel blamed the militant Baha Abu al-Ata for most of the rocket attacks and other terrorist activity emanating from Gaza in recent months and said he was actively preparing to launch more.

Protesters in Iran angry over 50% gas price increase

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Protesters angered by Iran raising government-set gasoline prices by 50% blocked traffic in major cities and occasionally clashed with police Saturday after a night of demonstrations punctuated by gunfire, in violence that reportedly killed at least one person.

The protests put renewed pressure on Iran's government as it struggles to overcome the U.S. sanctions strangling the country after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Though largely peaceful,

demonstrations devolved into violence in several instances, with online videos purporting to show police officers firing tear gas at protesters and mobs setting fires. While representing a political risk for President Hassan Rouhani ahead of February parliamentary elections, it also shows the widespread anger among Iran's 80 million people who have seen their savings evaporate amid scarce jobs and the national rial currency's collapse.

The demonstrations took place in over a dozen cities in the hours following Rouhani's decision at midnight Friday to cut gasoline subsidies to fund handouts for Iran's poor.

Gasoline in the country still remains among the cheapest in the world, with the new prices jumping up to a minimum of 15,000 rials per liter of gas — 50% up from the day before. That's 13 cents a liter, or about 50 cents a gallon. A gallon of regular gasoline in the U.S. costs \$2.60 by comparison.

But in a nation where many get by as informal taxi drivers, cheap gasoline is considered a birthright. Iran is home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves. While expected for months, the decision still caught many by surprise and sparked immediate demonstrations overnight.

Violence broke out Friday

night in Sirjan, a city some 500 miles southeast of Tehran. The state-run IRNA news agency said, "protesters tried to set fire to the oil depot, but they were stopped by police." It did not elaborate, but online videos circulating on Iranian social media purported to show a fire at the depot as sirens wailed in the background. Another showed a large crowd shouting: "Rouhani, shame on you! Leave the country alone!"

Mohammad Mahmoudabadi, an Interior Ministry official in Sirjan, later told state television that police and demonstrators exchanged gunfire, wounding several.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Student puts toilet water in child's bottle

NJ VINELAND — Police said a middle school student in New Jersey poured toilet water into another child's water bottle.

Vineland police said the child drank from the bottle.

Authorities have charged the 13-year-old student with aggravated assault and tampering with a food product.

Man accused of threats to kill dog and owner

DE HARRINGTON — A Delaware man, 65, is accused of threatening to kill a dog and its owner after the creature got loose and ran onto the man's property.

News outlets reported Edward Bonsall Jr. has been arrested on charges including terroristic threatening. Harrington police said the dog ran onto Bonsall's property Monday.

Capt. Earl K. Brode said the owner tried to catch the dog and got into an argument with Bonsall, who briefly left and returned with a BB gun pointed at the neighbor. The neighbor then called police.

Landlord ordered to pay ex-tenants \$1.1M

DC WASHINGTON — A Washington landlord is being forced to pay \$1.1 million in rent payments to former residents whose homes were plagued by pests, mold and raw sewage and violated housing and fire codes.

The Washington Post reported that District of Columbia Attorney General Karl Racine announced Wednesday that Sanford Capital LLC will pay the settlement to 155 for-

mer residents "forced to live in squalor."

For years, tenants struggled with unsanitary and poor conditions that left many without heat in winter months. Prosecutors said some residents also lacked working toilets, stoves or refrigerators.

Man kills another over losses at card game

FL HUDSON — Authorities said a Florida man was so angry about losing several thousand dollars in a card game that he set the man's car on fire with him inside.

A Pasco County Sheriff's Office arrest report said the victim was burned beyond recognition after playing cards with Michael Psilakis, 21, in October. Investigators haven't released the victim's name, citing Marsy's Law, a state constitutional amendment designed to protect crime victims.

A witness told investigators he'd played cards with the pair and Psilakis lost \$3,500. The witness said Psilakis asked him whether he should kill the victim.

School apologizes for throwing out lunches

MN RICHFIELD — School officials are apologizing after some students at Richfield High School saw their meals thrown away because of outstanding lunch debt.

As many as 40 students in the lunch line Monday had their hot lunches taken off their trays, thrown in the trash and replaced with a cold lunch when a lunchroom staff member at the register saw that they had outstanding lunch debts of more than \$15.

Superintendent Steven Un-

owsky told KARE-TV that the school's nutrition staff "inaccurately and inappropriately implemented alternate lunch."

Richfield High School Principal Latanya Daniels said the school "absolutely failed."

Student expelled after bringing stolen gun

ME BANGOR — A Maine high school student who was arrested for bringing a stolen handgun to school has been expelled.

Police said Bangor High School employees searched the student's belongings on Oct. 31 because they suspected the student had been using marijuana.

The student was charged with theft of a firearm, burglary and possession of a firearm on school property.

The Bangor Daily News reported the Bangor School Committee unanimously voted to expel the student on Friday.

According to the committee's meeting minutes, the student's conduct was described as "deliberately disobedient."

Man wrongly sentenced for robberies is freed

CA LOS ANGELES — A man who spent 11 years in prison for a series of Los Angeles armed robberies he didn't commit has been exonerated.

Ruben Martinez Jr. walked free from Los Angeles Superior Court on Tuesday after prosecutors reviewed his unwavering claim of innocence and agreed he had been wrongly convicted.

District Attorney Jackie Lacey apologized to Martinez for the injustice that led to a 47-year prison sentence.

Martinez had been convicted of five robberies at the same

auto paint shop from 2005 to 2007. He saw five appeals rejected.

Officer killed service dog that bit at him

FL OKEECHOBEE — Authorities said a Florida police officer fatally shot a service dog while responding to a man suffering from a seizure.

An Okeechobee police statement said the shooting happened late Monday night.

Police said two officers approached a man suffering from medical issues on the side of a road. They recognized the man and were familiar with his medical history.

While one officer helped the man, his service dog began to lunge and bite at the other officer. Police said the officer pushed the dog away several times before it went for his face, prompting the officer to shoot the dog once. The animal died while being taken to a veterinarian.

Puppy stolen from man at gunpoint

DC WASHINGTON — Authorities said a man was walking his 4-month-old pit bull in Washington when he was robbed of the puppy at gunpoint.

News outlets reported the dog, named "L.A.," was stolen Saturday. A police statement said the man and L.A. were walking that afternoon when a vehicle slowed next to them and the driver asked about buying the dog. The man refused, and the driver followed the pair.

It said the driver then stopped the car and got out with a passenger, who pulled a handgun and told L.A.'s owner, "It's our dog now." The driver grabbed L.A. and fled.

From wire reports

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STARS AND STRIPES®

Chiefs, Chargers set for division clash

Associated Press

Everyone's hoping the playing surface at Mexico City's Azteca Stadium won't be the main story of Monday night's game between the Kansas City Chiefs and Los Angeles Chargers.

Both coaches said they have received favorable updates about the turf going into the game. Last year's game between the Chiefs and Rams was relocated to Los Angeles less than a week before the game when the field was deemed unplayable because of rain and the stadium having hosted concerts less than a month before the game.

"Everything that I've been told has been positive," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said.

The teams have taken different approaches to preparing.

The Chargers have spent the week at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs to get acclimated to the altitude. The Chiefs have kept their same routine with the only adjustment being to hydrate more, according to quarterback Patrick Mahomes.

It is an important AFC West matchup. Kansas City (6-4) won its first four games but has dropped four of its past six, allowing Oakland to get within a half-game of the division lead. Los Angeles (4-6) has struggled for most of the season but remains only two games out.

This is the first of two straight division games for the Chiefs. After their bye week, they will host the Raiders on Dec. 1.

"To say you are in control of your own destiny at 4-6 is pretty rare," Chargers quarterback

Philip Rivers said.

Here are other things to watch as the Chargers play an international home game for the second straight season:

Choppy Rivers

Rivers leads the league in passing yards (2,816) but is also third in interceptions (10). He had three last week against Oakland, including a pick-6 that loomed large in what turned out to be a 26-24 loss to the Raiders.

The Chargers were among the league's better teams in not committing turnovers the past two seasons, but their 16 giveaways this season are tied for seventh in the league. Five have occurred in goal-to-go situations.

Healthier Mahomes

Mahomes returned to the lineup last week after missing two games because of a knee injury. He threw for 446 yards and three touchdowns in last week's loss to Tennessee but said on Thursday that this is the best he has felt since early September.

Keep an eye on

Chargers running back Melvin Gordon. He rushed for a season-high 108 yards last week and seems to be regaining his stride after missing the first four games because of a contract dispute. He had 166 scrimmage yards (102 receiving, 64 rushing) the previous time he faced Chiefs, who are ranked 31st in run defense.

Sports briefs

US bounces back to beat Canada in Nations League

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Sergino Dest set up a goal in the second minute of his American competitive debut, Gyasi Zardes scored twice and the United States overwhelmed Canada early in a 4-1 CONCACAF Nations League match on Friday night.

A month after Canada embarrassed the Americans with a 2-0 victory at Toronto for its first win over the Americans since 1985, Jordan Morris, Zardes and Aaron Long scored as the U.S. built a 3-0 halftime lead.

Steven Vitoria cut Canada's deficit in the 72nd minute and Zardes got his 12th international goal in the 89th, capping a victory that may lessen some of the criticism of U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter and his play-from-the-back system.

The U.S. (2-1) would finish ahead of Canada (3-1) to win the group and advance to the semifinals of the first CONCA-

CAF Nations League if it beats Cuba (0-3) on Tuesday in a match moved to George Town, Cayman Islands, because of issues with the stadium lights in Havana. The Americans overtook the Canadians in goal difference, plus-eight to plus-six, and Canada has completed group play.

Tsitsipas tops Federer to reach London final

LONDON — Stefanos Tsitsipas kept his nerve in the key moments to beat six-time champion Roger Federer 6-3, 6-4 on Saturday and reach the final of the season-ending ATP Finals.

Tsitsipas saved 11 of 12 break points and took advantage of an error-filled performance from Federer — who continually put his opponent under pressure only to come up short when it mattered.

The Greek player next faces defending champion Alexander Zverev or Dominic Thiem.

For Federer, it was a surprisingly erratic performance after he played near-flawless tennis to beat Novak Djokovic on Thursday to reach the semifinals.

He finished that match with five unforced errors — including two double-faults — but had 26 in this match.

Nebraska gives Frost 2-year extension

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska coach Scott Frost has received a two-year contract extension through 2026.

The university announced the extension Saturday before the Cornhuskers' game against No. 14 Wisconsin.

Frost is 8-13 in his second season since leaving Central Florida, which he led to a 13-0 record in 2017. The Huskers are 4-5 overall and 2-4 in Big Ten play this season.

In a joint statement, chancellor Ronnie Green and athletic director Bill Moos said they

are "committed to Frost and the direction he's taking the program."

The original terms of Frost's contract will remain intact. He is paid \$5 million per year.

US baseball team on verge of Olympics

Minnesota's Brent Rooker hit a go-ahead, two-run homer in the seventh inning, and the United States beat Taiwan 3-2 on Friday in Tokyo to keep alive the Americans' chance of earning an Olympic baseball berth at the Premier12 tournament.

The U.S. finished the super round 2-3 and would clinch a berth if it beats Mexico (3-2) on Sunday in the Premier12 bronze-medal game. Mexico lost 7-3 Saturday to South Korea (3-1), which clinched an Olympic berth and plays Japan for the Premier12 gold medal. Taiwan (2-3) defeated Australia (1-4) by 5-1, putting the Americans in position to qualify with a win over Mexico.

College basketball roundup

No. 2 Duke shakes off Georgia State

Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — No. 2 Duke hadn't shot this poorly all season. The Blue Devils made up for it with one of their most impressive rebounding performances in four decades under Hall of Fame coach Mike Krzyzewski.

Tre Jones scored a career-high 31 points and Duke pulled away to beat pesky Georgia State 74-63 on Friday night.

Freshman Vernon Carey Jr. added season highs of 20 points and 14 rebounds and Jack White finished with 10 rebounds.

Duke (4-0) overcame its season-worst 34.2% shooting by outrebounding the Panthers 58-32, and the school says its 30 offensive rebounds were the most in Krzyzewski's 40 seasons.

"I feel like if I rebound, the points will just come," Carey said.

And yet, three nights after top-ranked Kentucky was upset at home by Evansville, the Blue Devils — 28½-point favorites — were on upset alert

against an unintimidated mid-major for longer than expected before they scratched out a sloppy victory, their 150th in a row at Cameron Indoor Stadium against nonconference opponents.

"Probably at halftime, I feel like maybe we were just like, 'What if that happens to us?'" Carey said. "Coaches told us to bring it, and if you brought it, you'd be fine, and that's what we did."

No. 21 Xavier 59, Missouri State 56: Paul Scruggs scored 14 points and made a layup with 11.6 seconds left Friday night, helping the host Musketeers hold off the Bears.

Xavier (4-0) never trailed but couldn't shake clear of the team picked to win the Missouri Valley Conference. Missouri State (2-2) tied it at 56, but Xavier made a free throw and two big plays in the closing seconds.

No. 5 Kansas 112, Monmouth 57: Isaiah Moss scored 21 points and the host Jayhawks routed the undersized Hawks.

Moss, who missed the opener against Duke because of an in-

jury, was 5-for-6 from beyond the arc as Kansas (2-1) ran its home winning streak to 23. The streak is the third-longest behind Tennessee (28) and Gonzaga (25).

No. 6 North Carolina 77, Gardner-Webb 61: Freshman star Cole Anthony had 28 points in the Tar Heels' victory over the visiting Runnin' Bulldogs.

Fellow freshman Armando Bacot posted his first double-double with 12 points and 11 rebounds for the Tar Heels, who shot 50% after halftime to build a double-digit lead after leading just 30-27 at the break.

No. 8 Gonzaga 79, Texas A&M 49: Admon Gilder and Ryan Woolridge each scored 16 points and the Bulldogs routed the host Aggies.

Filip Petrushev added 14 points and 10 rebounds, helping the Bulldogs (4-0) overcome a slow start. Drew Timme had 11 points.

No. 17 Utah State 81, North Carolina A&T 54: Alphonso Anderson had 21 points, six rebounds and three assists and Justin Bean added 18 points, 10

rebounds and three assists for the host Aggies.

With North Carolina A&T (1-3) rallying in the second half, Utah State (4-0) made a key run to pull away.

No. 22 Auburn 116, Cal State Northridge 70: Samir Doughty scored a career-high 33 points and J'Von McCormick had a school-record 16 assists for the host Tigers.

Auburn (4-0) had its highest-scoring game since beating Winthrop 119-85 on Nov. 24, 2017.

No. 24 Baylor 72, Texas State 63: Jared Butler scored 15 points, Freddie Gillespie had 11 points and 11 rebounds and the Bears beat the visiting Bobcats.

The Bears (2-1) had five players score in double figures while playing without preseason All-Big 12 junior forward Tristan Clark, who had a non-operative procedure on his knee this week. Clark was limited to 14 games last season because of a knee injury at the start of Big 12 play, but had played in Baylor's first two games.

Gibbs walks fine line managing three contenders

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Joe Gibbs is a retired Hall of Fame NFL coach with three Super Bowl titles who changed course in his early 50s to wade into NASCAR and see if he could build a second career and a family business.

Gibbs not only developed a championship-winning organization that gave both of his sons leadership roles, but he also turned Joe Gibbs Racing into one of NASCAR's elite teams.

Gibbs is taking three drivers to Sunday's championship-deciding finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway, where the Toyota trio of Kyle Busch, Denny Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr. will race

Ford driver Kevin Harvick for the title. The highest-finishing driver wins the Cup.

Gibbs has an interesting week ahead as he figures out how to manage three teammates racing for the same thing.

The business model in NASCAR can be messy for multicar teams and those with alliances with other teams. Each car has its own sponsors to keep happy, its own individual team members and drivers laser focused on winning a title. Gibbs often says that model makes team-wide orders impossible, but there have been instances that have raised eyebrows, including Hamlin's pivotal victory Sunday in Arizona.

Hamlin had to win to make the final four and a late restart

put his chances in jeopardy. He lined up next to fellow contender Ryan Blaney for the three-lap shootout to the finish, and once he cleared Blaney to claim the lead, Busch wedged his car between Blaney and Hamlin as a buffer for Hamlin to drive to the win.

Starting with the JGR team meeting Monday all the way into the final debrief before Sunday's race, Gibbs has a pressure cooker to handle his three drivers, who have very different personalities. Busch is the regular-season champion and won the title in 2015; Truex won the 2017 championship driving for former Gibbs affiliate Furniture Row Racing and is in his first season as a full-time Gibbs driver; Hamlin

has never won a title and lost chances in 2010 and 2014.

"What I love about our sport is we work together at the race shop, try to prepare things, solve problems," Gibbs said. "When we get to the racetrack, it will be three cars going for it. Three drivers want a championship. Their sponsors mean so much to us, each one of them, and it's a separate story, each one of those."

He then referred to his past: "When I was in football, it is one team and you're trying to win with one team. This is four teams. Then when you get to the racetrack, it's four teams competing against each other. I love that aspect of it. I'm thrilled to be a part of it."

NBA roundup

Harden, Rockets extend winning streak

Associated Press

HOUSTON — James Harden scored 44 points and the Houston Rockets used a big fourth quarter run to beat the Indiana Pacers 111-102 on Friday night.

Houston has won a season-high six games in a row and Harden has scored 36 points or more in five straight games to carry the Rockets as they deal with injuries to Clint Capela, Eric Gordon and Danuel House.

Domantas Sabonis had 18 points and 13 rebounds for Indiana, and Doug and McDermott also scored 18 points. Indiana had won four in a row.

Lakers 99, Kings 97: LeBron James hit two free throws with 5.5 seconds to play, and Anthony Davis blocked Harri-

son Barnes' driving shot at the buzzer with both hands in Los Angeles' 10th win in 11 games, beating former coach Luke Walton and visiting Sacramento.

James had 29 points and 11 assists, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 12 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter of the Western Conference-leading Lakers' third straight win.

Celtics 105, Warriors 100: Jayson Tatum dunked after a jump ball with 1:36 left to put his team ahead, and visiting Boston held off undermanned Golden State for its 10th straight win since losing the season opener.

D'Angelo Russell had 12 points and seven assists but also nine of his team's 19 turnovers before leaving with a sprained right thumb in the Warriors'

sixth straight defeat.

Hornets 109, Pistons 106: Malik Monk hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to lift Charlotte past visiting Detroit.

After Detroit's Derrick Rose drove the lane and awkwardly threw the ball away with a second left, Charlotte got it at mid-court. Following a timeout, the Hornets threw several screens, with Monk flying around one near the top of the key. He caught a pass from Cody Martin and launched the winner, finishing with 19 points on 8-for-12 shooting to help the Hornets snap a four-game skid.

Thunder 127, 76ers 119 (OT): Danilo Gallinari scored 28 points to help Oklahoma City outlast visiting Philadelphia in overtime.

Chris Paul had 27 points in the biggest win of the season for

a Thunder franchise that lost All-Stars Russell Westbrook and Paul George in the offseason. The crowd roared in the fourth quarter and overtime as — just for a night — it seemed like nothing had changed.

Wizards 137, Timberwolves 116: Bradley Beal scored 44 points for the second straight game as Washington topped short-handed host Minnesota.

Grizzlies 107, Jazz 106: Ja Morant scored 25 points, including the go-ahead basket with 1:32 remaining, and Memphis spoiled the return of guard Mike Conley by beating visiting Utah.

Magic 111, Spurs 109: Evan Fournier scored 26 points, hitting two late three-pointers, and host Orlando handed San Antonio its fourth straight loss.

NHL roundup

Canadiens respond to Ovechkin's hit with scoring flurry

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — By the time Capitals coach Todd Reirden called a timeout to tell his team to wake up, it was too late.

Alex Ovechkin's thunderous hit on Jonathan Drouin had already energized the Canadiens.

Montreal scored four goals in the second period following Ovechkin's hit and went on to beat Washington 5-2 on Friday night, ending the NHL-leading Capitals' 13-game point streak. Drouin returned for the third period, and the Canadiens won their third in a row.

"I think it just woke us up," Montreal's Phillip Danault said. "That was not great, but it definitely woke up the team. Jo took a hit for the team and came back and is healthy, so that's all that matters."

Danault, captain Shea Weber,

Jordan Weal and Nick Suzuki each scored over a span of eight and a half minutes after Ovechkin flattened Drouin with an open-ice hit that knocked him out for the rest of the second. Ovechkin appeared to leave his feet to deliver the blow, and Drouin was slow to get up before skating to the bench and going down the tunnel.

At the time, Ovechkin's hit was the first big highlight of the night after a ho-hum first period. Montreal coach Claude Julien wondered if it should have been a charging penalty on Ovechkin but acknowledged it wasn't an illegal check to Drouin's head.

Ovechkin wasn't penalized, but the Capitals made a series of errors on the ensuing shifts and the game slipped away.

"I think they just have momentum on their side," Ovechkin said. "After first goal, they score another one and we just

didn't execute the play, we make lots of mistakes. It was not our best period. We didn't play our game at all."

The Canadiens played their textbook style of game in front of Carey Price, who made 25 saves to beat the Capitals for just the eighth time in 27 games against them. Price's biggest save came a few shifts after Drouin's injury when he denied Jonas Siegenthaler and was bailed out by defenseman Brett Kulak blocking the rebound, and he made a series of crucial stops in the final minutes.

Blue Jackets 3, Blues 2 (OT): Zach Werenski scored 3:34 into overtime to lift host Columbus past St. Louis.

With the Blue Jackets on a 4-on-3 power play, Werenski buried a shot from the right circle. He has scored in three straight games.

Bruins 4, Maple Leafs 2: Brad Marchand scored two

third-period goals to help visiting Boston beat Toronto.

Charlie Coyle had a goal and an assist, Zdeno Chara added a goal, and Tuukka Rask made 29 saves. The Bruins snapped a 0-2-2 skid.

Devils 2, Penguins 1: Mackenzie Blackwood made 38 saves and Travis Zajac and Blake Coleman scored in host New Jersey's victory over Pittsburgh.

Jack Johnson scored for Penguins and Matt Murray made 19 saves.

Senators 2, Flyers 1: Filip Chlapik scored in the second period, Anders Nilsson made 26 saves and host Ottawa killed off a late four-minute power play to beat Philadelphia.

Ottawa's Colin White took a double minor for high-sticking Claude Giroux with just over four minutes remaining. The Flyers pulled Carter Hart for a two-man advantage, but were unable to score.